



STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE**

Mr. Warren Michelson, Chair
Moose Jaw North

Ms. Cathy Sproule, Deputy Chair
Saskatoon Nutana

Mr. Kevin Phillips
Melfort

Mr. Warren Steinley
Regina Walsh Acres

Mr. Lyle Stewart
Thunder Creek

Ms. Christine Tell
Regina Wascana Plains

Mr. Corey Tochor
Saskatoon Eastview

[The committee met at 19:00.]

The Chair: — Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. This is the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice, and welcome to tonight's hearings. My name is Warren Michelson. I am the Chair of the committee. Cathy Sproule is here, the Deputy Chair, along with Kevin Phillips, Warren Steinley, Lyle Stewart, Christine Tell, and Corey Tochor.

This evening's committee will be considering the estimates and supplementary estimates of the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission, estimates of the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport. The committee will also consider Bills 38, 10, and 9.

We have one document to be tabled this evening. Members have received a copy of it tonight. The document is IAJ 12/27, Ministry of First Nations and Métis Relations. This is responses to questions raised at the April 19th, 2012, meeting of the committee regarding First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund criteria dated April 26th, 2012.

**General Revenue Fund
Office of the Provincial Capital Commission
Vote 85**

Subvote (PC01)

The Chair: — We will now begin our consideration of vote no. 85, Office of the Provincial Capital Commission, central management and services, subvote (PC01). Before I begin I would like to remind the officials to introduce themselves when they speak, for the purpose of Hansard. Mr. Minister, welcome, you and your officials. If you've got some opening statements, please provide them now.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well I do indeed have a couple of introductory comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the committee. It's a pleasure to join you this evening.

With me today: Mr. Harley Olsen who's the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission; Ms. Wanda Lamberti, executive director of central management services; and Ms. Linda McIntyre, the Provincial Archivist for Saskatchewan Archives Board.

The commission's 2012-2013 budget enables a number of important initiatives and allows us to continue to fulfill our mandate to promote, preserve, and strengthen our distinctive heritage and culture through the celebration and creation of opportunities for tourism and economic development within the capital region with emphasis on educating youth about the history of our great province.

The budget of just over \$14.7 million includes an overall increase of approximately \$4.1 million. The net increase is attributed in part to the celebrations around the 100th anniversary of the Saskatchewan Legislative Building, where we are right now. This also includes several legacy projects that will maintain and enhance the Legislative Building and the grounds which surround it for years to come and for future generations. The centennial celebration honours a century of

democracy in our province and represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to recognize our great democratic traditions and connect residents of Saskatchewan to the historic structure that is their seat of government.

Of the overall \$4.1 million increase, \$2.5 million will be set aside for restorations to the dome atop the Legislative Building. As members are aware, the roof is leaking and needs substantial repairs. Throughout the life of the Legislative Building, a number of restorations have taken place over the years to ensure not only the structural integrity of the building but the safety of those who work inside. Work on the roof of the dome is the next necessary and logical step in that process.

Smaller amounts have been budgeted for a number of other physical improvements in the building. Work includes removing and replacing the carpet in this very Chamber where we're sitting this evening. At the same time, all of the old communications wiring connecting the desks to the Speaker, members, and table officers will be replaced as well. Upgrades to the front entrance of the building will also take place. Yes, and there will be a new visitor information kiosk and updated storyboards to go along with it.

To recognize not only the 100th anniversary of the Legislative Building but also the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen, funding has been allocated to provide upgrades to the Queen Elizabeth II Gardens out front that will enhance the visitor experience while making them safer and more accessible. Work will include replacing the gravel pathways with pavers that will better accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility aids while providing a more solid surface underfoot for everyone. An allowance has been made to create and install a statue in the QE [Queen Elizabeth] II Gardens that will complement the existing statue of the Queen on her horse Burmese which was unveiled by Her Majesty herself in 2005, the centennial year of the province. Together these additions will go a long way toward encouraging more visitors to come to the gardens while emphasizing our strong relationship to the Crown and shedding light on our province's history.

In addition to committing to improving the infrastructure of the Legislative Building and the surrounding grounds, we have also allocated money for educational programming and events that celebrate the history and the heritage of the Legislative Building.

Some examples of these programs are the recently announced artist-in-residence program which provides students and visitors to the building a chance to explore our provincial history through the artist's lens, actually it's the first one of its kind in the entire country, we're told; the Share Your Story campaign which is gathering people's stories and memories of the Legislative Building through the last century; and the installation of a new time capsule all of which will educate visitors on the history of the building and the role it plays in their lives.

As mentioned in my opening remarks, the Capital Commission . . . Oh, I didn't mention it before but I'm mentioning it now. We're also allocating funding to complete the ongoing and very extensive review of the Wascana Centre Authority to ensure

that its needs are being met as well as those of the community that it serves. Ultimately we want Wascana to remain a vibrant part of the community for many years to come. All three partners including the city of Regina and the University of Regina strongly support this project.

In addition to these changes, the following administrative adjustments are included: an increase of \$174,000 to the Saskatchewan Archives Board for mandated salary and operational cost increases, an additional funding amount of \$7,000 for mandated salary increases, and \$17,000 for operating increases for accommodation services.

In closing we believe this is a responsible budget that will allow the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission to continue working with its partners to preserve and promote the history and culture of Saskatchewan and to ensure that its capital continues to remain a source of pride for the people of our province. It will also help build awareness and educate students, residents, and visitors about Saskatchewan's history and how the province is governed. We would now be pleased to answer any questions members may have.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister Hutchinson, and welcome to the officials. Are there questions from the committee? The Chair recognizes Mr. Nilson.

Mr. Nilson: — Good evening. It's a pleasure to have you here this evening to talk about some good things about our Provincial Capital Commission. Perhaps you can explain how the finances work, and the reason I ask that question is that it seems like you do lots of things with not very much money, and so I'm concerned about, you know, are there other sources of money or other places where expenses are that you manage in the sense that. You know for example, you show Conexus Arts Centre \$446,000. It seems to me that's not very much money to run that. And are there . . . So perhaps you can just explain how the money works.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Government Services is a major partner of the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission in maintaining the various assets that the government owns. Major funding for a number of government-owned buildings, both for capital and maintenance purposes, that's provided.

Just to give the members a couple of concrete examples, the Legislative Building, and if we cast back just a few years, there was a very major upgrading of the structural underpinnings of the building. And funding for that, if I understand correctly, was provided by Government Services. So when we have major projects of that kind, they're a partner that we can always rely on.

The Conexus Centre of the Arts also gets funding for major upgrading through Government Services as well, and Government House does as well. The addition and renovations that were carried out in the not too distant past, if I understand correctly, were funded in large part by Government Services.

Each of the partners also has other sources of revenue. Just to give a couple of examples, the Conexus Arts Centre of course receives revenues from ticket sales and events as well. That's a

revenue stream that they have. Wascana Centre Authority does receive money from the Government of Saskatchewan, but it's also funded by the University of Regina and the city of Regina as well. They are financial partners on an ongoing basis. In Government House, we see as revenues from the Government House Historical Society and also the Government House Foundation. So Government Services is a major partner, but each of the components of the Capital Commission's collection of partners has its own sources of funding as well.

Mr. Nilson: — Well thank you for that explanation because I think people would get concerned if they saw that this looked like just the amount of money that was available to do all of the things that are important. And does that also explain then why so many of the numbers are flatlined? There's no increase at all between last year and this year or is that, I don't think that's necessarily normal, but is there any reason there's no increase on these numbers?

[19:15]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have a couple of facts and figures that might help answer the member's question. With respect to the Conexus Arts Centre, there is of course two revenue streams directly from government that they count on each year. In addition to the accommodation expense which remains relatively flat, there is an operating subsidy, and that's reviewed on an annual basis. So far the Conexus Arts Centre seems to be keeping up with expenses, but that's something that can be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

There is a lot of capital investment that's being made there. For example, people that frequent the place, like the member from Lakeview clearly does on an ongoing basis, you'll notice that all of the exterior concrete work, sidewalks and landings and approaches, all of that has been done. And there's more work to do in the future. Those are some of the things that people might notice. I know that there's been some electrical work done in the not-too-distant past, and some of these things go on without, hopefully without, patrons really noticing much of the work. But all of that money is being invested on an ongoing basis too.

Government House revenues are flat, or approximately so. Wascana Centre Authority has received a substantial amount of extra operating money in the last few years. If memory serves me correctly, there's been an extra \$350,000 in each of the last two years to help with operating expense increases due to inflation, and then also all of the money for the core service review to look at the mandate of the governance structure and the funding models, as well as the money for the asset review too.

If you think about it for just a moment, Mr. Chair, you realize that there are a lot of buildings and streets, sidewalks, lighting, underground sprinkler systems, a whole pile of stuff which we can call infrastructure within the 2,300 acres that comprises Wascana Centre, and all of that is being reviewed. So on the operational side, the mandate, but also the physical side, the infrastructure, money has been invested and is currently being invested in this budget to move those ahead.

And the archives, as we mentioned before, receives \$174,000 more this year than in the previous year for operational

pressures.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Archives Board is clearly one of the, I guess, newer additions to the Provincial Capital Commission. And I guess one of my questions would be do you anticipate that there are other organizations that would be added to the Provincial Capital Commission in the coming years, or is this the full complement that we have now?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good question. This is an ongoing conversation, and it is a worthy one too. I think that the right mix has been allocated to date, but there's always the possibility of reconsidering those things as we move forward into the future.

To give you one good example, the Royal Saskatchewan Museum is actually within what we would probably call the footprint of the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission simply by virtue of the fact that it's within the perimeter of Wascana Centre Authority. If we looked at what the perimeter, the area on the map that we could assign underneath the mandate of OPCC [Office of the Provincial Capital Commission], it would certainly include at a minimum the 2,300 acres of Wascana Centre, and the museum sits in it. So that's something that we perhaps could be considering in the future.

Currently that institution reports to Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, and it receives all of its funding from there and direction et cetera. Should it be transferred to the purview of OPCC? That conversation hasn't occurred yet. But it's certainly something that might be entertained in the future. It's one of those things that we certainly could have a look at as time goes by.

Mr. Nilson: — Would that same conversation also extend to the Science Centre?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well it hasn't to date. That's a different sort of a thing. There is a very successful business model there, and it's run independently with its own separate board. It has a more independent relationship with the Government of Saskatchewan, so it would be a different kind of thing all together. Could we have that conversation? Perhaps.

I think the first thing that we might want to do, if we were to consider going down that road, would be to respectfully have a consultation with the good folks at the Science Centre and to see what their interests might be. We don't know at this point what sort of opinions they might express, but it's something that we might possibly do in the future. No work in that way has been undertaken so far, though.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Chair, I wonder if there's any possibility that the minister may want to comment on the possibility of a domed stadium being part of the Provincial Capital Commission.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — I think it's safe to say that that's not currently within my mandate. And the member is probably best advised seeking advice from others that are a little more intimate with the details of the file.

Mr. Nilson: — Well I just was concerned because your acronym, Provincial Capital Commission, starts with a P. And we've been hearing a lot about triple P, so you could be one of the Ps in that whole stadium conversation.

But it's interesting. I know when this Provincial Capital Commission was first set up, it was, I think, quite a challenge to figure out exactly how it would come together. And I think that, looking at the reports that we've had for the last couple of years, looking at the results of the consultation — I guess it's over, well it's a year and a half ago that that consultation took place — that there are quite a number of very positive directions that are being set out. So that's good.

Now one of the activities clearly that's included here is the archives. And it seems like this maybe doesn't fit quite as well as some of the other things in this, but I'm not totally certain about that. But can you explain how the archives got into this mix — especially given, I think, that the archives has got two offices. Is there one in Saskatoon and one in Regina, whereas most of the other activities are all based around the actual capital area?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Olsen has a couple comments that might be helpful to the member.

Mr. Olsen: — I hope they're helpful. Harley Olsen, Office of the Provincial Capital Commission. I'm not 100 per cent sure, in terms of the initial development of the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission, why the mandate for Archives went there.

Certainly there are very important linkages in terms of the Archives being the repository of all of the historical documentation for the province. And certainly a large part of that happens here in the city of Regina and certainly we are an important user, given our mandate to protect the heritage and culture.

However we do understand that Archives has a broader purview than simply the provincial capital. But it really is the repository of all of the democratic record of government so, you know, there are some very, I think, logical reasons why we have control. But in terms of the fundamental rationale that was originally made, I can't give you a more solid answer than that.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you. I'm somewhat curious because I understand there are about 50 jobs at the archives, but under the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission, just shows six full-time jobs. So where would the archives jobs be reported in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Once again, Mr. Olsen has some details that we think will be of use.

Mr. Olsen: — Thank you. Harley Olsen again. The archives functions under its own Act and its own legislation. It's governed by a board of directors and has a management which reports directly to the archives board. It's considered outside of executive government proper.

And these FTEs [full-time equivalent] are shown here just for the FTEs which are in the government, in executive, within

executive government. In the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission, we have three FTEs and there are three FTEs that run the operation of Government House, which falls directly under our mandate.

Similarly with Wascana Centre, the FTEs for Wascana Centre don't show up again because they're outside of executive government and report to its own board of directors and have their own management. So those FTEs don't show up. Conexus is the same, really.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Chair? Thank you, Mr. Chair. And Ms. McIntyre advises us that the actual FTE count for the Archives operation is 41, apparently.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. It's just, I know the press release I saw here or the story talks about, well there were 49 but now there's less. So I guess that's maybe the answer, there's now 41 instead of 49.

Well I guess that is interesting that there are all these other jobs that don't really show up on the records even though they're obviously directly related to the provincial government. So will that change as we go even more fully into summary financial statements where we include all of these things or is that question better left for the Finance minister people, even though I know that some of you have had long experience in that area? But it's just interesting that there's whole, big segments of important work that you do that really don't show up in your books. So do you have any comment about that?

[19:30]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ms. Lamberti would like to answer this question.

Ms. Lamberti: — Good evening. Wanda Lamberti. There are a number of different agencies and entities that do roll up into the summary financial statements that are not part of executive government. And in the case of the archives as well as Wascana Centre Authority, Conexus, these organizations we provide grant funding to, so we don't directly incur operating and salary costs the same way. We don't process them the same way as we do for executive government. So they do operate independently with their own boards. And it's not uncommon for government to deliver services through third party agencies. Health regions would be an example, school districts.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. No. No, I appreciate that answer. But it does raise the question of how we show the I guess broad, important work that's done through this particular office when big pieces of it are not showing up anywhere in the books.

When it says on page 120 here that there's money paid to accommodation services, where would that money be going? Like does that go to property management or whatever the . . . I guess it's Government Services they call it now. Or where does that go?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — I think we have an answer that will directly address the member's question at this point, Mr. Chair. What happens is that a number of the facilities, institutions that are components of the Office of the Provincial Capital

Commission are assessed a lease, if you will, by Government Services in return for the services, the accommodation services, that are provided by Government Services as an entity to these organizations.

We have three examples that we can offer. The Conexus Arts Centre is assessed, in this year's budget, \$868,000 by Government Services in return for the services rendered there. And as we mentioned before, we simply include that as an amount to grant to Conexus Arts Centre, so that it is money that is paid through a grant to the institution and then offered back up to Government Services as a lease payment. Government House, the equivalent number is 699,000, right. And the office itself, the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission has, they have a small space within Government Services, and they're assessed \$33,000 as a lease payment, if you will, to Government Services on an annual basis.

A Member: — The correct number — sorry, Minister — the correct number for Conexus is 899,000.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Oh, small correction. Conexus is not 868. It's 899 — 899,000.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. And those three numbers then add up to . . . Well they don't add up to the 1,631 though, do they? They're close. They're 1,431. So is there 200,000 somewhere else?

Mr. Olsen: — Sorry, it should add up to one six three one.

Mr. Nilson: — We both get 900 and 700. Yes, you're right. Okay, thank you.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — You had us a little bit worried there. So we got the calculator out, just for the record, and checked it very quickly, and we believe the total is correct. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Nilson: — Well you can tell Government Services that most of us don't operate with 899 and 699 numbers, but that's okay. So well no, that's helpful, so I understand how that works. Then with the Archives Board itself, then obviously their accommodation expense is included in the 4.341 million. Is that correct?

Mr. Olsen: — Yes. Yes, it is.

Mr. Nilson: — So we have to watch these numbers fairly carefully because some include some everything and others are split up a few different ways. Now let's go back to the Archives Board. I know that there's lots of work, and the numbers of documents and volume and the changes required because we've got so much electronic information means that this organization is really under pressure.

And there's been some increase I see, but we know publicly that changes have been made so that in fact many people who work regular daytime jobs do not have access to the archives any more. Can you explain how that decision was made and why an important asset, especially to many of our historians and writers, is now not as accessible as it was, you know, a few months ago?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. What we'd like to do is to expand on the question's parameters just a little bit because we think it'll provide some very useful context for what we believe is a very important discussion.

One of the major challenges that's currently facing the archives — this is one of several by the way — is the management of digital records. I mean there's tons and tons of paper, that's for sure, and that in and of itself is a very significant challenge that I think Ms. McIntyre will be addressing in her remarks to follow mine.

But since 2003 it's estimated that perhaps as much as 99 per cent of the information that's contained in government records has been produced in digital format. Okay. So what do we do about that? On response, the archives says, already carried out a detailed review of what other jurisdictions are doing — in other words, to get a sense of best practices from coast to coast to coast, the good guidance there — and has developed protocols for acquiring and preserving digital records.

The board governing the archives operation has also completed a cross-ministry study of records management practices within the provincial government that recognizes the need for an enterprise-wide approach. It seems to be one of those things where there are layers within layers. The deeper you go, the wider the inquiry seems to get before it becomes resolvable. With that in mind, SAB, the Saskatchewan Archives Board, is working with the Information Technology Office, the ITO folks, to develop the best ways to ensure that digital records — all that new stuff — is appropriately managed and preserved from the very outset. In other words, how do we start, once we receive these pieces of information, to catalogue them and preserve them properly?

The next step facing the Archives Board is to consider the infrastructure needed to put this plan known as the digital archives initiative into action. So that's where they are right now. Details are still being worked out. And as soon as this work is complete, we as a government will be in a better position to consider scheduling and budget. And as I said, that's just one of them. We have the backlog of paper. As an interim measure, in 2011 the board approved an additional 280 square metres of record storage. Approximately 80 square metres of that space has been acquired, and a potential site for the remaining space has now been identified. Government institutions are also being asked to store the records on site until the archives has facility space sufficient to allow transfer to archival custody. So just a snapshot, if you will, Mr. Chair, of two of the more pressing issues.

And now I think Ms. McIntyre has a more detailed answer that more precisely addresses the member's question.

Ms. McIntyre: — Linda McIntyre, Sask Archives Board. With regard to service hours to the public, it was a matter I guess of trying to balance off service delivery. So we do have a new website. It was launched in February of this year. And we have seen quite a substantial increase in inquiries coming in both through the website and telephone inquiries and written inquiries as a result of that. So we have reduced reference service hours for walk-in visitors. It's the hope that in doing that we can balance off catching up with our written inquiries,

given the resources that we have. So we are attempting to offer the best services both to distant researchers as well as walk-in visitors.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you for that answer. And I mean clearly at some point you're going to need some more resources to actually do all the things that you have to do. And that'll be part of the review, I assume, that you're talking about.

I'm somewhat concerned that leaving records that are not that current with departments and other places, that they will not be as well preserved as they would be if they were in the hands of the provincial archives. Have you been able to make sure that records are properly being kept or is there some slippage, if that's the right word, with that whole process?

[19:45]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're not particularly concerned about the physical security of these actual records, if that's what the member had in mind, for example locked up in filing cabinets in, for example, the Ministry of Health's offices. We believe that these materials — and they might be paper although more and more these days, it's more likely to be a digital file — they're physically secure. And they're also held in offices where temperature and humidity and all those sorts of things that are important for archival collections are within what we would call the normal range of tolerance.

The bigger issue it seems to me from the longer range perspective is accessibility if for example you were, oh gosh a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] in health administration student at the University of Regina and you wanted to study what was happening with — oh just to pick something that comes to mind — the H1N1 response for the province of Saskatchewan the last number of years whenever a pandemic seems to emerge. We've had some very successful responses and it's been, gosh, a poster child for jurisdictions across the country. Somebody might want to make that a thesis topic. How are they going to find all this information?

The easiest way would simply be to be able go down to the archives and to find this stuff, to access it, whether it's an older document in paper form or a newer document in digital form. As we said, prior to 2003 it would perhaps be more likely to be in a paper form in a box. After 2003 much more likely to be a digital file, some sort of electronic storage device. While it is I think safe to say that paper and digital files could be stored for some period of time in the Ministry of Health's offices without much worry regarding the physical safety, ultimately you would want to see those things transferred to the archives themselves so they could be properly catalogued and made accessible in the same way other documents could. So while this is a reasonable temporary solution, we think that there's a better long-term solution.

And that's why I wanted to introduce this business about the backlog of records and also the digital challenge that the Archives Board is currently facing. They're a good way through coming up with what they think would be a viable long-term solution. And as soon as we have the pieces of the puzzle available to us, rather than proceeding in a piecemeal fashion,

we want to have a solid plan that looks at all these bits and pieces together in a concrete way. And then we can review it, come up with a policy, and budget according.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that's good news to get on the record for all of the historians present and future, that that is the goal because I think it's important that we have the records accessible.

Now I just have a couple of questions about the plans and the good amount of money that you have in the budget for the 100th anniversary of the Legislative Building and grounds, I think would be the best way to put that. In your plan for 2012-13, you indicate that there will be the installation of a statue dedicated to the province's first premier. And I'm going to ask you, Mr. Minister, about this because when there was a question about that a few weeks ago, it wasn't entirely clear that that's what the statue was going to be for. So is there a change in plan, or is it still going to relate to Mr. Walter Scott?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank your for the question, Mr. Chair. Yes, the member raises an interesting question. At this point in time it's just a little bit early to tell precisely who will be the subject of the statue. Walter Scott, who was the first premier of the province, obviously is one of the logical choices. But what we wanted to do is to canvass a number of experts and get some different ideas. That would certainly be one of them. And it may in fact be the final one that's presented in the way of recommendation.

But we're putting together an advisory group, a blue ribbon panel if you will, of folks who have a background in history of the province. And they'll advise us and give us some choices to consider. And Mr. Olsen has the composition of the board in hand here. He can present those details.

Mr. Olsen: — Thank you. Harley Olsen, Provincial Capital Commission. Right now, we've asked Dr. John Brennan from the University of Regina to — or Bill Brennan, sorry — to sit on and he's agreed to sit on the panel. We have the director of the heritage branch in Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport. His name is Carlos Germann. Ron Dedman sits on the committee. I'm on the committee. And we're looking for another couple of probably academic historians. I've consulted with our former lieutenant governor briefly, being a renowned expert on the subject of Sir Walter Scott.

I guess my personal opinion, given that it's the 100th anniversary of the Legislative Building and it was the vision of Sir Walter Scott and the management of Sir Walter Scott, it would be a logical, a logical first step in the ability to commemorate Saskatchewan citizens and residents that have made significant contributions to the development of the province.

But ultimately the final decision has not been made, although I can say without reservation that my recommendation will be Sir Walter Scott.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — So if you're a betting man, maybe Walter Scott's where you need to put your money.

But it's a worthy process. And what we think will happen here

is that all kinds of interesting suggestions will be presented with some very interesting background discussion. So we're looking at this as an exciting kind of an exercise. What it'll do is it'll bring to mind and bring forefront some of the credentials of a number of prominent former citizens in the province and their contributions. And that's really what the celebration is all about. We think it will be a wonderful conversation.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Chair, I'd like to ask if there's been any consideration to include one of the First Nations leaders as an option, or even going and getting the statue of Louis Riel that used to be in the legislative grounds and placing it back in a place of prominence.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Once again Mr. Olsen has an answer.

Mr. Olsen: — Harley Olsen. Just to expand a bit on the question. Certainly First Nations individuals, Métis Nation individuals, and other individuals that have made a significant contribution, I guess it's our vision that the legislative precinct should really be a solid place where we can commemorate people who have made an important contribution. And certainly one of the mandates of this committee which I have referred to is going to be a broader look at how establishing a commemoration policy in the legislative precinct for . . . I mean we already have the war museum and a number of others. The question of the statue of Louis Riel, I mean it's certainly been mentioned but I have not seen the statue. But you know it's certainly a possibility.

Mr. Nilson: — You haven't seen the statue. You don't remember when it was here. But I think it's over at the MacKenzie Art Gallery is where it's located.

Mr. Olsen: — It could be.

Mr. Nilson: — So that it's not that far away for people to go and . . . But you know, there are pieces of public art like the big steel sculpture that was out in front of it's now called the Conexus Arts Centre, which have been moved to other places that are part of the history of the province, even though some people didn't always like some of that sculpture. Because I know it is quite obvious that our public art or our outdoor art in Regina or in the capital region isn't maybe as strong as some other capital regions. So I strongly encourage you to consider that as well. I mean we obviously have challenges with the weather, but clearly the bronze sculptures seem to stand up pretty well, so I encourage work there.

I thank you for the answers to the various questions that I've raised today. And I've learned a few more things and hopefully the public has learned a few more things about how your finances work and about some of the plans that you have. So thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Nilson. Mr. Minister, before we go into estimates for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, did you have some comments that you wanted to lend to wrap up this?

[20:00]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Just one very brief one, I'd like to

thank the member for his questions, excellent questions. Hopefully we were able to satisfactorily answer them. And, you know, he raises a number of intriguing points that are good not only for tonight's discussion but things to keep in mind as we move forward too. So I'd like to thank the member very much for his wise counsel.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister Hutchinson, and thank you to the officials. This committee will take a brief recess while we change officials before we go into the estimates for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**General Revenue Fund
Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Vote 27**

Subvote (TC01)

The Chair: — Well thank you and welcome back to the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee. We'll now move to the consideration of estimates of the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, vote no. 27, central management and services, subvote (TC01). Mr. Hutchinson, if you'd like to introduce your officials, and we'll get into the question part.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Members of the committee, a pleasure to be here again. As we have already provided introductory remarks, we should limit our comments to simply introducing officials. And they include Wynne Young who's deputy minister; Lin Gallagher, associate deputy minister; Cindy MacDonald, executive director of parks service; Darin Banadyga, executive director of sport and recreation; Gerry Folk, the new executive director of cultural planning and development branch; Ken Dueck, executive director of tourism initiatives; Susan Hetu, senior advisor to the deputy minister; Melinda Leibel, director of corporate services; and Bob McEachern, director of park management services.

We're ready for questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and welcome to your officials. And we'll look for questions from the committee. I will recognize Ms. Chartier.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and to the minister and to all of your officials here today. First question is around the 2012-2013 Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport plan, number 7, the child and youth agenda. The commitment is to "... work with provincial partners in the sport, culture and recreation sector to focus support and provide quality programming to children and youth during the after school ... period." I'm just wondering, well a couple pieces here. First of all, how has your ministry interacted in the whole child and youth agenda? We'll start with that.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — We thank the member for her question, Mr. Chair. I'll turn it over to Wynne Young who's the deputy minister. She has the details that are required.

Ms. Young: — Thank you very much. There is probably three

aspects I would talk about. First of all, the enterprise-wide approach that government has taken around children and youth and that is all the ministries who are involved with children and youth are a part of a deputy ministers' group that looks in child and youth issues. There's also a working group, and of course there's also a ministers' group on that. So we're involved with that group, and what we bring to the table is expertise in a lot of ways around how to prevent child and youth negative behaviour. And so we have a lot of expertise that comes there. So that's the enterprise-wide work that we do.

There's also the mandate of the ministry itself, Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport. So we have a mandate around healthy physical and mental and cultural aspects of all citizens' lives but in particular children and youth. And of course we have funding that goes through the lottery system and through the casinos' system; lots and lots of it is focused towards children and youth. And of course we have agreements with those systems in how to direct some of that funding.

Finally what I would say is through the sport-recreation FPT [federal-provincial-territorial] group of all ministers, deputy ministers across Canada, about a year ago Saskatchewan initiated and actually leads an FPT focus on the after-school period. And why we thought this was important to bring forward, is that we are aware that the after-school period — that period between, you know, roughly 3 and 6 — is a period of lost opportunity in a lot of ways for children and youth, but it's also a high-risk time for children and youth.

And so what we have been doing and we are about to take to the ministers this June across Canada is a framework around children and youth in the after-school period: what to do, what actions are possible. And we will be hopefully having a Canada-wide framework on that.

We will also be moving out within Saskatchewan on that. And two things early we have done is we've done some work with Saskatchewan Parks and Rec Association to actually get some work done around what are the best models out there, what are the best practices. And we also are working with the federal government on doing some pilots within Saskatchewan, on piloting alternate after-school programs for children and youth. And so we're hopeful there; we are going to be able to work with communities and find good models for them. So those are the three things.

[20:15]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — If I could, Mr. Chair, one comment that might help put it into the proper perspective as well, we knew that some of the work that we were doing was tending to be leading-edge, but we didn't really find out until last year when we went to the federal-provincial-territorial, or FPT, meeting in Halifax. I made a presentation on behalf of the good work that's being done by the folks in our ministry. And what I found was the rest of the country is looking to Saskatchewan for leadership on this particular file.

Everybody is keenly aware of child obesity statistics and the fact that we don't seem to be addressing them successfully nationwide. Not a sufficient percentage of youngsters are actively engaged in physical activity each and every day, and

we're missing those sorts of targets. Everybody understands the problem. Everybody knows something has to be done. And what I did in a tentative sort of way, I guess, is to present some of the work that we were doing and wondering whether anybody else was interested in doing some of that work too. Quickly found out that some sorts of attempts were being made in other provinces, but not in a coordinated fashion. And given the quality and the quantity of the work that was coming out of Saskatchewan through our particular ministry — this is not my work; this is work done by the folks in the ministry, their good work that we're commenting on today — what we found out is that the rest of the country now wants Saskatchewan to lead on this particular file. So good work.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. Just following up to that, I know the deputy minister mentioned determining what are some of the best models. I'm wondering what your ministry has come up with respect to those findings. What are some of the best models to engage and keep kids active in that after-school period?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. The deputy minister has an answer ready.

Ms. Young: — So thank you for that. I was just seeing if we had the document, but we didn't bring the document tonight. I guess I would answer in a couple of ways. In terms of some examples, the examples that come to mind are the Dream Brokers example, and it's run out of Sask Sport, and it's very supportive to First Nation and Métis young people in helping them with positive activities. There's also a very interesting program out of Prince Albert that has been developed by their health district, but really they have the sports district, the health district, and others involved with it. And it is around reaching out to the schools to get young people into positive activities.

Closer to home, one of our pilots is with the Regina YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association]. They have a very interesting program called the Virtual Y [Young Men's Christian Association] and why it's a Virtual Y is there is not a Y building, but they go into the schools and provide after-school programming. And so we are supporting the Y in that pilot too.

What I might say more generally is when you talk about best practices, what we know to be best practice is not a laid-on, province-wide program. Best practices come when they're developed by the community and when parents are involved and when schools are involved. And so when we look at best practices and how we'd like to support communities throughout the province, it's with those things in mind, because every community and set of children and youth are going to have some different views. So we look to having the communities drive it when you think about best practice.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's one other bit of information I can provide that might be — it's a bit more personal — it might be a little bit easier to relate to. I went to an event just a short while ago at the North Central Family Centre in Regina here. It was an event sponsored by the Dream Brokers program. This is a great program. It matches inner-city kids in schools with mentors that might enable them to reach their dream. Inner-city schools . . . I think Sacred Heart,

Kitchener, and Herchmer were all represented there, and there was two or three more as well. There's about five or six schools in the Regina inner-city area I think that are represented, and probably an equivalent number in Saskatoon because they also have their own Dream Brokers program.

In this particular case, there was one young First Nations fellow and his dream — you know, it could be a sport thing but it can also be cultural — his dream was to be a guitar player. He didn't have an instrument. Well they found him one. He didn't have anybody to teach him the fundamentals. Found that too. And this is all done under the umbrella of, the auspices of, the two school systems, Regina Catholic and Regina public. Gee, you could have heard a pin drop in the room; it was very compelling, very emotional. This youngster came out and actually decided to play some music to show people what he's been doing, and had an opportunity to thank all the folks that had enabled him to, in other words, reach out and grab on to a chunk of that dream.

It's a very powerful program. This is just one of the initiatives. There are lots more. We probably don't have time to get into that level of detail with many more of them, but this is just one of the efforts that's being made on behalf of these youngsters. And it was powerful and it was compelling and I think it's very successful too.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that. Just to clarify then, in the 2012-2013 plan, it talks about the support for three pilot projects with objectives to enhance community after-school programs. Are those projects that you've . . . And you'd mentioned the federal projects. Are some of these the same ones? Or are these different under your key actions? Will there be new projects that you'll be introducing?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — I thank the member for her question, Mr. Chair. Once again the deputy minister has a detailed answer.

Ms. Young: — I am sorry; of the three pilots that the province is funding — they're all rather modest pilots — but the Regina YMCA is one of them. I cannot remember the other two. Dream Brokers and P.A. [Prince Albert] are programs that came different ways. In addition to our three pilots, the federal government has also got a number of modest pilots that are starting up in the province too. The idea is to get different views and different ways of doing things to see what works and what doesn't work.

And the Regina YMCA pilot in particular, it's very interesting. It starts from the premise of what the Y believes in, in terms of its values and its asset building for young people, but it adds to that the whole of the child. So it is about . . . So after school they make sure they have physical activity. They make sure they always have a snack so that they're well fed. But they also are helping young people with homework, and they work with the teachers to make sure that they are meeting the needs the teachers think they need to focus on and then of course extracurricular things that the children are involved with too. So it's really a well-balanced approach.

And it's very interesting. Regina YMCA is one of, I think, only three Ys in Canada that has done this. The other two are in

Ontario. And it actually starts from a program that came out of Harlem, New York, their virtual Y, and it's been adopted to the Y in Regina. So we're very interested in seeing how that unfolds and whether that's a workable model that other communities might be interested in.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you very much for that. With only half an hour here, I'm going to be all over the place here, just sort of wrapping up estimates here.

But with the budget allotment for the Royal Sask Museum, it is down by a bit. I'm just wondering what that's about.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the question. There are a couple of small increases in the RMS budget this year. There's a \$17,000 lift for 2 per cent salary increases with respect to the current collective agreement in place. There's also a \$21,000 transfer to an internal funding transfer from culture for administrative support.

What's missing this year is \$145,000 that was in the budget last year. Now that was a one-time request for occupational health and safety, OH & S, related issues. And I really didn't understand what they were talking about, so I went over to the facility to talk to them and see precisely what it was that they were mentioning.

There are some exhibits in there with overhead lighting. And just because you can't get beyond the barriers and put a ladder in the middle of the plants and the animals and the dioramas, you need to have some sort of a lift that will get you there. Otherwise you're teetering on ladders on uncertain footing. They've been doing it that way apparently successfully for the last number of years but said, look it's time for a much better solution. It would cost \$145,000 to get the proper equipment. And then that thing can move around from diorama to diorama, area to area, floor to floor. So that \$145,000 was a one-time request. We honoured that request. They bought the equipment. And now they can conduct their maintenance for changing of the lights in the diorama areas much more safely than before.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you very much. Under vote no. 27, accommodation services, the cost is going up here. Can you just tell me . . . Or sorry, down. Can you tell me about the changes there, why, what's happening here?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you again for the question, Mr. Chair. The deputy minister has the detailed answer.

Ms. Young: — There were two significant decreases this year. One of them was a decrease that we will see in the future towards the end of this year. We are moving from our current offices downtown to relocate to 3211 Albert Street, and we are moving into smaller and less costly space, so that accommodation decreases \$90,000.

The other \$627,000 comes as a reduction for last year, just over a year ago, SaskFilm identified that they no longer needed the space that they had rented and that we had paid for, and that was in the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] building, so we actually gave that up probably close to a year ago. We actually started to see some of those accommodation savings in '11-12, and it's fully annualized in '12-13. And then there's

been a few little increases to MacKenzie Art Gallery, T.rex Centre. All in all, it's a variance of \$847,000.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that. So can you tell me again then that you just mentioned a building that you're vacating. So where are you in now and where will you be moving?

[20:30]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is right up the alley of the deputy minister, so she has the right answer.

Ms. Young: — So we are currently on Sask Drive in the Delta Hotel and only half of our ministry is there, and so the Tourism, Culture, Sport area is there. The other part of our Regina location is 3211 Albert Street, Lloyd Place, and it is on the second floor. So we are taking our Delta Hotel, and we are giving up that space later this year and moving to the first floor of 3211 Albert Street.

And I don't have the accommodation costs, but I do know that the space we are moving to is 20 per cent less than what we are in right now. And there are some reasons we can accommodate that, if maybe I can speak to it just very quickly . . . is we made a decision because of our focus on lean within the ministry. We made a decision when we knew we had to move and consolidate. We made a decision to actually take on, for the first ministry in government, taking on what they call a lean 3P [production, preparation, process] process, which is actually looking at your space and designing your space based on lean principles, which is around efficient work flow and a line of sight movement to try and gain efficiencies. And because of that, we believe that we will be successful going into the smaller space.

Ms. Chartier: — So obviously your lease at the Delta is up then at the end of 2012? Okay. And what is the length of your lease at 3211 Albert Street?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The deputy minister has the facts.

Ms. Young: — 3211 Lloyd Place is a government building, and so it's indefinite, and we are there. It's a good place for us to be because we'll be consolidating all our Regina space within two floors of one building. So it's a good decision for us. But it's ongoing as far as we know.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that. Again also in vote 27, executive management is going up I think by \$214,000. I've made a note here. Can you tell me what's going on with executive management?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Can the member point out a particular page that she's referring to that we can get to?

Ms. Chartier: — Oh yes, if I can find the page too, page 132.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you.

Ms. Chartier: — Sorry.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Once again,

the deputy minister comes to our rescue.

Ms. Young: — It was actually no new costs added, except for the salary increase that got added throughout the ministry. The costs were just moved from other subvotes within the ministry. And in particular, the associate deputy minister who had been in the parks subvote moved into central management, and then other small admin costs transfers moved in and out. And that's how we got to the increased number. But it wasn't a net increase for the ministry per se.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. Just with respect to FTEs, you've talked a little bit about lean, but the ministry is down by three. Can you tell me where those positions would be?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair, another one for the deputy minister to handle.

Ms. Young: — It's very simple. Two reductions were with the RSM, the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, and they were because of retirements. And we haven't had any service impact there. We have just created some more efficiencies within the system. And the other one reduction was in the sport and recreation area.

Ms. Chartier: — I know we often talk about creating efficiencies. So I'm just wondering when you say, there's been no service reduction. Can you tell me a little bit about how you can create . . . or you've got two folks who retire and there's no impact on service. I think people who've retired from those positions might be somewhat put out by being told that their no longer being employed means that services stay the same.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again Wynne Young has the answer that we're looking for.

Ms. Young: — So just to maybe comment on your last comment, the people who retired of course had done incredible work for us over the years — many, many, long years — and we very much appreciated their work. I think that there's an expectation of all of us that we continue to look for efficiencies and better ways of doing things.

And so on the two folks who retired at the RSM [Royal Saskatchewan Museum], one of them was a manager who we worked very hard to transition, so another manager actually increased the span of control and took on managing two areas. And so we were able to do that with a careful transition. The other one was a support staff who, when they retired, we opted to provide half-time support out of another branch into the RSM to give them the support they need and again try and gain some efficiencies that way.

So we very much miss the people who have retired of course, but we think we've done the right thing for government and are still offering the service that we did before with the RSM.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that. I know that our time has just about expired. I'm going to pass it off to my colleague here for one quick question. But thank you.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a quick question. You talked about the possibility of two new provincial parks

coming ahead, and you talked about a process. And I want to be clear on this. You had more work to do. You had to go and consult with, I believe you said, First Nations, Métis, and other communities that would be impacted.

Can you give me a little bit of background information? Who exactly in these areas are you going to be contacting as far as chief, council, mayors, Métis leaders, or communities? I just want to have an understanding who and the process, how are you're going to make sure that you contact them to make sure that they are truly consulted, not just, we are going to do that and then it doesn't happen. I just want to understand the process. If you could explain how you're going to achieve that.

[20:45]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. As the members may be aware, we engaged in a very comprehensive schedule of consultations with the widest possible number of folks, and that included cottagers and business owners. We talked to the people in the urban and rural municipalities. But we also got very active engaging First Nation and Métis communities and representatives.

I have a little bit of a breakdown. I think I can read that into the record fairly briefly, and it might be helpful to the member.

With respect to the proposed park in the Porcupine Hills area — that's near Hudson Bay — we've talked to Edgewood Forest Products and Métis Nation Eastern Region II. Specific individuals that are mentioned in our list here: Ryan Calder, the executive director, and Helen Johnson who's the regional director; the RM [rural municipality] of Hudson Bay; Saskatoon Tribal Council. We've talked to Tribal Chief Felix Thomas of course; Dave Scott who's a councillor with Kinistin First Nation and Burton Smokeyday who's a councillor as well there; and also an individual — we simply have a first name — Francis, who's a trapper in the area. Yorkton Tribal Council, YTC, was also consulted on this particular proposed park. The tribal chief and Chief Aubrey Whitehawk, Cote First Nation; the chief of Keeseekoose; the chief of Key First Nation, also Kim Smith who is the executive assistant for YTC.

And with respect to the proposed park in the Prince Albert area, it's actually more specifically the Emma Lake-Anglin Lake recreation sites area. We talked to Métis Nation Western Region II. That's Darlene McKay who is the regional director and Matthew Vermette. Hey, there's an interesting name, no relationship? Okay. RM of Paddockwood and also the District of Lakeland and we've had lots of correspondence with those folks.

Provincial organizations: Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, Robert Doucette is their president; Laurier Caron, Julie Castille, and Louis Gardiner who looks after sports, recreation and youth. That's his portfolio. We know him well. And of course the Snowmobile Association; the Trappers Association, Don Gordon, president; and Tourism Saskatchewan is involved as well. Day Star First Nation, Fishing Lake First Nation, Gordon First Nation, Kawacatoose, Muskowekwan, Touchwood Tribal Council, and also Yellow Quill . . . getting back to the Porcupine areas. And we have some more folks in Emma Lake-Anglin Lake: Little Red River First Nation, Montreal

Lake Cree Nation, PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council], Sturgeon Lake First Nation as well.

And then with respect to provincial organizations, those of specific interest to the member with regard to this question, certainly FSIN, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Gabriel Dumont Institute as well. Perhaps the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association would be of interest. And I think there's an actual contact log for stakeholders, but that gets probably into a little bit more detail than we need.

And what we found was first of all, people were very pleased to be asked to be involved in the consultations and very pleased to be engaged, and we learned a lot. What we found was that while we made interesting contacts and were able to learn a lot of relevant and important information, the message that we got from our First Nations and Métis partners around the table was that we need a little bit more discussion.

And it breaks down into three main areas, Mr. Chair. First of all with respect to traditional uses and specific sites, traditional uses, of course hunting, fishing, trapping, and the gathering of plants for medicinal and sacred purposes — there are some specific, special sites that First Nations and Métis residents in those two areas, the Porcupine Hills area and the Emma-Anglin Lake area, said we need a little bit more conversation about those. They are very important to our people.

Second of all, park programming, what kind of interpretative programs, what sort of cultural programs might be offered that would indicate, that would communicate the importance, the relevance to today and some of the interesting information and traditions in history of the folks who are of First Nations and Métis ancestry in those two areas. That's a very interesting subject, very important.

The third area where extra consultation appears to be required is with respect to employment opportunities for First Nation and Métis individuals within the provincial parks system. We're very interested in that one.

So, Mr. Chair, we had a great start. I think everybody will agree that a lot of good discussion took place, but it's also fair to say that our First Nation and Métis partners said we need to talk more about these specific issues, the three that we identified. And that's what we're undertaking to do as we go forward from this point.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your detailed answer. The allotted time for estimates for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport has since passed. We will move into consideration of Bill No. 38 at this time, the active family benefits amendment Act, number, family Act, 2012.

**Bill No. 38 — *The Active Families Benefit
Amendment Act, 2012***

Clause 1

The Chair: — We will consider Bill No. 38, *The Active Families Benefit Amendment Act, 2012*. We will start with clause 1, the short title. Mr. Minister, do you have any opening remarks that you may want to proceed with?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we can save some time. We don't have to reintroduce those folks that were here that are staying. I'll just wave a fond goodbye to those that were here but are leaving and thank them very much for their service and interest this evening. I do have a couple of introductory remarks if this is the appropriate time, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

What we're trying to do in essence is to simply make a good program even better. The active families benefit program is a successful program that has helped many Saskatchewan youngsters gain opportunities to participate in a very wide range of cultural, recreational, and sport activities. Creating and increasing access is at the core of the program, and active, healthy children and families is the overall goal.

The active families benefit, by way of information, was first introduced four years ago in Bill No. 33, entitled *The Active Families Benefit, 2008*. Its intent was to encourage the development of healthy, active families through increased access to culture, sport, and recreation activities as mentioned. And the specific purpose was to help families with the cost of their children's participation in those important activities.

The estimated cost for the program back in 2007-2008 fiscal, when it was introduced, was \$18 million. And for those members that might be wondering how did we arrive at that figure back then, it was based on the projected cost if we reached full, i.e., 100 per cent, participation by the entire Saskatchewan population of 6- to 14-year-olds. That was considered to be the best operating premise at the time. It was recommended that the initiative proceed with the full \$18 million, although it was a little more difficult in the beginning to establish what level of funding was actually needed. Planners knew that they could go back and look at the numbers once we had a year of the program under their belt, so to speak. And that's exactly what they did.

Using the population of children age 6 to 14 from the 2007 Stats Canada data report and factoring a 40 per cent uptake from the first year of the program, which was pretty close to what was actually measured, I believe, that brought the cost for the 2009 year to 5.6 million. In 2011, skipping forward a couple of years, the first year for which full statistics are actually available, data from Canada Revenue Agency showed that approximately 40 per cent of the families with children at home were participating in the program. Since then, factoring in Saskatchewan's record-setting growth in population and taking into account a moderate amount for inflation, we arrived at the \$9 million estimate for the program for the 2011 and '12 budget.

An additional \$3 million has been added to the budget this year to account for the expanded age range for the active families benefit, bringing up the program budget to 12 million for the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the current one. That means that the funds for the program are already set aside and included as part of the budget.

We've seen the results, Mr. Chair. We believe that the active family benefit is making a difference. The program is particularly helpful for households with several children where, if multiple siblings participate in a couple team sports like, say,

football or hockey with equipment and travelling, or a sport and a cultural activity such as theatre school or music lessons, the cost can be daunting. Of particular importance is the fact that the majority of families enrolled in the program have household incomes of \$80,000 or less. So we're meeting the need of that particular segment of the population. Clearly the accessibility of sport, recreation, and culture programs is being increased by the active families benefit, exactly according to its design and intention.

The Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport have been consulting with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to look for ways to enhance opportunities for youth during the critical after-school period of 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., as the deputy minister answered in response to a previous question. We believe it's important for youth to participate in these sorts of things, especially during this time period. The active family benefits program could very well boost uptake in the after-school period youth initiatives such as Kids in Motion, an excellent program, wonderful partners. Non-profit organizations and municipalities want a wide variety of programs and activities in this time period, and costs to participate can be claimed through the benefit program.

The change in the Bill will expand the active families benefit eligibility to include all children under 18 years of age, allowing families to claim up to \$150 of eligible expenses for each child for each taxation year. To date, the active families benefit has provided tax rebates for nearly 57,000 Saskatchewan families, again with the majority having a household income of \$80,000 or less. We think the results so far have been very encouraging, and we want to build on that success.

The next step is to work towards increasing public awareness. And with that goal in mind, Mr. Chair, the active families benefit is now integrated directly into our provincial income tax forms. An ad for the program is featured prominently in this year's parks guide. Residents will soon see ads in a range of media and event programs directing them to the website and the hotline number for information about the program. It's also easy to apply to the program. As before, families will simply need to retain receipts and complete an application form as part of their Saskatchewan income tax return and submit it to the CRA, the Canada Revenue Agency, with their annual return.

There's not much more to say, Mr. Speaker. I think we are now ready to answer questions.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Are there questions for the minister? Ms. Chartier.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The questions will be very brief. Obviously in the last set of estimates, a week or so ago, I had asked some questions around the active families benefits. So I think I've asked many of those questions already. But I want to point out, I do very much appreciate and I think families appreciate, that it covers sport, culture, and recreation. I think that that's one of the strengths of the active families benefit for sure, and the fact that it is a fully refundable tax credit, which is nice to have a fully refundable tax credit.

But one of my questions is why is the age criteria being moved

from the legislation into the regulations?

[21:00]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. What we decided to do was to take those things which could be taken out of legislation and put them in regulations simply because, as we've found in the past, if you want to make a change to the legislation, it's a very long, cumbersome, time-consuming sort of a ponderous thing. We're probably best advised, we feel, to put in legislation those things which we perhaps don't want changed. But it's much more nimble and flexible if we can put something like an age criteria for eligibility with respect to a certain program in regulation because we can change it at the stroke of a pen. If for some reason we wanted to change the eligibility criteria, change the age range for example in this particular case, if it's part of the regulations, we can change that very quickly. In other words, if the circumstances change, we can react quite quickly.

So we think overall, while it is certainly beneficial, advisable to follow prescribed practice to put the main elements of the program in the legislation, we would like to have the flexibility to change peripheral bits, like eligibility criteria with respect to age, as quickly as possible. And it just allows us to adapt much quicker to situations.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that, which I might also point out can be a double-edged sword sometimes too, when government can change things really quickly in regulations. It can be problematic as well, but that's neither here nor there on this.

Just with respect to your opening comments on the Bill, please forgive me here if I misheard you, but did you say all children under 18? I know in the legislation right now it's between six and fifteen, or sorry, six and fourteen. Yes. And is the plan now to have in regulations those under six as well?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Yes. In brief the answer is yes. What we've done is we've lowered the age from six down to zero, the lower age criteria. And we've moved the upper one up from 14 to 18, so every Saskatchewan child up to his or her 18th birthday now qualifies for the benefits, well actually the taxpayers in the family do.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that. Just one more thing just around the program in general, obviously as a ministry you've talked about that after-school period till 6:30 being sort of that period of vulnerability for many families. And one of your goals and the goal of the program is creating increased access. Was there any thoughts around the development of this Bill or of this program? And obviously that was four years ago. But with the increase in the program, was there any thought of making it more targeted and doing something else that would get directly into the hands of families?

I know as a parent myself, I shell out lots of money for kids' activities, tons and tons of money. And I do appreciate a tax credit, and I'm in a position to be able to carry the cost of that tax credit whereas many families aren't able to shell out the money at the start of the year. So I'm just wondering if there had been any thought . . . Obviously it's a nice program, but

was there any thought to doing something slightly more targeted to really get to those kids who are not able to participate in sport, culture, or recreational activities because the families can't even pay to be reimbursed. Could the money have gone into Creative Kids or could the money have gone into KidSport?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Perhaps the best way to describe it is that we felt the proper way to design this particular program, the active families benefit program, was to make it universal. Anybody can apply. Anybody can benefit from the results. The lower the income, the more the extra dollars will mean to people. There's no question about it.

But we certainly do recognize that below a certain threshold of family income, there may be a problem with finding the money to get into the program in the first place. You don't have that money; you're not going to get into the program. So having some sort of a rebate program that provides you with some extra dollars at the end of the tax year isn't something that's really going to be terribly helpful. So we recognize that it's for folks that have modest incomes that this particular program will likely be the most helpful for.

We have a lot of other programs that are much more particularly targeted to the lowest income groups. And there's two different kinds as the member was talking about before. One of the nice things about the active families benefit is that it targets sports and recreation but also arts and cultural activities. All of them are applicable. They're all eligible. So we have a number of programs on the sport and recreation side and a number of them on the arts and cultural side specifically targeted at kids that come from the lowest income families.

KidSport is a great example. Everybody knows about KidSport. They're fabulous partners. They do excellent work. I just had an event with them the other day. It's a wonderful opportunity to congratulate them for their wonderful work. In brief they support the provincial costs of the KidSport program as well as support local committees to offset the costs of disadvantaged youth participating in community sport programs. That's very specifically targeted at kids from the lowest income families with respect to sports and recreational activities.

Another one that we might mention, the urban youth sport initiative that supports the employment of urban youth sport program coordinators in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Yorkton, communities with a large First Nations-Métis population, and intercity areas where we have neighbourhoods where there's a concentration of families with significantly low, lower-than-average family incomes, so it's targeted at those folks in the communities where you can find them.

Another one that's a little bit more general in nature, but we need to be mindful of this, is the province's investment in the North American Indigenous Games which is coming up in a couple of years time. This is going to make it possible for thousands of young First Nations kids to get involved directly in sport and recreation. It celebrates their excellence. It provides an opportunity for mentorship for all kinds of support.

And we know that there will be a trickle-down effect when

youngsters can see their heroes from their communities doing exceptionally well in competitive sports. It's a great incentive for them to become involved even if it's just at a recreational level. Somebody goes to a hockey game and sees elite teams competing with their family members, their community members there. Even if it just gets them involved in recreational level hockey, that's fantastic. That's plenty for the program to achieve. If it incents them to become involved in competitive and more elite levels of the sport, well even better.

So those are three activities which are very specifically targeted at kids who come from families with very, very modest incomes.

On the arts and cultural side, three other examples. The Aboriginal arts and cultural leadership grant is in place that supports the development of Aboriginal arts and cultural leadership at the individual, the group, and community levels. It builds capacity in Aboriginal communities through the development of arts and culture leaders. So it's a leadership and mentorship program. ArtsSmarts and TreatySmarts, this is provided by SaskCulture who we fund. SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board and our Ministry of Education work together to address arts education issues. Again this program is targeted at folks from modest income families. Creative Kids is another great program, charitable-giving program, designed to reduce social and financial barriers for children and youth ages four to nineteen who want to participate in arts and culture programs.

We could go on at greater length, but I think that's enough to answer the question at this point.

Ms. Chartier: — Well thank you for that. I suppose the rationale there is an additional \$3 million for active families benefit, so it's always a case of government with limited resources trying to decide where best to put its money, and I might challenge that I'm not sure if KidSport and Creative Kids has waiting lists. So you think about \$3 million for programs like KidSport or Creative Kids, what that could do to support still those children who have no opportunity or very limited opportunity. But again I know governments make decisions with limited resources what they feel is best. So I think with that I have no further questions.

The Chair: — Thank you, Ms. Chartier. Is there any other questions from the committee? If not we'll proceed with the voting of Bill No. 38, *An Act to amend The Active Families Benefit Act*. Clause 1, the short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and the consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts the following: Bill No. 38, *The Active Families Benefit Amendment Act, 2012*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 38, *The Active Families Benefit Amendment Act, 2012* without amendment. Mr. Phillips. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you, committee members.

Bill No. 10 — *The Parks Amendment Act, 2011*

Clause 1

The Chair: — We will now proceed with consideration of Bill No. 10, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2011*. Mr. Minister, do you have any opening remarks on Bill No. 10, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2011*? We will start with Clause 1, short title.

[21:15]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Easy for you to say. We do have a couple of brief remarks we'd like to read in the record if we could, please.

Over the past four years, our parks have experienced record growth in visitation numbers as the facts will clearly show. This increase makes it even more important that we give our ministry's park officials and enforcement staff some improved definitions governing private development and enhanced enforcement procedures to ensure that all park visitors enjoy a high quality experience when they visit one of our beautiful provincial parks.

Now *The Parks Act* is proposed to be amended in three areas. The first amendment clarifies that invested capital in reference to disposition in parks means invested private capital not government investment. It further clarifies the development of property on a recreational lease, for example a cottage, is not subject to the regulations on private investment capital. It's a different thing.

Second, *The Parks Act* amendment will allow park enforcement officers more ability to deal with individuals who contravene specific regulations where, under current legislation, enforcement has been difficult. This includes amendments to allow the powers of eviction by park officers to be prescribed in regulation. Now the term of eviction is also being increased from 48 hours to 72 in order to apply to the full duration of a long weekend. Just by way of a quick example, Mr. Chair, if somebody is found to be drinking in a way that contravenes the regulations, rowdy behaviour disruptive to the other guests in that particular area of the park, typically in the past, they've been evicted, but they can come back 48 hours later. So if this happens on a Friday night, they can come back and do it again on a Sunday night. And what the parks folks are saying is it would be much better if we could actually evict these individuals for the full 72 hours so that they can't come back and do it again on the same weekend.

Currently *The Summary Offences Procedures Regulations, 1991* indicate several offences under *The Parks Act* and regulations when an officer may withdraw the specified penalty sum option

and require the defendant to appear in court. When this occurs, *The Parks Act* currently specifies a judge can fine a person found guilty up to a maximum fine of \$1,000 and require the offender to pay restitution. This amendment with regards to restitution defines property to include built facilities, natural and cultural resources within a park. The amendment will assist a judge in deciding what items should be included when determining the value of restitution for any damage done by a person found guilty of contravening park regulations.

The maximum fine for summary conviction at the current level of \$1,000 was established in 1986. Twenty-five years later, there is a need to increase this fine to maintain its significance as a deterrent to those who would knowingly contravene park regulations. We're talking about vandalism. In the past we have witnessed impacts to parkland such as bulldozing trails or park encroachments without proper approvals. In looking at other Western provincial jurisdictions, we see that both Alberta's and British Columbia's park legislation have much higher fines for individuals, up to \$100,000 and \$1 million respectively and/or up to a year imprisonment. Manitoba's park legislation identifies a fine of up to \$10,000 and/or up to six months imprisonment. To be closer in line with other legislation and provide a greater deterrent, the maximum fine amount is being increased from \$1,000 to \$50,000.

Third, are amendments to legal descriptions including corrections to plan numbers, confirmation that highway rights-of-way are excluded from the park descriptions, and correction of errors in legal descriptions.

Amendments to legal descriptions include a change to the boundary of Moose Mountain Provincial Park resulting in the withdrawal of 15.7 acres of land to facilitate the sale of this land to the village of Kenosee Lake which has actually requested it. It should be noted that in this particular case, the land being deregulated from Moose Mountain Provincial Park has been impacted by a previous commercial development which no longer exists. It's separated from the rest of the park by highway and village development on all sides, and is deemed not to hold any intrinsic value for the park any longer. The village of Kenosee Lake first inquired about purchasing this land as early as 1999.

And at this point, Mr. Chair, we turn it over to you and questions from members.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister Hutchinson. The Chair recognizes Mr. Vermette.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you very much. Looking at Bill 10, and I guess I was wanting to give an opportunity to your officials and yourself to provide information as to how this Bill came about, why now, and what's the purpose. Have I got a clear understanding of the purpose of the Bill now, the timing, and who's requested it? I'm just curious to see some background, why it's coming up at this time.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question again, Mr. Chair. Well as we mentioned before in our preliminary remarks, there are three areas that too, we believe, require amendment. The associate deputy minister can address number one and I'll make an attempt at two and three.

What we wanted to do was . . . I think what we can do is put it in this perspective: things accumulate over years and eventually you get to the point where you need to do something about them. With respect to the expansion of the ability of officers to look at incidents and events and damage — whether it's bulldozing of trees, for example, or perhaps a party gets out of control and a service centre is damaged, those sorts of things — what we're finding is, is that it's time to make that change. The limit of damage that we could . . . The damages that we could require offenders to pay is minimal and is really no deterrent at all. It's simply that the value of these things, that the value of the repairs has gotten way out ahead of the dollars that we can recoup in judgments.

Second of all, what we found is that you could bulldoze a pile of trees, and there's no remedy available at all. What we now have is . . . we will have the ability to set a value for these things and actually require compensation, restitution to be paid in exactly the same way as we could require somebody that vandalized a service centre. So we have increased the limits to reflect the current costs of these damages, repairing them. And we've also expanded it from capital assets, actual stuff like buildings for example, to natural things like trees as well which didn't qualify for restitution before. That's what we were doing there.

There were some offences that we simply couldn't actually require people to leave for. This may sound a bit peculiar, but it's actual fact: if you refused to pay a park entry fee and simply camped on a campsite, the officers there had no legal ability to evict you. They could try to encourage you to leave, but there was really nothing they could actually do about it. Well now they will be. And we think it's high time that they had that sort of ability.

With more and more people coming to the parks, I mean even last year with all of the Qu'Appelle Valley parks under water for a significant part of the season — the first month or two — we still set an attendance record, 3.3 million, I think it was, night stays. This is an amazing number of folks coming to provincial parks. It's increasing every year. We expect to set another attendance record this year I'm sure. With that in mind, we really have to pay attention to some of these things.

With respect to amendment no. 3 which talks about legal descriptions, you know, the more years that go by, the more of these funny things we turn up. We find out for example that the park boundary by law is on the other side of a road allowance. It's not supposed to be there. It's this side of the road allowance. The road actually belongs to the RM not the park. And each year that goes by, we find more and more of these funny little anomalies that need to be addressed. That one in particular is probably best described as housekeeping, but it comes to the point where you need to take that broom out and sweep the cobwebs away.

Now with respect to the first amendment, we'll turn it over to the associate deputy minister for her comments.

Ms. Gallagher: — And in this example, some of it is housekeeping as well. So the first amendment clarifies that invested capital actually means private invested capital not government invested capital. And as well we also made some

changes to the legislation that clarified property on a recreational lease, like a cottage property was not going to be subject to the same regulations as private capital. It was not clear in the legislation. We haven't included that in the past, and now it's clear in the legislation that we don't, or we are not required to include that.

And the third piece of that first area that we've made changes to is to increase the amount of invested capital that is required to go through an order in council. The original fees were established in the late 1980s, and what's happened is, in measuring price changes and looking at Statistics Canada indexes, it seemed relevant to increase that amount to be more current with prices of investment today.

Mr. Vermette: — Okay, thank you for that. You talk about housekeeping items, and I actually went to, I guess, schedule 1, part C amendments. And it talks a lot about that, and is that where you're referring to those housekeeping items that you were referring to, to some of them? There's quite a list here.

[21:30]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the question. Yes, if folks want to refer to the side by sides, well I'll just read a couple of excerpts from the side by sides, and in fact we can see that they are housekeeping in nature.

We've got one. We're talking about Cypress Hills provincial park, repeal a particular item in there and substitute proposed change to address a small portion of land, 482 square meters — which is about the size of a house lot here in Regina — which falls within the right-of-way for Highway 271. And if I understand that correctly, currently we consider a tiny patch of land, again about the size of a house lot, to be a part of the park, but it's actually in the right-of-way of the road allowance which belongs more properly to the RM. So we would consider that to be a housekeeping amendment, and there's lots more.

I'll just read one other little example. Yes, here's a couple of pages on . . . and this is to do with Douglas Provincial Park which is near Lake Diefenbaker. Repeal a particular part of it and substitute proposed text to correct typing errors. Now that's housekeeping, so there's an awful lot of those little ones.

And simply put, the more time that goes by, the more of these things come to light. And it's not that the folks that originally framed all of these regulations and bits and pieces of the law made major errors. It's just inescapable when you talk about all of these complexities, hundreds and hundreds of these details. Two or three of them here and there are going to be just slightly incorrect. And as time goes by, you simply want to take an opportunity from time to time to correct them. This is the opportunity we're doing. We're doing that work now.

Mr. Vermette: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I was looking at them and if you look at the explanatory notes as to the Bill . . . and I know there's some areas . . . and I guess for the record, and I want to be clear on this, to give your officials and yourself an opportunity. We look at the Bill. Some of the changes you're proposing here are good changes. They make sense. It's time, you know.

But I guess to go through it all item by item, we could go through that. I'd like to give yourselves a chance. Is there any areas in the Bill that you're providing here in the information, and anything you can share with us that would make changes that should be brought to the public and as an opposition to our attention? I'm just wanting to open it up if there is anything to share with us at this time. It would be nice to see if you want to do that.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Again thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. The associate deputy minister will have a few remarks about the changes that she thinks are most important, that perhaps the opposition members might consider that, and also perhaps in the way of an important message to the folks in the public, especially those that use our provincial parks. And I'll follow up with a couple of comments after hers.

Ms. Gallagher: — Well I think one of the important messages is how special our park system is. They're representative areas of some very unique natural and cultural landscapes in the province. And it's very important that we ensure that we have the right legislation and regulations to allow us to care and protect our parks appropriately.

And as the minister has spoken about, we have increasing numbers and pressures on our park and so it ensures that we need to be even more careful that we have the right types of legislation or regulation, especially around enabling enforcement officers to do their work when they are in the provincial parks, and looking again at ensuring that when our visitors come to the park, they have a quality experience and they're able to enjoy the natural and cultural amenities that they come here to experience.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would add just briefly, I think there are two messages from my perspective and this certainly parallels what the associate deputy minister said, two particular messages that we would like people to take from tonight's discussion.

Part of the reason that we're doing these things is to protect our parks. It's all about good stewardship. We have a precious legacy in 34 beautiful provincial parks that we've inherited from the generations previously that established them. And you know, it's our responsibility — not just an opportunity but a responsibility — to make sure that we provide those parks to future generations. We turn them over in a shape which is at least as good as today and possibly even better.

There's also the quality of the camping experience. We want to make sure the people that come to these parks enjoy them to the fullest. And these regulations are designed specifically to enhance their experience, to make sure that people that come for an experience with the natural environment — whether they're adventure campers who have, you know, a little crossover SUV [sport-utility vehicle] and a kayak on the roof and a pup tent in the back or where they come with a big F-150, 4x4 with a 28 foot trailer and a satellite dish and air conditioning, I'm not thinking about anybody in the room actually when I say that, but for all of that wide variety of people that come to the parks — that they have the best possible experience. So it's environmental stewardship, and it's also quality of experience for our visitors.

Mr. Vermette: — Again to the minister and your officials, thank you. I want to wrap it up. And I said earlier when I had an opportunity to talk to you in estimates and we had talked about, I guess, the quality in the parks, and you talk about that, and we want to make sure our parks are safe, beautiful, enjoyable for all residents, that whether they're from the province, out of Canada, I guess, around the world, that come to Saskatchewan, we want to make sure that happens.

And I said this to myself and as a critic, we'll take pictures of parks. I'm going to be asking people. I know I've asked some people to take, when they see problems, to take pictures and send them. We'll make sure that we'll work with your department to make sure some of the areas that . . . I know in northern Saskatchewan there's some areas that need work, and I know you have a budget that you have to work with, but I guess it's with safety, I think that's crucial. And I'm going to work with individuals again to make sure that safety is a priority and that these areas and these parks are used by families and tourists but also to make sure they're safe for them.

And they're beautiful parks. We know that. We have a lot to offer. And again I wish you well this year as you guys look after the parks and you work with the officials, the staff that you have to. But clearly when there are problems, I want to make it . . . you know, just so you know, we'll do all we can to bring it to your attention to resolve these issues if they're brought to our attention.

Anyway at this point, there's no more questions on Bill number . . . from myself, that I have. So at this time I'm done, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Vermette and thank you, Minister. Is there any other questions or comments regarding Bill 10, *The Act to amend The Parks Act*? If not, we will proceed with the voting on Bill 10, clause 1, short title. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 9 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts the following: Bill No. 10, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2011*.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 10, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2011* without amendment. Mr. Stewart. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you.

Bill No. 9 — *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011*

Clause 1

The Chair: — We will continue on with consideration of Bill No. 9, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011*. Mr. Minister, would you be ready to make a few comments at this time?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. It's a pleasure once again to introduce this particular piece of legislation. At the outset, what we would like to confirm to members is that the changes that we're proposing by way of amendment to this Act are actually changes that were requested by the Board of the Community Initiatives Fund. So these are things which they are asking for and they are fully supportive of.

The Community Initiatives Fund, or CIF for short, was created to ensure that Saskatchewan communities received tangible benefits from casino profits. The fund receives a portion of profits from the Regina and Moose Jaw casinos. The mission of the CIF is to make knowledgeable and effective investments in community-based initiatives throughout Saskatchewan that strengthen the capacity of communities.

Current program streams offered by the CIF are community grants for human development; youth leadership and Aboriginal inclusion, including the urban Aboriginal community grant program; physical activity, including Saskatchewan in Motion; problem gambling and mitigation payment; community vitality program which includes small capital investments; and milestone community celebrations. The fund is managed by an arm's-length, government appointed board whose members all have extensive experience as community volunteers. It's a great group. I met with them on a number of occasions. I'm very impressed with their work.

The legislative amendments to part IV of the Act are intended to improve the efficient operation of the fund itself. Governance items in the amendment include terms of appointment for the board of trustees, the establishment of quorum, the designation of Chair and Vice-Chair, the remuneration and reimbursement of expenses, the ability to engage technical expertise, and provision of appropriate pension and benefits for employees.

In addition to those matters of governance the legislative amendments to part IV of the Act address four main issues. First, the board of trustees currently has full authority to manage and operate the fund. But the legislation is silent on the ability to hire the employees necessary to manage this substantial fund. These legislative amendments will provide the CIF Board of Trustees the ability to hire employees and put in place the capacity they need to properly manage the fund.

Second, we are clarifying the need for liability protection within the Act. The board of trustees and any future employees require liability protection from legal actions for good faith decisions carried out when managing the fund. Legislative immunity from liability can protect the board of directors and any future employees and the Crown from baseless lawsuits. Currently liability protection for the board is extended to the fund through

an indemnity letter provided by the government. There is a risk, we are told, that the indemnity letter will not provide the same level of protection that would exist with a legislative provision, thus the need for this provision.

Third, as minister I have stewardship and oversight responsibility for the CIF. However the reporting relationship between our office and the fund is only supported by a memorandum of understanding, or MOU, that is not actually legally binding. These legislative amendments we're proposing will provide the minister of the day with clear authority to establish reporting, performance, and management expectations.

And fourth, Mr. Chair, the amendment will update and modernize the wording of the granting provision. The modernized wording will ensure board members are able to fulfill their mandate to ensure that Saskatchewan communities do in fact receive tangible benefits from casino profits. These amendments clarify government's accountability for the fund and provide the board of trustees with the ability to manage the fund more effectively. And as mentioned, the ministry has consulted with the Community Initiatives Fund Board of Trustees regarding proposed changes, and they are pleased to support them. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. If there's any questions. The Chair recognizes Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And welcome to the minister and officials. I guess the first question I'd have for the minister or officials right off the bat, there is a good letter of explanation that came from the Community Initiatives Fund to our leader, Mr. Nilson, concerning the board's opinion and understanding of the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . How interesting. My colleague will owe me a Coke, I guess, unless she's being . . . Anyway well back to the questions, Mr. Chair.

The letter states the following that "The CIF Board of Trustees unanimously made the request following the adoption of an enhanced management plan for the CIF Board in December of 2008." That's over three years ago, Mr. Minister. Why has there been the lag in terms of this piece of legislation coming forward?

[21:45]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. The deputy minister will offer an answer.

Ms. Young: — Concerning the timing, they did bring forward proposals around that through 2009, and we were working with them over that time period to have it prepared for this session which, of course backing up, is actually close to a year ago when we had it ready. So that's the time difference.

It is true it was a time difference, and I know that the board that we work closely with would have loved to have had it in sooner. One of the realities is that we have a very good, strong working relationship with them, and we were comfortable working under the MOU that we had. And where we had problems arising because of their restrictions with the Act, we found ways of working with them in the time being. But I must

say that they are delighted it is here now.

Mr. McCall: — In terms of problems arising, could the minister or deputy minister characterize what those problems might have been?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question once again, Mr. Chair, and the deputy minister has a detailed answer, a couple of interesting examples that I think will address the member's question. And I have one comment that might be helpful afterwards.

Ms. Young: — Probably the most specific workaround that we had to do was in the hiring of the CEO of the Community Initiatives Fund because they aren't able to hire staff under the current arrangements. They had to do a workaround where she was actually hired by Sask Sport and seconded over to the CIF, which is a very awkward thing.

What makes it work is the integrity and the professionalism of the CEO, and she understands that she works for the CIF Board. But in fact we've had to do this workaround which, in the board trying to do its good work, it really . . . good governance would say that the CEO ought to be working for the board directly. So that's one workaround that they had to do.

I guess the other workaround, but with an interesting ending, was they do a lot of grants administration. You would know that there are hundreds of grants that go out every year through the CIF. And they have not had the ability to do the direct grants administration. So to do that, they entered into a relationship, again with Sask Sport to partner with the grants administration. That one's had an interesting ending because now that they have been working with Sask Sport, it's working so well that they will not go back, and they will continue in the partnership with Sask Sport for grants administration because that's what Sask Sport does a lot of, and they have expertise. So it works very well. But that was again another workaround that they had to do.

I guess my comment would be this isn't about hiring a lot of staff. They really are looking for just a couple of additional people. They run a very lean shop, but they are looking for greater technical expertise. And they are also looking for more communication expertise that I think the minister wanted to speak about.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the one bit of supplementary information I can provide that might be of some interest to members is the following. At the recent SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] we had a Tourism, Parks, Culture, Sport round table in which we provided an opportunity for all the folks that were delegates at the convention to bring any kind of questions or comments to the forum that they wished. One of the things that we found out about was that those people in those communities who have had experience with CIF warmly applaud it and say that they are a tremendous group of people to deal with, that the financial assistance that they've received for two things really, it's either small capital projects. We're talking about replacing the lighting at the rink to be more energy efficient, things of that nature; or on the celebrations side, typically these are most often 100th anniversaries of smaller towns. They have said that

the experience was wonderful. They commend the CIF group.

But we found also that there are a lot of communities that simply aren't as aware of these programs and the advantages of being involved as we would like. So it was a bit of a revelation for all of us, some of the folks that were delegates, and some of us sitting at the head of the room there trying to field the questions. So that's not so much a problem as an opportunity that we think that some of these changes will allow CIF as an organization to better handle. We want to make sure that all communities are well aware of these programs. The folks that have taken advantage of them are delighted with the results. We want to make sure that all the municipalities get involved. Thank you.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, Madam Deputy Minister. In terms of the CIF Board, they're all order-in-council appointments. That is correct? The Chair is selected internally from amongst the board by the board. Is that correct as well? How is the board Chair selected?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. The deputy has the answer.

Ms. Young: — My apologies. I just wanted to check to make sure that we were correct. The current Act is very short and is silent on that. The LG [Lieutenant Governor] does appoint all of the board in both the current Act and the proposed changes. And in the proposed changes the LG will also appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair. And again I would say that these changes were fully supported by the CIF Board. We had to check on this because we've had a very strong working relationship all the way along. And we actually had to go back and check who does what because we really do work together.

Mr. McCall: — And again the Chair and Vice-Chair are currently order-in-council appointments, or what's the current method of selection?

Ms. Young: — All of the board members are order in council.

Mr. McCall: — I'm not making myself clear I guess. I realize they are all order-in-council appointments, and I thank the deputy minister for that answer. But as it stands right now, are they appointed and then they self-select in terms of Chair and Vice-Chair, or is it an appointment by order in council?

Ms. Young: — The former is correct that the Act, the current Act only says that all members are LG appointments, and the current Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed within themselves. But we had to go and check that because we're sort of work together as we do this, and so certainly the current Chair, who has been reappointed by this government, we certainly had discussions with that as that occurred.

Mr. McCall: — The board as it stands, what are the terms of appointment for that board and what's the range of experience on the board?

[22:00]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question once again, Mr. Chair. The board is appointed. Each board member

is appointed to a four-year term, and they're staggered. With an eight member board, two are replaced each year. So there's always a good mix of folks with lots of experience, lots of corporate memory for ongoing discussion of issues, and a little bit of an injection of new blood, fresh perspective, new ideas, that sort of thing each and every year. The members are chosen specifically for extensive community service and understanding of community issues. Perhaps the best way that I can illustrate that is just to try to summarize as best I can one or two of the biographies.

Darlene Bessey, the board Chair, comes from Saskatoon. She's employed as a consultant with various voluntary and public sector organizations in the areas of effective board governance, organizational review, and strategic planning . . .

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Chairman, not to be rude, Mr. Minister, but I do have the biographies provided by the good folks at CIF. So perhaps to save us some time, the minister need not enter their biographies into the record.

What I'm more interested in, Mr. Minister, is if you have the dates of appointment for the OCs [order in council] connected to each of the board members. That would be more useful information given that we already have the biographies.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Okay. Thank you for the question once again, Mr. Chair. We don't have the dates of appointment of each specific member. We do remember of course that Ms. Bessey was reinstated as Chair very recently. Also I can recall that Cara Merasty from Saskatoon was recently reappointed. And perhaps the newest member is Lynn Chipley from Estevan. All of this information of course is recorded in OCs, and they're all posted to the website, so all that information is publicly available.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much for that, Mr. Minister, and it certainly is available publicly. I was just thinking if you had the biographies here that you might have the dates of OCs on hand as well. That not being the case, that's fine. We can carry on with the questioning.

So in terms of the . . . If there's one sort of characteristic of the proposed legislation, Mr. Minister, Mr. Chair, is that it's very much consumed with the governance and not so much with the parameters under which funds are dispersed from the CIF itself. Is that an accurate characterization of the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Again thank you, Mr. Chair, for the question. You know, a one word answer to the member's questions is yes. These are specific changes that have been requested by the board to make it a more effective organization administratively, specifically things like the ability to directly hire staff, things like better indemnity protection. Those are the kinds of things that that board, looking at best practices of other comparable groups, have brought to our attention with their request to bring them forward at this point in time.

They and we both agree that the mechanism for distributing funds is working very well. There's well over 200 communities that have been assisted with various projects where there's the small capital improvement projects for places like rinks and arenas or whether it's anniversaries and other significant events

within smaller communities. So that part of it is working exceptionally well. It's very, very well received, community after community, so we're pleased with the performance on that side. We just need to tinker with the governance and that part of the machinery.

Mr. McCall: — So again, if the minister could, the minister has characterized it as the legislation seems to read, as it seems to be described in the correspondence from the folks at the fund itself. But just for record, is there anything in the proposed amendments to the legislation that expands the parameters for funding activity on the part of the CIF? Are there new activities that can be taken as a result of this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you again for the question, Mr. Chair. And again a one-word answer would be no. The parameters of the funding itself, the mandate of the organization overall, its ability to reach communities — there are no proposed changes in this amendment here, nor were any requested by the board themselves. They and we are both comfortable with how it operates and how it supports communities.

But with respect to some of the details there I know that the deputy minister has an answer that she'd be happy to provide as well.

Ms. Young: — And only just to supplement that, saying that even though there are no program changes as a result of this legislation, it doesn't mean that in the future there won't be program changes because of course this fund is responsive to community needs. And it is actually about to undertake a fairly comprehensive review to make sure it's actually meeting the targets for what its fund is intended for.

But guided by the RICs, the regional intersectoral committees, and the sport and rec districts throughout the province, the CIF works together with them to make sure that the funding is actually hitting where they need. And of course then we have an agreement with them in terms of overall direction.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and Madam Deputy Minister. The review that will be undertaken to evaluate meeting of community need and community responsiveness, what is the timeline on that, Madam Deputy Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you again for the question, Mr. Chair. Well I have in front of me the Community Initiatives Fund strategic and operational plan for the next couple of years. And the deputy minister is a little bit more familiar with some of the details, and she'll be happy to explain some of them that I think will answer the member's question.

Ms. Young: — Thank you very much. And in fact the program enhancement review actually began in September 2011 and is under way now. And some of the changes, affected changes will be in place as early as this coming spring, but they are hoping that by fall they will have more changes in place. And I think the way . . . I haven't looked at the plan for a little bit, but the way the plan is laid out, that there is a system of continuous improvement around that. So it won't be a stop and start, but they will be continually looking at their programs.

Mr. McCall: — Is the minister or the deputy minister able to table the plan with the committee?

Ms. Young: — I would be pleased to. I do have to check. I am seeing it says confidential on here. So I would be pleased to, but I need to talk to the CIF Board.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Minister. Returning to the functions of the board, what was the process? And I appreciate the deputy minister's description of the workarounds and, you know, some of the . . . the one workaround that is now the working through, and the way that the relationship with Sask Sport has been beneficial. But with the appointment or the hiring of the current CEO, could the minister or the deputy minister describe that process for the committee? And then how that has changed or how that will have changed under this legislation? And will that necessitate a rehiring of the CEO?

[22:15]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. The deputy minister has an answer that we think is appropriate.

Ms. Young: — You probably are aware the CEO has a very strong provincial and actually national reputation. She was hired through a full competition that was carried out by the board. Government didn't have any part of that competition. And yes, her hiring is a little unusual going through Sask Sport as it is. We've never actually entertained the notion that they would do anything other than move it over under the board. I guess I've never actually asked the board that question, but this current CEO is doing — I think we all agree — a spectacular job, especially considering she's the only, she's the only person who is staff to them, full staff. So tremendous job and I'm assuming that we will just technically move that over, or they will move it over post this legislation, should it pass.

Mr. McCall: — Okay. I guess that's the gist of my question. The individual that is the CEO is well known to the community and for a lot of great reasons. So we're interested in seeing that good work continue, to just put the oar in the water — that's probably better. Anyway may that carry on.

In terms of additional staffing undertaken by the CIF, what is anticipated there once the governance is straightened out under the terms of the proposed legislation?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you again for the question, Mr. Chair. The deputy has a comment that I think will be helpful.

Ms. Young: — The conversation we've had with them is that they will be hiring just two part-time staff. One is an admin support because they don't have any. And the other is a part-time communication support. And that's, as the minister referred to earlier, there is a lot more the CIF can do with better communication and community outreach. So I think that's the other one. So those are the only two that we have heard of. As I said, the relationship with Sask Sport, in terms of grants administration, seems to be going great so that their plan is to continue.

Mr. McCall: — Okay. Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Minister. I guess at this time we have no further questions on this piece of legislation. So I thank the minister and deputy minister and officials for joining us this evening for a discussion of Bill No. 9. But with that, Mr. Chair, we're ready to let the government side do what they will do.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. McCall. And thank you, Mr. Minister and the officials. Is there any other question or comments regarding Bill 9? Seeing none we will proceed with the voting on Bill No. 9, *The Act to amend The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Act*.

Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts the following: Bill No. 9, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 9, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011* without amendment. Mr. Phillips. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you, committee members. That ends the items on the agenda for this evening. I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment. Mr. Steinley. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. This committee now stands adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 22:22.]