



STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE**

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Moose Jaw North

Mr. Doyle Vermette, Deputy Chair
Cumberland

Mr. D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert
Wood River

Mr. Rob Norris
Saskatoon Greystone

Mr. Kevin Phillips
Melfort

Mr. Warren Steinley
Regina Walsh Acres

Mr. Corey Tochor
Saskatoon Eastview

[The committee met at 18:59.]

The Chair: — Well good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. This is the committee meeting for Parks, Culture and Sport. My name is Warren Michelson. I am the Chair of the committee. Other committee members include Doyle Vermette as the Deputy Chair, Rob Norris, Kevin Phillips, Warren Steinley, and Corey Tochor. Again welcome.

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

Subvote (PC01)

The Chair: — And Minister Doherty, welcome to you and your officials as we enter these hearings. This evening the committee will be considering the estimates of the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. Before I begin I would like to remind the officials to introduce themselves when they're speaking for the purpose of Hansard.

We will now begin our consideration of vote 27, Parks, Culture and Sport, central management and services, subvote (PC01). Mr. Minister, if you'd like to introduce your officials. And you may make an opening statement after that, if you would, please.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good evening to you and to members of the committee and colleagues from the opposition. Looking forward to the discussion this evening. My officials and I will be delighted to answer questions after I make a few opening remarks, Mr. Chair, if you wouldn't mind.

Before I make those remarks, I would like to introduce the officials that I have with me here this evening from the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. I have to my left, to your right, Wynne Young, deputy minister. To my right, your left, Lin Gallagher, associate deputy minister; Twyla MacDougall, assistant deputy minister. Back behind me I have Gerry Folk, executive director of cultural planning and development branch. I have Darin Banadyga, executive director of sport, recreation and stewardship. I have Melinda Leibel, director of corporate services, and Cindy MacDonald, executive director of park services.

And, Mr. Chair, we're joined this evening by Michael Veltri. Michael is a Johnson-Shoyama School of Public Policy student and is an intern in the ministry. And we thought it would be a good opportunity for Michael to join us in the Chamber tonight — I don't imagine he's ever been in the Chamber before — to observe the proceedings. He's been involved in a number of different meetings when officials come to brief me on different issues. As a learning experience for him, I just thought it would be very beneficial for him to join us this evening. And as well, Margaret Huntington, my chief of staff. So, Mr. Chair, with that if you'll indulge me, I'd like to make a few opening comments.

French surgeon and Nobel prize winner Alexis Carrel once said, "The quality of life is more important than life itself." Now, Mr. Chair, that is a bold statement. But let me say that budget

2013-14 supports the fact that quality of life is incredibly important in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact, less than a year ago, our Premier released a plan for growth. It is a plan that sets out some bold targets, including growing Saskatchewan's population to 1.2 million by the year 2020.

Mr. Chair, we have been clear that we do not want growth for growth's sake alone. The purpose of growth is to secure a better quality of life for all of the people of Saskatchewan. We want growth to invest in health care. We want growth to invest in women's shelters. We want growth to invest in more affordable housing. We know that there are challenges and that we must balance these priorities, and that is what we have done, Mr. Chair, with budget 2013-14. It is our government's sixth consecutive balanced budget. We have balanced the books, but more importantly, we have balanced the priorities. We have focused on improving our already strong quality of life here in Saskatchewan.

This year's provincial budget for the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, which also has responsibility for the Provincial Capital Commission, supports quality of life in a number of ways. We have invested in arts, culture, provincial parks, sport and recreation, and heritage.

The 2013-14 budget provides \$5 million for an investment fund for Creative Saskatchewan, a new agency that was announced earlier this year, for a total investment of \$6.5 million into Creative Saskatchewan. The agency will assist in marketing and commercializing the work of Saskatchewan's creative industries. Both the announcement of the agency and the announcement of the brand new funding were the result of months of consultations with the creative industries in Saskatchewan. The \$5 million investment fund will be available to music, film, digital media, visual arts, crafts, publishing, and the performing arts producers to bring their products to market.

One of the advantages of our growing province is the ability to invest in our creative sector. As well, Mr. Chair, investing in these areas will help them further contribute to our province's economic growth and thus help us achieve our vision of a growing province and improved quality of life for all.

I should mention that we kicked off Creative Saskatchewan with a \$1 million transition fund earlier this year. The \$1 million was available from the Saskatchewan Arts Board's existing flexible loan program which was under-utilized. The Arts Board identified the funds and has been working to administer the grant program.

As we are talking about the Arts Board, I should also mention this year's budget provides a 5 per cent increase to the Saskatchewan Arts Board. And in terms of arts, it may be a bit premature, but I can't resist sharing that we are poised to renew our partnership with Business for the Arts to continue the highly successful incentive program called artsVest. Our government partnered with Business for the Arts just over two years ago to introduce the \$1 million sponsorship training and matching incentive program that was delivered in Saskatchewan with funding from the Government of Saskatchewan and Canadian Heritage with support from SaskCulture Inc.

In year one, partnerships between arts organizations and local businesses generated \$1.17 million for the province's cultural economy. We know that creativity and innovation creates that enviable quality of life that makes people want to move to and stay in our communities.

Another area in which my ministry continues to invest in our fantastic quality of life is in our provincial parks. Funding for the provincial parks will increase by 6 per cent this year, Mr. Chair. Over the past five years, our government has increased funding to provincial parks for operating and capital by \$8 million, an increase of 38.8 per cent. Part of that increase is government's commitment to investing an additional \$10 million over four years in capital funding to improve provincial parks. This is the second year of that commitment.

This year some of the work we are looking forward to includes major expansions and upgrades of campground electrical systems in three different provincial parks, construction of three new campground service centres, improvements to potable water systems as well as to roads and bridges, recreational trail development in provincial parks, commercial development including a lodge and rental cabins at Greig Lake in Meadow Lake Provincial Park, a long-term seasonal campground at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, and explore expansion opportunities such as the development of further recreation at Blackstrap Provincial Park, new parks, and new programming. We are also continuing to lead the multi-ministry plan to develop lakefront around Lake Diefenbaker to strengthen tourism and recreation opportunities and economic growth potential of this area.

All of our investments and work continue to pay off. The 2012 park season was another record year for the Saskatchewan provincial parks with more than 3.5 million visits, nearly a 6 per cent increase over the 3.37 million visits recorded across the park system in 2011. Already in 2013 we've set a reservation record. We made improvements to our reservation system, including a staggered spring launch, and we helped complete 19,436 bookings in the first week, an almost 30 per cent increase over last year's first week.

Budget 2013-14 also provides support for our cultural, recreational, and heritage infrastructure. A few examples include \$100,000 for the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Heritage Centre to match the city of Regina's commitment; \$1.7 million in continued support for the community rinks affordability grant, which provides community-owned indoor ice surfaces with an annual grant of \$2,500 to help offset operating costs; and nearly \$5 million to continue the three-year conservation plan of the Legislative Building dome as a legacy project celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Legislative Building. And \$50,000, Mr. Chair, to support the development of a military history project to remember and celebrate Saskatchewan's contributions and sacrifices.

I should point out, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chair, that the Legislative Building dome repair may seem like a new project for our ministry. In fact our ministry has changed somewhat since the last time we were here at estimates.

In May 2012 we assumed operations of the Provincial Capital

Commission. It was an exciting time to take on that portfolio. The PCC [Provincial Capital Commission] was in the midst of celebrating the Legislative Building's 100th anniversary. There were a number of events and activities, including the Artist-in-Residence program that gave eight artists the opportunity to reach out to the community to promote the Legislative Building and its anniversary and each leave a legacy artwork piece at this legislature; the official reopening of the Queen Elizabeth II Gardens, where the historic landau was taken on its final journey with 32 members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police musical ride to the Saskatchewan legislature; the Saskatchewan Dream High School Video Contest; the provision of the die-cut models of the Legislative Building and resource materials for every grade 4 student in the province; the Centennial Art Show in the Cumberland Gallery; the unveiling of the 1909 time capsule and the placement of the 2012 time capsule; and of course, the organization of the October 11th 100th anniversary celebration day with Their Excellencies and Their Honours in attendance; and work on legacy projects such as the Walter Scott statuary project to be unveiled this coming summer; and, as I just mentioned, restoration to the dome here at the legislature.

Looking forward, the Provincial Capital Commission continues to celebrate the province and capital's heritage and tell its stories through enhanced visitor experiences. Government House will be celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2016 and is already preparing by developing new features and temporary exhibits, installing Wi-Fi [wireless fidelity] mobile museum technology, and growing its youth outreach provincial programming.

And speaking of heritage, Mr. Chair, budget '13-14 supports the completion of the three-year Main Street Saskatchewan pilot program launched in 2011. Main Street is a \$1.65 million investment over three years, starting in '11-12, and was introduced to help revitalize historic commercial downtowns through community organization, economic development, heritage conservation, marketing, and promotion. The demonstration project has been very successful, resulting in a 10 to 1 return on investment. In its first year the program has generated local commitments of 1.66 million in Main Street capital infrastructure projects, almost ten times the \$172,000 that the province had invested to date. I offer my congratulations to the participating communities of Indian Head, Wolseley, Prince Albert, and Maple Creek.

Mr. Chair, another infrastructure piece, the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, has assumed operations of the T.rex Discovery Centre in Eastend, Saskatchewan to safeguard that centre's long-term sustainability as a key tourism destination. We will be working this year on developing a marketing strategy for cross-promotion of the RSM's [Royal Saskatchewan Museum] operations in Regina and Eastend that maximizes visitor experiences and connections between the work at the centre and the RSM.

Mr. Chair, one of the integral parts of quality of life is ensuring families and young people are healthy and active. That is why budget 2013-14 continues government's commitment to the active families benefit by providing a refundable tax benefit of up to \$150 per child for all children under the age of 18 involved in cultural, recreational, or sporting activities. The

benefit is a fully refundable benefit and helps families with the costs of their children's participation in cultural, recreational, and sports activities.

Our ministry is also continuing to work proactively with other ministries and agencies to further government's child and family agenda by developing and implementing the healthy weights action plan to reduce the rate of child and youth obesity by 5 per cent by 2022. We are also continuing to support the implementation of the afterschool time period initiatives through the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association.

In budget '13-14, gaming and lottery revenues remain steady. Therefore the good work of the Community Initiatives Fund, SaskCulture, Sask Sport, and Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association continues through their funding and support of provincial and community-based organizations. In fact, the Community Initiatives Fund will receive funding of \$9.6 million this year, an increase of just over \$300,000 based on higher projected revenue from the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation's gaming profits. This ensures Saskatchewan communities receive tangible benefits from casino gaming profits.

As well we are working with Sask Sport, SaskCulture, and SPRA, the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, on renewing the lotteries agreement that expires in 2014. We want to ensure continued community-based sport, culture, and recreation programs and services. I look forward to getting that good piece of work done.

Mr. Chair, budget '13-14 focuses on balanced growth. It makes every effort to meet the challenges of our growing province with a balanced, sustainable approach. Budget '13-14 also focuses on ensuring a better quality of life for the people of our province.

Mr. Chair, now my officials and I would be more than happy to answer any questions committee members may have. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister Doherty, and welcome to the officials. Minister Doherty, before we get into other questions, there was one clarification. I was making some notes. The parks budget was increased by 6 per cent this year, and you said it was 38.8 per cent over what period?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Over the last . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . over 5 years.

The Chair: — 5 years.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — That's on the operating side.

The Chair: — That's right. Yes. Yes, I was just making notes. Thank you. We'll open the floor now for questions. Mr. Vermette, do you have questions?

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the minister and your officials, thank you for being here. And I guess we'll get right to the point and going at it. And I just want to be clear, instead of going into . . . because I'm going to be going into parks and sports, but I'll start out with sports to deal with that

situation first, then go to parks. So if that works for your staff, to get your staff ready, I'll just explain that starting up.

And I guess I'm curious. You mentioned a program and a grant that families could apply. And why I bring that up . . . And of course obesity and we know the challenges — less activity of our young people and families with playing games. We know those issues face many young people and families, and we try to do what we can. And I think individuals try to encourage . . . I know schools do. I know communities do with, whether it's hockey. How many people or how many families would have applied for the grants and how many were approved in 2012-2013 year when the program ran in that year, if I could have the answers?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Vermette, just to be clear, the active families benefit you're talking about?

Mr. Vermette: — Yes, that you referred to in your opening comments.

[19:15]

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Right. So, Mr. Chair, beginning in 2009, the number of filers was 25,891. In the year 2010, the number of filers was 30,986. Sorry, that was preliminary. In the final in 2010, there was 31,504, so slightly above what they had preliminarily thought. And then 2011, the preliminary figures have us at 32,317 filers.

Mr. Vermette: — Do you have an idea of what the number or the amount of money that was spent on those programs?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, 2009 it was about five and a half million dollars. I don't know if you want the exact number that I have or just rounded off.

Mr. Vermette: — Rounded off would be fine.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Okay. So 2009 was five and a half million dollars — just in excess of five and a half million. In 2010 it was 6.7 million. And again preliminarily for 2011, we're estimating 6.9 million, getting close to 7 million.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you. I know every . . . And I guess with your staff and programs that your ministry offers, how do you guys work with communities and what contact do you have directly with communities and recreation activities? Does your ministry work directly with certain groups, or is it grants that they apply for and most sports programs are run in the community or out of the school? And what role does your ministry play in those, I guess, programs, partnerships, and grants? Can you give me some background information just to understand it, if you could?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Yes, thank you for the question. The relationship between my ministry and those . . . We don't have a direct relationship with a lot of the community groups directly. We are primarily through what we call our globals — that would be Sask Sport, Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, and SaskCulture. So we provide funding to those organizations through the lotteries funding.

And I'm informed that of all the different programs, that they all run through these, in lots of cases, community-based organizations — not the CBO [community-based organization] in the terms of what we traditionally call CBOs, but organizations that are in the communities. We touch over half of the population in the province of Saskatchewan through those three different organizations.

Mr. Vermette: — So then would you say your department works mainly with, I guess, organizations that work with the community in that way? Is that how you're saying you have direct contact with those organizations first?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — That's correct.

Mr. Vermette: — Okay. Now does your ministry provide any funds to them, any other supports to those organizations that are working directly with the communities?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, in response to the member's question, the total lottery funding that's distributed . . . We don't fund these globals directly through the ministry. We fund them through the lotteries financing. And just for your information, the breakdown this last year — well the last year that we have audited financials, '11-12 — there was a total of about \$60.6 million through lottery funding that went out to our globals.

Approximately, of that 60.6 million — and this doesn't add up to it — but for sport, culture and recreation, it breaks down as follows for the different community organizations you were talking about: about 21.1 million in sport, 14.7 million in culture, and 5.6 million in recreation.

In addition to that, we also have the Community Initiatives Fund, which represents about \$9.3 million that goes out through an application process to various communities throughout the province as well.

Mr. Vermette: — That initiative fund that people apply for, the 9.3, how many communities apply for that, would you say? How many?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, again they're at arm's-length from government. I appreciate the question. What we have is approximate figures right now. The latest information that we have through the Community Initiatives Fund, the two different ones are primarily the community grant program and another program called the community vitality program, which funds capital infrastructure, if you will.

Now the community grant program, they had funded approximately 400 grants up to a maximum of \$25,000 each. And under the community vitality program, we've had, I'm informed, about 300 different projects funded through the community vitality program. And those go up to a maximum of \$50,000 for small capital projects, to a maximum.

Mr. Vermette: — Okay, thank you for that. Understanding . . . I know there's different organizations, different ways that the money gets out from the lotteries, you know. It goes through your ministry in the sense just to oversee it kind of, to make sure everything's, I guess, done right and proper.

But having said that, I'll go back to targeting. And I want to think about youth and just some of the challenges that we're seeing. And I know there's a plan and I don't know if they submit it to your ministry, if they give you the targets that they want to hit when they're dealing with youth and getting our young people active, physically active. And how do you target those dollars to say, okay here's what our targets are, making sure. And then you talked about 5 per cent getting, you know, young people active. Can you give me a little idea of that plan, how that plan lays out? And are you aware of that? Do they share that with you? Just so I get an understanding of how that works.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, thank you for the question again. It gets to be . . . There's many different moving parts with respect to all of these different organizations who have, in some cases, they cross over each other's functions with respect to activities for youth, as you've identified, Mr. Vermette.

Just on the Community Initiatives Fund, their mandate is . . . I'll just read this off to you. This is the CIF mandate. The Community Initiatives Fund mandate is:

. . . programs are structured as grants that help foster community development, inclusion and leadership in Saskatchewan. Grants are designed to support: opportunities for children, youth, family and community; Aboriginal inclusion, participation; engaged and inclusive communities; leadership among youth; increased physical activity; enhanced awareness about problem gambling.

In 2011-12, the CIF granted just in excess of half a million dollars to support 43 afterschool time-period programs. And the reason why the afterschool program is of critical importance is that we know that between the hours of 3 and 6, analysis and studies will show that that's the predominant time that most kids of school age get into difficulties, if you will. They engage in activities that perhaps aren't that healthy for them, whether it's getting involved in criminal activity or they experiment with drugs or alcohol or sex, if you will, with these young folks.

And these afterschool programs are designed to lead them down a different path during that 3 to 6 time frame, which is where it's critically important for them to be involved, not only from a physical activity perspective but from a health lifestyle perspective.

On the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund side, the three different globals, as I pointed out, Sask Sport, SaskCulture, and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, as part of the lottery agreement with them, as part of their funding agreement through the lottery negotiations, there are a variety of metrics that government has asked them to meet with respect to whether they're accomplishing their goals or not from the funding they're receiving from the lottery funds. And there's literally pages and pages of it. We can go into that, if you will, or we can simply make sure you get a copy of that, and you can have a look at it at your leisure.

Mr. Vermette: — No, I'd appreciate that. If you could make available a copy, it would be nice to have just for information. I mean I don't expect you to go into the numbers.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Sure.

Mr. Vermette: — I guess when I look at that and you have organizations and communities applying, and I imagine you have schools, non-profit organizations, community groups applying for funds within those, I guess, funds that are available, lotteries and different ones. Do you have any from First Nations? Are they allowed to apply for those funds as well? First Nations community, we know there's 74 in the province that, you know, can apply. And do they apply?

And you said, I think one of the areas you did mention, that you try to target First Nations and Aboriginals to have access to those funds. How many organizations would you say, and would you know this? And if you can't, can you get this and provide . . . have applied and been, you know, denied funding with one of those groups? Are many organizations, groups turned away? And there might be different reasons why they get turned away. But do you have any numbers on those, just say even the last year?

[19:30]

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't have those numbers with us here this evening. These again are third parties that adjudicate. We have nothing to do with the adjudication of these applications. So we will endeavour to go back to the globals and ask them about how many of those specific applications came in and how many were approved, for what amount of money were they approved, and how many were declined, and try to get for you the reasons why they would have been declined. But again that's their adjudication process. And we'll have to get that, and we'll endeavour to do that for you.

Mr. Vermette: — And if you're going to go back — and I understand you don't have that information — if you're going to go back, could you go back even say three or four years to ask them if they have that, if that's possible to get that from them? Be handy to see if there's a trend or anything, if that would be possible?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — We will endeavour to do that, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you. What would you say, and did you have a number, a total amount of dollars that, whether it be from your ministry, from any other source that you're aware of, government ministries that give money to sports, culture, recreation? Is there like a dollar value we'd have, say, that the government and lotteries and everything else comes together for a figure, a one-time figure saying, we've spent \$180 million on sports, culture, recreation? Is there a number from different areas to see just how big the number is? Maybe it's quite large. Just trying to understand how much we're actually investing in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, I'm informed we've never actually engaged in an exercise where we've gone across all spectrums of government to look at how much money is actually spent on recreation, cultural activities, sporting activities, heritage — those kinds of things that . . . as I talked about in my remarks about quality of life.

Some of the interesting discussions we've had around the cabinet table is, you know, in defining culture and what defines a cultural activity or the funding of a cultural activity. And we look at things for the Education ministry that they fund, whether it's in First Nations or in Fransaskois or different educational components that they're funding that contributes to that particular cultural identity within the province.

A rough, back-of-the envelope calculation by my deputy here, within my ministry, between lottery funding and what we spend from the GRF [General Revenue Fund], it's about \$130 million in those areas. But that, again, doesn't include municipalities and doesn't include what the feds might spend in the province. And there's a lot of local activity, obviously, in every community. I mean the backbone of every community in Saskatchewan, as you well know, are the ice rinks and the ball diamonds or the rodeo fields, if you will, and some of these sporting grounds in these communities.

So a lot of that money is spent through volunteer activities and with the local communities, and so I suspect it's extraordinarily higher than 130 million. That's just government proper, what we can find through lotteries and the ministry.

Mr. Vermette: — My last question when it comes to sports, and then I'm going to go to parks. But do you have organizations, individuals that contact your ministry, and maybe they're applying through one of the funds that they, you know, make available to them, and that they're feeling like they're not getting a good response, or they're not getting what they're needing or programs, are feeling like they're a group that's feeling like left out for some reason, they can't access it, there's a reason why . . . Does your ministry get many of those contacts from individuals and groups? Can you just shed some light on it?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I can tell you from my own experience, having been in cabinet less than a year now, but I've had probably a handful of organizations or communities come to me and ask me to intervene directly, whether it's to put a new roof on their skating rink or whether it's to improve their swimming pool in their community, what have you. Or they might have felt that they put an application in to one of these funding bodies and they didn't get what they wanted, or perhaps they were declined completely.

And so we certainly undertake to ask ministry officials to discuss that with the particular body to find out where the application process might have fallen apart or why they were declined. And if there's something we can help them with, we certainly undertake to do that. But we're not a direct funding agency in this particular ministry on those activities. So, as I said to one group, unfortunately I get to say no more than I get to say yes to different organizations.

I think the basis of your question was, if people have gone through the process and they've been denied or it's fallen off the rails, and have we done anything, or do we get that often? I don't get that that often, Mr. Vermette. But what I do get are letters coming directly to me asking me or my ministry to fund a particular facility or infrastructure funding in their community.

Mr. Vermette: — Okay. No, thank you. That ends the questions on sports. I guess I want to go into parks now. And if you want to change your officials . . .

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess to start out, your opening comments, you talk about online and the service that people are doing to reserve sites and that individuals can use that. And you talked about some numbers that's increased. Can you tell me how you guys decided to, I guess if I'd say, is it outsourced out of the province, out of Canada? And what business or organization is handling that for your ministry when it come to reserving sites in parks?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, on the reservation system itself, that was through an RFP[request for proposal] process, the company that was . . . There was four that had bid through the RFP process. One company was disqualified for not meeting the criteria. None were from Saskatchewan. And the winning company is from Ontario. It's not out of Canada.

Mr. Vermette: — You say one was . . . because they didn't have the capacity to fulfill the contract that you were requesting?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, we had a list of critical factors that companies had to meet in order to qualify for the bidding process, through the bidding process. And this particular organization missed one of the critical factors during the application process.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you. And just listening to your numbers, and it's a service that's, I think . . . Do you track, and is there any way to know, is it Saskatchewan residents, Canadian, or out-of-country that are using that service and are applying? Do you guys have numbers on that, how many that it is? Is it possible to get those numbers? If you don't have them here, to provide those at a later date?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Yes, Mr. Chair. We do track. I'm informed we do track those numbers. We just don't have them here with us this evening, but we can get those for you.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you. I'd appreciate that. And I know that we've gone to our provincial park and we stay there and we have a bunch of friends that come in. And there was a time where you could . . . actually you couldn't reserve then. And I realize that it caused quite a bit of grief. Some people got there and whether there was a campsite available or not, you just . . . First-come, first-served was the way it worked. And you know, you had to get there early. And we used to race around in trying to . . . And that service might be fine in that situation for those individuals.

But some individuals maybe are not connected to the technology and online. And you know, there are individuals out there who just want to go travelling, and where they end up, they end up. And they want to hope they find a site. How if it's an individual that's just, they decide to go out and they just want to go touring, wherever they go it takes them, and just want to enjoy the scenery and go wherever. When they get there, is there provisions or are there any sites that are held for individuals that have not? Or if they are all booked up, they are 100 per cent booked, then they are booked? Those individuals I

guess will have to continue going on until they find one. I'm just curious because I actually had that question by somebody and that's what they were faced with. So I am curious to see how you would address that?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — It's a great question, and I recall back in the day with my parents hauling six kids around in the back of the station wagon, trying to go camping and would pull up and hope that there is a spot available. So I understand.

With respect to the question, if somebody isn't technologically inclined or have the capability through technology, we do have a call centre that people can call in. I'm assuming a 1-800 number, that they can call in. If they don't have technology as it is, I don't imagine they have the mobile app, and we do have a mobile app available to see where spots might be available in the province.

If you did pull up to a park and there was a spot open, you are eligible to book it on the spot if it has not been reserved. And secondly, I think most of all parks, if not all of them, we have overflow camping as well. So if we are full, we will try and accommodate people under those circumstances. You pull up to camp in the overflow until a spot may come up if you want to stay longer.

So through our surveys of our campers, what they're telling us is they want to know that when they get to a park, they're going to have a spot, and hence the reservation system has been very welcome. But for those that, as you suggested, don't have the technology or they just kind of fly by the seat of their pants and hope that there's a spot there, if there's a spot available, they're certainly eligible to book it at the gate at that time.

Mr. Vermette: — Okay. Thank you. Just by your numbers you're talking about, do you get, I guess . . . People that are using the system, do you have a survey? Is there any way to tell how people are responding? I mean I know you can say, well by the numbers it should look like, you know, people are responding to reserving sites. You're saying your numbers are going up. Is there any type of survey to see how people are finding the system? Is it easy to get through? Are there complications? Are you getting any complaints? And how do they make sure that the ministry's aware of their concerns or complaints that they have trying to reserve or that type of situation?

[19:45]

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, first of all, if people are unhappy with the system or unhappy with an experience in the park, trust me, we hear about it, whether they call us directly or they send a letter to the minister's office or directly to the ministry. Certainly through social media now, if people are unhappy with an experience of any nature, they put it on their Facebook page or Twitter it or whatever the case might be.

But in response to your question around the surveying — how do we talk to our campers, how do we engage them, how do we receive direct feedback from them — we collect email addresses from the campsite reservation system, and then we invite those campers to participate in an online Saskatchewan provincial parks campers survey. This past year in September of

2012, a total of 8,085 campers participated in an online survey for a response rate of just over 52 per cent of 15,559 email addresses that we had collected. So the report that I'm talking about with respect to how we determine the satisfaction levels of these kinds of things is based on this online survey.

Mr. Vermette: — I'm going to go away from that area now with reserving sites and stuff. Your ministry is going ahead, and I think you talked about earlier, new parks that you're going to open up. And where are those new parks that you're proposing? And if it's in your plans, can you have an idea of how many there are, where they're located at?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chairman, I'll have associate deputy minister Lin Gallagher address that question directly.

Ms. Gallagher: — Lin Gallagher, the associate deputy minister with Parks, Culture and Sport. We've been looking at several new areas throughout the province for provincial parks.

In 2010 we narrowed down a number of sites down to two locations. The first location is Emma, Anglin area, and it's just north of Prince Albert. We already have two recreation sites in the area. We would be joining those locations with additional land base. We also have identified Porcupine Hills as the second area that we are moving forward on. And in that area we also have recreation sites in the system already.

And we are continuing to look in the North to see where there are some appropriate sites, and we'll continue to look throughout the province. And the other advantage I didn't mention of the Porcupine Hills area is we actually have a parkland reserve over that . . . have over that area. And so that provides us with a good opportunity when we're engaged in discussions with that community.

Mr. Vermette: — Now you talk about Emma Lake and Anglin Lake; you're talking about that. And I think it goes from something like 12 000 hectares, is it, or acres? And then it goes from 12 000 . . . Because you're bringing them together, it's going to be 16 000, I believe. I've seen some of the numbers on that.

And can you give me an idea of who would have been consulted and talked to? If you're proposing this, was there individuals and groups that you guys had to share your idea where you're going? Can you give me a little bit of background information? And I know there are some First Nations and Métis organizations over there, and municipalities. And can you just give me some background on that?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, in response to the hon. member's question, there has been extensive consultations, as you suggested. And we started in 2010. Actually we were going to . . . The government of the day — I wasn't elected then — but it was going to introduce legislation in 2011 and actually held off on it because we weren't satisfied with the level of consultation that had gone on yet and had carried out additional consultations through the course of 2011.

I can tell you that we held two public open house sessions at Christopher Lake in 2011 in Prince Albert, Christopher Lake and Prince Albert. We held three . . . Public open house

sessions were held in Hudson Bay, Preeceville, and Pelly for the Porcupine Hills. I know you are asking specific about Emma-Anglin. We had trade show booths set up at the Back to Batoche event. Meetings and discussions were held with local jurisdictions, First Nations and Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, local and provincial stakeholder groups with interests in the area of provincial park. We had a website that was set up and we mailed and emailed a survey to a variety of stakeholders.

And I can tell you on the Emma-Anglin Lakes consultation process to date, we have met with the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, Gabriel Dumont Institute, FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] lands and resources secretariat, the Prince Albert Grand Council, the Saskatoon and District Tribal Council, Métis Nation Western Region II, Fish Lake Métis local, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Little Red River community, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Little Red River community, Wahpeton — I hope I am saying that correctly, or Wahpeton, Wahpeton — Wahpeton Dakota Nation, James Smith Cree Nation, and Sturgeon Lake First Nation. As you mentioned First Nations and Métis groups and whatnot, those were the ones that we have met with.

We've also gone back with our stakeholders since last year, and the park boundary itself has increased based on feedback we've received from a number of these different organizations and First Nations to protect the watershed or provide greater protection for the watershed in that area and some trails that exist in that area. So we have been listening to these folks, and we know that the park proposal for the Emma-Anglin Lake has received over 80 per cent public support for those that have responded to the survey. And we had full support from the MNS [Métis Nation of Saskatchewan] Local 108 Fish Lake. And that's where we're at today as we go through the legislative process here.

Mr. Vermette: — You mentioned Montreal Lake First Nation. Have they given their support to that expansion of this provincial park?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — We don't have anything saying that they support it, but we have nothing saying that they oppose it. We continue to discuss with these different groups. So we have nobody on record other than Lac La Ronge Indian Band had opposed it initially and we've continued with discussions with them about additions they want to see added to the provincial park.

Mr. Vermette: — So would that be the only one so far of any of the groups, individuals that opposed? You only had one, and that was the La Ronge band that . . . Am I understanding that clear?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — That's correct.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you. Going into the park — and you're going to go ahead with making the park bigger — what will that look like? Is there going to be more campsites? Will there be leases where people will put up cabins? What is that plan for there? And just give me some ideas of what you're proposing.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, again I'm going to have the

associate deputy minister, Lin Gallagher, address that.

Ms. Gallagher: — So again, Lin Gallagher. As we go through the process, we've indicated to the public that we will have another process when it comes to actually what will be any developments in the park. We're not anticipating extensive new developments in the park. We already have a very large campsite at Emma Lake, and also at Anglin Lake we have a campsite.

We may look at expansion. We may look at additional recreational trails, those kinds of enhancements to the area. But that would be done through our park process; where once we have established a provincial park, we establish a park management advisory committee. And we work with stakeholders; First Nations and Métis in the community, any other interest in the community. And through that process, we work towards what we call a management and development plan. And that would be where we would identify any additions or enhancements that we would make to one of these provincial parks once they're established.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you. So to be clear on that then, once you establish the park — and you're saying you're going to go ahead — then you have a management board and its stakeholders. Whether they're First Nations, Métis groups around there, from a municipality, or a rural community, you'll have different groups that would sit on a management board to come up with I guess ideas on how you would develop that, and presentations to them.

How much input or how much say would that management board have to, say if someone wants to have 100 leases or new spots for cabins, would that organization or that management board say no, we're going to . . . Can one of them veto it? How would it happen if you have groups come? I just want to understand that process.

Ms. Gallagher: — So thank you again. Lin Gallagher. I'd want to clarify, it isn't a management board. It's called a park advisory committee. So they are an advisory board to the park service.

And what I would clarify around, if there were extensive requests, requests for extensive cottage subdivision developments, that type of thing, that's not in our current policy to develop in that way. And as we go through a park management and development plan, we work to certainly allow recreational opportunities but also to be sensitive to the natural attributes of the provincial park. And it has not been our practice in the past years to . . . It is not our policy to establish large cottage subdivisions within the provincial parks.

Mr. Vermette: — And I apologize. I said management and I probably should have said advisory, and I appreciate that, clarifying that for me.

So if this advisory board comes together, and I know you're going to bring different groups to share their views and concerns, and maybe the First Nations community would have somebody sitting on this advisory board. The Métis, like you said, from different groups would. If they truly . . . What capacity would they have if they were not comfortable with

what was being proposed and were to say they do not support it? And maybe you have a majority of them. Maybe you have one or two of them that do not support the direction the government or Parks would be proposing to go. What would happen in that situation? Just clarify their role.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, it's a good question, a valid question. And going through this process, we haven't had a new provincial park in the province for I think 30 years. So it's an evolving process here with respect to how we work with the local stakeholders, whether it be First Nations or Métis or local area residents, municipalities and what have you.

During the development of a park and in consultation with the advisory board as we lay out the plan for the park. We do develop zoning within the park to suggest that in the future we're going to zone this particular area within the park for cottage development — if in fact we were going to go that way, although that's not the government's policy today — or campsite development or traditional land use in consultation with First Nations on traditional land use inside the park.

So it wouldn't come as a surprise to anybody that down the road, if government moved ahead and said, okay we would like to provide more campsite opportunities within this provincial park now, if there are people who are opposed to that, naturally we would take that into consideration and consider why they are opposed to that. And you know, regardless of what development any government ever does, there's going to be somebody that's not in agreement with it, for whatever reason. But we try to work with the local stakeholders as much as possible to ensure that they're well aware of what the plans are moving forward and to ensure that we protect the ecological value of sensitive areas, of traditional land use areas.

And I mean one of the mandates of provincial parks is not only to provide recreational opportunities for individuals, whether they be Saskatchewan residents or tourists, but it's also the preservation of eco-sensitive areas and conservation of lands in our province that we don't want to see development on. So you know, one of the things I learned is some of the most protected lands in the province are inside provincial parks. So we would take all of those things into consideration as we move forward.

[20:00]

Mr. Vermette: — And I guess so why I raise it in the way I do, just trying to understand the process. And I know that it's been talked to me. It is the area that I represent in the Cumberland constituency and there are, I know, individuals are watching it closely and they're very concerned what will it mean and what's going to . . . Again, it's new to them as well, how will they be impacted. And if it's an area where they traditionally went and whether it's harvesting, whatever it is — whether it's wild meat, whether it would be berries, whether it would be mushrooms — people are just a little concerned of what impact's going to hit and what their involvement's going to be because they want to be consulted.

And that's just some of the feeling that, whether it's traditional territory of First Nations or Métis land, they want to make sure that their issues and their concerns are, when they express them, are dealt with and that government hears them. And that is a

concern, so I just share why I was going to that area.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — And it's a good point and a valid point, and we thank you for that. We're very mindful of that. And you know, if you have constituent concerns, we would appreciate you bringing them forward or having them contact us so we can hear directly from them what concerns they might have.

We are doing a traditional land use study and the treaty implications with respect to the lands that are involved here. And as I understand it, if you have traditional hunting and fishing rights, they will not change whatsoever inside the provincial park boundaries for First Nations people. So it is about education, you're correct, and it's about understanding what the future holds. And so we want to have those conversations; we want to hear from them and make sure that they understand exactly what we're trying to accomplish here.

Mr. Vermette: — And I guess that's clear. And I will be approaching, there's three groups that I'm going to be approaching myself to find out what they feel about it and whether they're . . . get an opportunity to bring their concerns forward or at some point to make sure that, you know, your officials are aware and yourself as a minister know that where their concerns are. And sometimes I don't think some of the individuals are against, you know, the growth and movement, and that seeing they want to share what's there. And that's part of the tradition that they believe in. They want to share it, but they just don't want somebody coming in saying this is the game plan and not respect their values and their concerns to be addressed.

And I think that's clearly what I've heard from most groups or people, I guess, I represent in here. And the concerns I hear from them is they just want to be heard and want to make sure that their concerns are dealt with, and not just saying, well we heard you, and then we're going to go and make the decision. They want to make sure they're heard, but also the issues that they have, government or ministry or whoever it is, whether it's a company, industry, takes their concerns and actually says yes, we hear you, but we will act on your concerns and try to accommodate the issue you have. And that's, I think, truly what they're asking for and most are there. So I share that with you.

Now I'm going to go to another area, and if maybe you can give me some information. And I'm just trying to understand the process, and I know there was, your ministry handled this, and I don't know if any of the dollars in here will assist with this, the LeRoy regional park. Can you give me an update on that because I don't seem to have an answer what happened? Can you just give me some background information so that I have a better understanding of what's happening and what has happened, and then didn't happen, if it didn't happen? Just a good understanding from the process.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair, and I welcome the opportunity to have this discussion and talk about LeRoy because I think that, fairly or unfairly, there's been some comments made about what transpired here that I don't think . . . at least what I've seen in the media doesn't truly reflect what went on here at LeRoy. And the implication being that the Government of Saskatchewan privatized or was trying to privatize the LeRoy regional park, which the minister —

whether it's . . . I'm in this chair, or any other minister— does not have the authority to privatize a regional park. The minister has the authority to create a regional park and has the authority to dissolve a regional park at the request of the regional authority.

So in May of 2011, shortly before I was appointed to cabinet, we received a letter requesting, from the regional park authority in the area, requesting permission to dissolve the regional park and to sell their assets. That was a decision made by the regional park authority. This is a particular regional park authority that was having some difficulty meeting their financial obligations. They had a sizeable debt load that they were carrying, and revenues that they were deriving on an annual basis and contributions from those that make up the regional park authority was not suffice to offset that debt load. They were approached by a private interest, as I understand it; I was not involved in the discussions. They were approached by a private interest to be able to buy the assets of that particular park and then enhance it and develop it and add to it, was the proposal.

So going through the process as per legislation, a formal letter of request from the park authority came into my office in September of 2011 requesting dissolution of the park. We had . . . Sorry, let me back up. We had consultation with them during the summer of 2011, with the regional park authority, regarding the stipulations of *The Regional Parks Act* for dissolution and distribution of the assets, and discussion of any other possible solutions that they might pursue or ponder in relieving themselves of that financial burden.

They indicated to us, to our ministry, that they had exercised all of the different options and opportunities available to them and that, in their best estimation, this was what they wanted to do with the particular assets. The Government of Saskatchewan doesn't own assets in a regional park. It is owned by the regional park authority comprised of a municipality or several municipalities.

My understanding is that the regional park authority approached each of the eight participating municipalities and obtained written consent of their council for dissolution of the park and for distribution of the assets into a community trust. The request was endorsed unanimously by these municipalities, elected officials, and unconditionally by each of the eight councils.

The regional park authority specifically asked government to request a stipulation of the private firm that had made an offer for the park, and they were asked to hold confidential any information concerning the price of the proposed sale. However, information was provided on the potential offer to each of the eight municipal councils to help them inform their decision whether this was a process they wanted to pursue or not.

So cabinet discussed this. I took an issue to cabinet to discuss this; this was at the request of the regional park authority. And they had one of two options at that point in time. They either go into receivership and lose all of their assets to a receiver to try to offset their debt or they do something with those assets, which is what they wanted to do with this particular private interest. So in discussion with my cabinet colleagues, cabinet

decided to allow the dissolution of this regional park if they were in fact able to sell the assets and enter into this agreement with this private entity.

Now as I understand it, the private entity situation did not come to fruition with the organization that had made the original offer, and that we know now that six of the eight participating municipalities have decided that they will provide some additional operational support to try to keep the park going for this year. This may turn into a long-term solution. We don't know. But they have to cough up the money to make this particular area viable. So the idea or notion that the provincial government was privatizing a regional park is just not accurate.

Mr. Vermette: — And I guess, clearly people will have their version of it. And some people will go away that I guess weren't a part of the discussion because of the secrecy or the quietness or being asked not to share any of the information with whoever. And I think that's probably some of the problem that arose from it. And I know there was a town hall meeting. I was contacted myself with concerns about the handling of it.

And so I guess at the end of the day, it sounds like it's staying there. They're going to give it another go, and I wish the municipalities well. And I think it's important that that's an asset that be retained by the people that truly own the regional park. It is the communities' and hopefully will stay that way.

I know that regional parks receive some grant money, some dollars. Can you tell me what type of dollars LeRoy regional park would have received from you? Any type of grants or dollars that they've received to help operate?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, we're going to try to endeavour to find out specifically. I'll just tell you what we're going to find out from another official here.

But the way it works is we have 1.023 million in the budget for the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association. And so what happens is that 75,000 of that is used for their administration. The remainder is set aside into a fund that regional parks can apply to, again arm's-length from government, to apply to for financial assistance for their regional parks. And I think the maximum is — 25,000? — 25,000 per regional park. And I believe they have to match that themselves in order to qualify for the 25,000. So 50,000 in order to get 25,000 from the \$1 million fund, in essence, the \$1 million fund. They will get matching monies up to \$25,000.

Just if you will, Mr. Chair, I'll try to find out what we have for LeRoy specifically. So, Mr. Chair, specifically to Mr. Vermette's question about LeRoy, we don't have that information with us tonight. That's with the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association. We will endeavour to get that information for you and get that over to you.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you very much. I'm going to finish up here real quick. And I guess going back and forth with LeRoy, and people have different versions of the process and how it happened, and I've said that. So we'll leave it at that, with community members or people who work in the park, the regional park, and those that whether they're seasonal or not, they'll have their version. And that's the way it's going to have

to, I guess, be. Having said that, I'll leave that.

The other area I was going to ask you, and it's my last question to you . . . when it comes to parks, and then I'll turn it over to my colleague. And there might be two, depending what's your answer here.

Handling tenders or contracts, works that go on in parks, and I'm going to go into electrical. If you have electrical contracts . . . And I've seen some of those numbers. Through my being the critic, they've come across my desk, that government is, through order in council spending certain dollars because they're doing upgrades to electrical sites and stuff like that. How do you determine who gets those contracts, and how does that process happen? I'm just curious to see how that work by your ministry and your officials, the process. If you could explain that process to me, I'd appreciate that.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, just for the record though, I mean the hon. member referred again to the regional park in his preamble about, you know, there's the secrecy and the municipalities involved, and I just would remind the hon. member that in 2005 there was an application made to the Government of Saskatchewan of the day, to the minister of the Environment at the time, to . . . "It is desirable and in the public interest to authorize the Minister of Environment to dissolve the Tramping Lake Regional Park Authority as requested by the park authority." And it was an order in council taken to cabinet and the government of the day:

The undersigned has the honour, therefore, to recommend that Your Honour's Order do issue, pursuant to section 15 of the *Regional Parks Act* . . . authorizing the Minister of Environment to dissolve the Tramping Lake Regional Park Authority as originally established by Your Honour's Order . . . [back in] 1969.

Signed by David Forbes, the minister of the Environment.

So this was the exact same process that we went through. And I know you talked about some hidden stuff, behind the scenes and whatnot. We weren't involved in negotiations with respect to the private entity. We were simply acting on the request by the regional park authority to dissolve the regional park. What they did with the disposition of their assets was their decision. It wasn't the Government of Saskatchewan. I just want to make sure that's on the record, Mr. Chair, because there's been some confusion about that.

With respect, no different process that went on in the government before. With respect to how we decide, on your last question, who receives the contract for electrifying stalls or what have you in a campground, it is done through an RFP process and through the MERX system, which is the Government of Saskatchewan's system that they utilize for these kinds of projects. And it's not always necessarily the lowest tender that wins it. It is the best qualified tender that wins these contracts.

[20:15]

Mr. Vermette: — Is that normally how they're handled? So contracts . . . And I'll go away from just looking at one, because

that's what came across my desk, was electrical one I believe is what it was. But there might be other contracts that you guys put tenders out or go through a process. Is there certain amounts, or it has nothing to do with it? It has to do with the quality of the work, and that's what it's based on or could be based on? Is that what I'm hearing? I want to be clear what you're saying to me.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — On the technical side of it, Mr. Chair, I'd ask again Lin to outline for the member exactly what the process is.

Ms. Gallagher: — Lin Gallagher. So we go through the tender process. And when we say we don't always take the lowest bidder, we take the lowest qualified. So for different contracts at different levels . . . If you're going to be building a service centre in a provincial park, you know, that is sometimes a \$750,000 project. So they would need to be able to assure us that they can have the financial assurance to do the work. They may have to have certain liability insurance, those kinds of things. So as part of the tender process, each tender package is quite thick, and they have to provide us with the information that we need to know that they would be able to complete the job and to do it within the government protocol that's established.

Mr. Vermette: — Just for clarification then, if there was a tender . . . And I don't know if it can be 100,000. It could be 750,000 you referred to. I'll use 750,000. You have three companies that are qualified and meet the criteria, and whether it's bid bonding that they need, whatever they need to insure, that they meet that. They go ahead and do that. They put their price and — I'll just give an example — one is \$50,000 difference; one is \$100,000 difference. Just to be clear, and I want to make sure it's clear, you could go with the highest bidder, you could go with the middle one, or you could take the lowest bid. Is that what you are saying? I just want to be clear on that.

Ms. Gallagher: — So we would go with, if they are all equally qualified, they all meet the qualifications, then we would go with the lowest bidder.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you. No, I just wanted that cleared up. I guess my last comments . . . And I want to be clear just talking about LeRoy. And yes I know people made their comments, and we were dealing with it at the time that we had to deal with it. And some people will say it was done in this way. Some will say they didn't know about it. They were blindsided. Some were saying it's this way. Some said it's secrecy. All these different things came out, and that's fine.

I just want to be clear. When I refer to that, it's stuff that was shared with me, and I express that. So it's nothing to be harsh about it at all. I'm just saying it's what I was hearing, so I was just bringing back to the table what . . . just to be clear to the minister and your officials.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I appreciate that, Mr. Vermette. And you will know, I think you will know, in *The Regional Parks Act* that's before the legislature as we speak, there is a provision in there that talks about if in the future some of these decisions have to be made, that the minister of the day, the government of

the day must be satisfied that the local area residents are satisfied with the decision that the regional park authorities are making with the future on their particular regional parks — so one of the things that I insisted upon on in the legislation we're bringing forward because it's a brand new regional parks Act.

And I think that this is something that the Regional Parks Association has been asking for for some time now and are quite excited about the possibility of this new Act coming through the Assembly is there is a provision in there to ensure in the future that if any regional park authority undertakes the dissolution of their park, that they undertake and they satisfy the minister of the day that there has been a proper consultation process with the local area residents such that they are well aware of what's going on. And I think it just puts another enhanced protection in there such that you wouldn't hear from local people saying, well we didn't know what was happening with our locally elected officials. And I think perhaps you and I can both agree on that, that that's probably a good provision moving forward.

Mr. Vermette: — Okay. Mr. Chair, at this time I have no further questions. I'd just like to say to the minister and your officials, thank you very much for answering the questions and providing me with the information at a later date that you have agreed to do. Thank you so much.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Vermette. Ms. Chartier, you have some questions for the ministry?

Ms. Chartier: — I do, thank you. I'd like to start, just going to jump in here with Creative Saskatchewan here. In terms of looking at the budget, the 6.5 million that's been allocated in the budget, could you tell me a little bit about . . . I've seen a news release and I think you've said publicly that 5 million will be for an investment program, and then there's 1.5 million that's been possibly transferred from support for provincial arts and culture organizations. So I just want to clarify that the 5 million is for an investment program, and I'd like to know what the 1.5 million for Creative Saskatchewan will be.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, in answer to Ms. Chartier's question, the \$5 million is for an investment fund as outlined in the budget. The 1.5 additional dollars that we see in that particular line item is the creative industry and growth and sustainability fund. We have provisions in place right now to guarantee the creative growth and sustainability funding for the industry associations till the end of August of this fiscal year. And then we've assured them that their administrative requirements will continue to be met through ministry funding if not through Creative Saskatchewan as we move forward.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. Sorry, so right now until the end of August the creative industry organizations will continue to be funded, which I know that they are, but what line item is that in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — It is a little bit confusing, and I appreciate that. The provision of funding through the creative industry growth and sustainability fund for the industry associations was pre-funded through the 2013 budget dollars. We pre-funded them before the beginning of this fiscal year to be guaranteed to the end of August, and then the 1.5 million

will continue in this fiscal year.

We hope Creative Saskatchewan will be up and running, if not by the end of August, then shortly thereafter, certainly by the fall, and that we will provide . . . We have provisions within our own budget to provide them with additional funding or ongoing funding for their administration costs, post end of August, if Creative Saskatchewan is not up and running yet.

Ms. Chartier: — So if it is up and running, the 1.5 million is from September 1st to the end of the fiscal year for the creative industry organizations?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well it's monies that's been allocated towards Creative Saskatchewan, but it will expire at the end of the fiscal year.

Ms. Chartier: — In terms of operation of Creative Saskatchewan then, there's no money built into that budget for operating Creative Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The amount of money required for administration is yet to be determined for Creative Saskatchewan. Obviously we haven't got it up and going yet. The legislation is going through the Assembly as we speak, the spring session. There will be a governance structure put in place, with a board of directors, board of governors, what have you. They will have industry representation on it.

The Arts Board, where the creative industry growth and sustainability fund is currently administered, already takes a \$200,000 administration fee off that 1.5 million. That will be part and parcel of the administration, available for administration in Creative Saskatchewan.

We know that as SaskFilm transitions from its current role into Creative Saskatchewan, there are administrative dollars currently being spent through the approximately 1.2 million that SaskFilm receives from government on an annual basis, that there is a sizable amount of money in there for administration. That will be rolled into Creative Saskatchewan.

So while the budget has not been set specifically for Creative Saskatchewan on the administration side, we believe there's sufficient dollars in there right now as those programs wind down — through SaskFilm and through CIGS [cultural industries growth and sustainability] moving over from the Arts Board into Creative Saskatchewan — for the administration cost to be absorbed there.

Ms. Chartier: — Can I ask why you didn't put them in the budget then or why there's not a line item for Creative Saskatchewan in the budget? If it's SaskFilm money or the Arts Board money, I'm wondering why you didn't directly state that we think X amount of dollars will go to Creative Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Because we have still ongoing specific programs, we know that SaskFilm is still operational. We've indicated in discussions with them it will transition, the funding for that particular program will transition into Creative Saskatchewan eventually. But because they're still operational, they're still doing work with respect to the film industry and the

film employment tax credits, we have to have provisions in the budget for that.

We knew in discussions with Saskatchewan Arts Board that the creative industry growth and sustainability fund was moving over to Creative Saskatchewan; therefore you do see it in this current fiscal year's budget. And there's also discussions and negotiations with the Arts Board on COGO, or Culture on the Go, funding yet.

So they will continue to remain in their specific line items because they are still in existence this fiscal year. Whereas CIGS, or Creative Industry Growth and Sustainability Fund, we know, through discussions with the Arts Board, is moving into Creative Saskatchewan. Therefore it shows up in that line item.

Ms. Chartier: — What are you anticipating or planning in terms of . . . I know that you're still in consultations, but obviously you've put a bill forward. So you must have some sense of what the administration of Creative Saskatchewan will be. Not just a partial year or not just part of SaskFilm being rolled over, but when Creative Saskatchewan is up and running, what are you anticipating spending in terms of on administration of it annually?

[20:30]

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, you know, again Creative Saskatchewan is not up and going yet, so we don't know all of their administrative costs. The board of directors, once they're in place, will determine what . . . We've got negotiations ongoing with the Arts Board on some funding still. So it would be premature for me at this point in time to say it would be X amount of dollars with respect to administration specifically and everything else for programming or the investment fund within Creative Saskatchewan.

But just round figures, we would probably anticipate around half a million dollars, \$500,000 or so on an annual basis for administration costs. Our goal is to put as much towards programming as we possibly can through Creative Saskatchewan.

Ms. Chartier: — So when we talk about programming, that's over and above the investment fund then?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well the existing programming, yes. It's over and above the investment fund.

Ms. Chartier: — So the programming that will be moving over from the Arts Board or anything, the remnants left of SaskFilm, those things, is that what we're referring to?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — That's correct.

Ms. Chartier: — So you anticipate 500,000 on administration as a ballpark figure? And what are you anticipating programming? And I know you said you want to put as much into it as possible, but what do you anticipate that could be? You must have some sense. You've been in consultations for about eight or nine months now.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well again all of the money that exists

for CoGo still exists. All of the money that exists for CIGS still exists. There's a \$5 million investment fund. All the money that exists for SaskFilm still exists. So as these programs come together, it will be determined by the board of directors and senior management at Creative Saskatchewan how it's allocated.

I'm sitting here saying ballpark, you know, of the total amount of money available. Five hundred thousand dollars is less than 10 per cent of the total amount available. Most administration costs run around the 15 per cent neighbourhood or so on these kinds of agencies. So I'm not going to sit here this evening and say that Creative Saskatchewan can only spend \$500,000 in administration or what have you. What we're going to do is work as closely as we can with the new board of directors in determining where we can get the most efficiency we possibly can with respect to administration and ensure there's as many dollars as possible, which we already know is at least \$5 million in the investment fund going towards support for the creative industries.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay, I find . . . You've got a bill. You've been in consultations for quite some time now. And that this is still a detail that still needs to be worked out, actually is a bit surprising.

But in terms of the sector organization, and you've said that CIGS still exists, and I know that you've committed to funding them till the end of August. Is there a long-term commitment? I know that that's something that's been reflected back to me by all the creative industries, that they're worried about the sector organizations continuing to be funded. Is your government committed to continue on funding the sector organizations?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Yes.

Ms. Chartier: — This year and beyond?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — As long as I'm in this chair, yes.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. That's very good. Thank you. In terms of the sector organizations, so there may be a reduction. Some of them right now get money for both administration and programming. I think in your earlier comments, you'd referenced administration. So is it possible some of the programming might be peeled away from some of the sector organizations? I know SaskMusic gets money for both administration and programming. So will that impact that?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Again, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate where you're coming from, but you're asking me to speculate and go down a hypothetical path here. You just indicated in your previous comment about, you know, you would have thought after eight or nine months we would have this working. The reason why we don't have this — I can sit here and say definitively yet — is because there are a lot of moving parts with respect of this agency. There are different interests at play here that all have their viewpoint.

I think you probably saw the article in the paper the other day with respect to the consultation process. The consultation process has 12 different groups at the table with ministry officials on a weekly basis talking about how we move forward

on this particular agency. Some would like to see it a specific way, others would like to see it a different way. So I'm not trying to dodge your question here, I'm just simply letting you know that for me to sit here and give you a hypothetical of what I think may evolve, I think would prejudice the consultation process and bias the consultation process.

And you know, tomorrow I'll be getting a phone call from agency A, B, or C, saying, well you said last night in estimates, Minister, that we're going to take programming funding away, or we're going to take administration funding away because there are duplication of efforts here and whatnot. I don't want to prejudice where we're going to end up on that. I appreciate where you're coming from and why you're asking. We're trying to provide as much clarity as we possibly can on a weekly basis with these agencies at the table.

And I can tell you that, you know — I'm sure you're having the same discussions with them in your role as critic — for the most part, the feedback I get is, well albeit there are differences of opinion at times, there appears to be far more consensus than there is differences of opinion as we continue to move down the path. There were some comments made about not sharing the bill with them before it came into the House. Well that's illegal, and it would be a breach of members' privileges for me to share a bill with people before it's introduced in the House.

So you know, we're trying to follow a consultation process that has been open and transparent. There's no hidden agenda here. And I'm simply, you know, I'm not in a position to sit here tonight and tell you definitively we will have X amount of dollars for administration, X amount of dollars for program spending in perpetuity.

We are going to try and provide an effective organization, and I say we in the sense of ensuring that it has the legislative clout and authority to do what it needs to do. We're going to try and provide as many dollars as we possibly can to them. We're going to continue to respect the Arts Board and the role that they play in the cultural sector in the province. But at the same time we want to engage with them to determine what's the best mechanism by which we can fund these organizations, not only the industry associations, but Creative Saskatchewan itself as a vehicle for providing that financial support.

Ms. Chartier: — I appreciate that there's lots of moving parts and money being taken from here and here and having to be reallocated. But I think just the question, do you see that the sector organizations, if you've got a body, Creative Saskatchewan, that's offering programming, do you see the sector organizations then as a bit of redundancy? The sector organizations, obviously the administration piece there, the connection to the creators, for sure, that's an important avenue. But the programming piece, do you foresee a redundancy between the sector organizations having programming and Creative Saskatchewan? And if so, that's where I was getting at with respect to removing programming from some of the sector organizations.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — What I see is it would be my preference to not see a duplication of efforts, to not see a duplication of funding with respect to the very things you just talked about. So where again we can find efficiencies, where again we can

continue to sustain the industry associations at the level in which they're comfortable at and what they're used to, if you will, the lifestyle to which they've become accustomed to, if you will, we want to ensure that.

If there's a duplication of funding that we can, through Creative Saskatchewan, find that we can eliminate that duplication — again, Creative Saskatchewan, not this minister or officials — I would strongly encourage them. And I think the industry associations would want to see that as well to ensure that as much dollars are going towards programming and support for the individual genres, if you will, the artists within those genres rather than financing administration.

Ms. Chartier: — You had talked obviously lots of moving parts and many different interests. The creative industries are obviously not a homogeneous group. There's many different interests around the table. And I know one of the things that's been flagged actually, I was cc'd [carbon copy] on an email that I know you realize I was cc'd on around reconciling differences between some of . . . the bill. For example, writing: I know the publishers don't believe writing is part of the creative industries and they see it under the auspices of the Arts Board. But obviously for film, writing is part of the creative process, or they see it very differently.

So with all these disparate groups, there has been . . . I don't think you still have consensus in the bill. So how do you reconcile all these differences in a piece of legislation?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well again I would say that that's part of the consultation process is that . . . Trust me, I'm not trying to be flippant here, but that's a very general question with respect to asking me sitting here this evening to say, well how are you going to reconcile these differences? That's exactly what we've been doing over the last eight or nine months with respect to this consultation process, is sitting in a room and talking about these differences.

I've met with the different organizations on several occasions. I've met with them individually. I've met with them in plenary sessions. I have continued to say that my door is always open. I don't think I've . . . Well I know I've never turned down a meeting with any of them if they have a concern about where the consultation process is going. I've met with a couple of them just this past week to talk about the specific thing you're talking about.

And I don't think it would serve the process well for the minister to inject himself into the discussions when I think the working group . . . and Jerry and Twyla have been doing a great job, senior officials here have been doing a great job with the working group on a weekly basis. One of the complaints I heard was they felt we ought to be meeting more often, more than once a week. Well I appreciate that. Others would not think we ought to be meeting more than once a week or maybe even once a week is too much. So these are the kinds of disparate views that we're trying to reconcile here and ensure that we are moving forward.

Nobody in that room should be surprised if there was a bill introduced in the House this spring, and that was talked about. I recall being asked, back in December, to introduce something

before the end of December. I think you and I had a conversation similar to that over the Christmas holidays on the phone about moving forward before the end of December, December 2012. We weren't in a position to do that. So we had to continue moving down the path where we felt people were comfortable enough that we had enough consensus to bring forward a bill because we have to, through a timetable in the legislature, as you well know, to get it passed this spring to get Creative Saskatchewan up and running so we can move the money through that organization. We had to pass it as a budget bill this spring session.

So we had to get a bill into the House here. The regulations have not been completed yet. There's plenty of opportunity through this consultation process for you and others to provide input on what should be in there from a regulatory perspective.

And you know, legislation is, particularly regulation is a living and breathing entity. I mean it can be changed and amended and enhanced on an ongoing basis, as this particular agency evolves. So again you're asking me to be very specific on how to bring these different opinions together and I think that's exactly what we're trying to accomplish. Will we achieve 100 per cent consensus? Probably not. But will we achieve consensus in the sense that people can agree that we have to move forward, so therefore let's get going on this? That's where we want to get to at this point in time.

Ms. Chartier: — I appreciate the fact that legislation is, should be a living document. So in light of the fact that, obviously with a budget bill you can't present it to the stakeholders before the fact, but I had heard from several stakeholders who had concerns about the actual bill. And you've gotten lots, you're getting feedback weekly about this? Would you be open to amendments of the bill?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, there was some communication, some correspondence. I know that the hon. member was copied on it from the Publishers Group specifically. And perhaps you weren't copied on an email that I received and others received from several different participants in the consultation process where they tried to explain to the publishers why writing was important to be included into this. So you were cc'd.

I also received another email from the Publishers Group from Jillian Bell, the co-executive director of the Publishers Group, the following day after the original email I think you're referring to where . . . And I can put this into the record, Mr. Chair, because there's many, many people on it, although I don't see the hon. member's name on this. But to paraphrase:

SPG [Sask Publishers Group] is concerned about those three clauses mentioned in the Interpretation section of Bill 89 concerning Creative Saskatchewan. To wit, the term "creative industry" rather than "creative industries" . . .

Whereas we explained to Ms. Bell that the singular represents industries as well, as per Justice's advice in drafting legislation, that that is a common practice they use in drafting legislation for all bills for the Government of Saskatchewan, not just our government but obviously previous governments. So we explained that to SPG, and they understood that. That that

covered that off.

[20:45]

“... the inclusion of “writing” in the clause “writing and publishing”; and the use of the term “creation of intellectual property.” I think that was explained to Ms. Bell as to why that was important to the film industry, for example.

She goes on to say:

SPG recognizes that the remainder of the Bill, and in fact, the majority of the Bill, does indeed reflect the discussions of and the work of the Creative Saskatchewan working group.

It was not SPG’s intent to indicate that the entire process had been flawed and that all of the SCIDC [Saskatchewan Cultural Industries Development Council, the group in SaskCulture] constituent representatives and the working group had been ignored. It was SPG’s intent to call into question only the definition of terms as outlined above, [which have been explained to her] and to indicate that for the book publishing, including ‘writing’ and ‘creation of intellectual property’ are extremely problematic in terms of this enabling legislation.

I do hope this clarifies the position SPG has taken on this matter. We are all working very hard to try to get this right the first time, and we appreciate the attention and the work you and your ministry have put into Saskatchewan’s Creative Industries.

So when these issues come up in the drafting of legislation, what we’ve tried to do . . . And again after having read the article on Friday or Saturday, whenever it was, when Ms. Bonk was quoted, I immediately contacted the assistant deputy minister and asked her to reach out again to Vanessa to find out specifically because it was very general in that article. And I understand how articles can be like that in the sense that you might have said something for 20 minutes, and then here’s what was published or here’s what was printed in the article.

But I asked again specifically, what are your concerns? Please put them on the table, your specific concerns, so we can try to address those. And I know the ADM [assistant deputy minister] had that conversation with Ms. Bonk on Monday morning, and that will be part and parcel of further discussions as we go along.

Ms. Chartier: — I think my question . . . And I’m not saying that there should be specific amendments at this point in time, and obviously we will be having that opportunity to discuss the bill when it’s moved to committee. But your general sense then is that all the creative industries are, in light of not seeing the bill before it was read, all the creative industries are satisfied with the bill?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — My general sense in discussion with officials that I meet with on a weekly basis — if not more often, depending on the week; I’m sure they feel they come over here far too often — is that there is general consensus on the bill. The bill is the framework. There is still meat to be put to the

bones, if you will, through regulation. And that’s why we continue to have discussions with them as to how that . . .

The other aspect of course is policy. And policy will be determined by the board of directors for Creative Saskatchewan which will have representatives on it from the creative industries, at their choosing.

So there are different levels here. And I don’t want to — and I understand if people have specific concerns about a clause in the bill or what have you — but I don’t want to lose the bigger picture here with respect to what we’re trying to accomplish as we move through the different levels of detail for how the agency will operate. There will be opportunities again for input on these different things.

Ms. Chartier: — And of course you don’t want to negate the bigger picture here, but you want to make sure that you get it right, is the point. You don’t want to get lost in the details, but sometimes the details matter. And if this is a brand new piece of legislation, you should try your damndest to get it right the first time.

With respect to the regulations, when are you anticipating the regulations will be written?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So again, Mr. Chair, I appreciate the question. The idea is to have the regulations necessary to have Creative Saskatchewan enacted and going, up and running, if you will, by September 1st at the latest. And again I’m reminded by the deputy minister that regulations can be changed or amended or added to at any given time once the agency is up and running. So it’s important for us. It’s important for me and our government to ensure that we can get this entity up and running as quickly as possible.

You know, you mentioned about getting it right the first time. Well that’s exactly what we’re trying to do. But you know, I don’t want to mislead people or have people think that if one agency or one organization disagrees with a particular clause or what have you, that that in and of itself doesn’t . . . It’s not consensus; therefore you ought not to proceed.

You know, the definition of getting it right may differ in people’s minds, but it’s an evolving entity. It’s something that has never been done before in the province. Other provinces are doing it. We’re trying to learn from best practices there as well. And getting it right means, in my view, is getting it up and running as quickly as we possibly can with the legislation in place that was asked for by the creative industries, by the way, to have this enshrined in legislation as opposed to something in the ministry or something as a Treasury Board Crown or something of that nature.

So again, just by the very fact we introduced legislation was something that the creative industries told us they want to see in legislation. So we are trying to accomplish that as quickly as possible. But there will be opportunity for input on the regulations as we move forward.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. In terms of the 1 million transition fund, the creative industries transition fund, do you see that as a pilot project that will be reviewed, or do you see

the \$5 million fund operating exactly as or very near the transition fund?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Right. So just so I'm clear, Mr. Chair, Ms. Chartier, if you could just repeat — sorry — the last part of your question? Is it my view that the adjudication process that the Arts Board is undertaking right now with the transition fund will continue to be the adjudication process in Creative Saskatchewan? Is that what you asked?

Ms. Chartier: — Not via the Arts Board but via Creative Saskatchewan. So the model that you've established for the transition fund, for the \$1 million, is that anticipated to be the model for this \$5 million fund?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Right. So the adjudication process that the Arts Board is utilizing right now was a negotiated model, if you will, between government, the Arts Board, and the creative industries. So it is serving its purpose with the million dollars.

Do I see that moving over lock, stock, and barrel to Creative Saskatchewan? Not necessarily. I think as the transitional fund has been fully subscribed here with this next intake — I think closes this Friday — and I'm assuming the remaining dollars will be allocated after that intake. I don't know for sure. I think there's some \$300,000 or so left roughly. I think that'll be time for again government to sit back, take a look at how that process worked, how that model worked, and sit down with the creative industries and get their feedback to determine . . . to hear them out as to how they felt that process worked.

Many of them applied, as I'm sure you're aware. I think there's been some 26 different entities that have received funding. Of course the maximum is \$60,000 since the transition fund was announced and started taking on applications.

So I guess the short answer to your question is no. I don't see that model being the one that would just move over as is. It may well be, but again I'm being hypothetical here right now because there is work to do. There is time to analyze what took place and how well that worked and what we can enhance or modify or improve upon.

Ms. Chartier: — So just to clarify, I think I hear you saying that there will be an evaluation of the transition fund delivery.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — That's correct.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. Thank you for that. I know that that seems to be a pressing issue for many of the creative industries. One of the other things that I'm hearing is that the Saskatchewan Creative Industries Development Council, which is the body of creative industries, has not been recognized by your ministry. I think that there's been comments and meetings that there was the feeling that this organization had been disbanded. And I know the cultural industries have felt that this could serve as the nominating body for the cultural industries representatives on Creative Saskatchewan. So I just want to know where the ministry is with respect to the Creative Industries Development Council?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the question. I don't want to suggest that we don't recognize

that particular SCIDC within SaskCulture, but it's not the body that we recognize to nominate the representatives on the board of directors for Creative Saskatchewan. It doesn't represent all the different creative industries. So we've indicated to them through our discussions that we are looking to the creative industry associations to provide those nominees with respect to Creative Saskatchewan's board of directors.

Ms. Chartier: — Who is missing from the body?

[21:00]

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I'm informed that theatre and dance are not represented on that council. Sorry, Mr. Chair, I think dance was included in all of these consultations, at your request.

Ms. Chartier: — Thanks for the recognition of that. But you've gone to the consultation that was organized at the end of February. The retreat or discussion was organized by this body. And the meetings that you've been going to are organized by this body. And I understand . . . Have theatre and dance said that they . . . I'm going to rephrase that. February was organized by this body. I saw some heads shaking. So the February meetings were organized by this body. Have you talked to theatre and dance about their thoughts on this council? I know that most of the creative industries feel like this is the body that should be utilized.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Again, Mr. Chair, I appreciate where you're coming from. This is an evolving situation, as I've indicated earlier. We're having discussions with them, consultations. There was one set of meetings that that particular entity organized amongst themselves out in Dundurn I believe. And well we were invited, the ministry was invited to the last day . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. After we requested to be in attendance. So we weren't there. I think it met for two days, if not three days. The ministry officials were there on the last day. So you know, to suggest . . . I'm not implying that you're suggesting that they've organized all these meetings. They did organize a group, or a set of meetings, three days, with the different industry associations.

Our meetings since last June, as you are well aware, when we entered this consultation process, had been with the individual industry associations. And that's who we continue to work with and that's who we want to continue to work with. I'm not for a second suggesting that the SCIDC is not a representative body in the sense of who they might have representation from. It's just not an entity that, when we have Creative Saskatchewan enshrined in legislation and we're having industry association representatives on the board of directors, those are the organizations we want to go to for their representatives.

Now if that body gets together and says, well we want this person for music, and music agrees with that, I suppose that's a different conversation. But we haven't had that conversation at this point in time, so we will continue to work with the entities that we've been working with all along.

Ms. Chartier: — Just acknowledge though, that this entity is recognized and supported as a community of interest with SaskCulture. So it's a fairly representative body.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I'm aware of that.

Ms. Chartier: — So I'm curious if the creative industries who you're meeting with on a weekly basis . . . My understanding is that the creative industries — and perhaps it's minus theatre and dance; I don't know that to be true — but these meetings that you're having on a weekly basis, would you say that the consensus is that the council should be the body that is nominating? Is that what you're hearing in these consultations?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, in answer to the hon. member's question, it's my understanding through the discussions that we don't have consensus at that table that that particular entity should be the representative body for nominating people on to the Creative Saskatchewan board of directors.

Ms. Chartier: — Just to clarify here though. So we've discussed consensus. Obviously not everyone with consensus. We have different definitions of consensus here, I think, working because consensus is when everybody gives a little bit and not everybody is pleased with the position. And so you've got the majority rules versus consensus. So there might not be consensus, but is the majority of the group thinking that this is the way to go?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well again I'm not at the table. What I'm suggesting to you is that if you have one or two members in the creative industries who suggest that, what is it, SCIDC should be the representative body nominating representatives on to Creative Saskatchewan board and three or four other entities who are either indifferent or disagree with that, I would not suggest that that's either consensus or a majority rule.

We also don't know . . . We also know that not all the creative industries are represented through SCIDC. And we also know that in legislation there's no provision for this particular entity or this council because we don't control the council or the formation of the council. There's nothing to say that that council in and of itself somewhere down the road could say, well you're no longer on the council, yet we're still the representative body to put nominees forward for Creative Saskatchewan. What we have said in consultation with the creative industries is they want the opportunity to nominate individuals from their organizations who represent them to Creative Saskatchewan's board of directors.

So you know, we can sit here and debate all night I suppose if you want whether they are the representative body for the creative industries or not. They are an entity who has a voice in this. They are part of SaskCulture. I understand that. They have representation on their committee or their council from the different creative industries, not all of them. And so therefore they want to engage in this. I understand that. At this point in time we are not prepared to recognize them as the representative body to nominate individuals on to Creative Saskatchewan board of directors.

Ms. Chartier: — Well thank you. So you will, you anticipate then each creative industry then will have an opportunity to nominate someone? How do you see that working?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well again there's, according to

legislation, there's five spots on an 11-person board for the creative industries. One simply has to do the math to realize that that doesn't have every creative industry having a representative on the board of directors, so we are still discussing that with them as to how they're going to come up with their nominees.

Ms. Chartier: — And I think that that's the point that this council could possibly address that, because if you're saying, well you only have five spots and there's X number of creative industries, someone gets left out. So to have a representative body, I would just like to make that point.

But I'll switch gears here a little bit. We had talked about the SaskFilm allocation and possibly some of that allocation being rolled into Creative Saskatchewan. I'm curious as to why the allocation for SaskFilm was the same this year as it was last year. It was a bit of a surprise in the budget, I think, both for me and for many people in the industry.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, it's just simply a matter of, we know that SaskFilm was going to be continuing in this fiscal year. They have work to do yet. In speaking with their board Chair, they were undertaking to complete that work, the administration of film employment tax credits and some of the program work that they're doing. And as that again as that entity rolls into Creative Saskatchewan, we want to ensure that we kept that funding whole as possible and have that roll over to Creative Saskatchewan at the appropriate time.

Ms. Chartier: — How many . . . I guess what's the plan with respect to SaskFilm? How many tax credit applications still need to be processed and what's the plan for staff? Is this the last year for SaskFilm?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, in answer to the hon. member's question, as of June 30th, 2012, there were a number of applications made to SaskFilm, again an arm's-length agency from government who did an adjudication process on those applications. There would be a fiscal number in this just recently past budget year with respect to how much was expended on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan for film employment tax credits. And then we, as we prepare the budget for this year in consultation with SaskFilm, determine what that number looks like for 2013-14, of which you'll see in the budget there's \$5 million allocated for that.

So based on the work that would be required to do the necessary administration of the FETC [film employment tax credit] for that particular level of funding, it was agreed upon with the SaskFilm board Chair and their administration to continue to do that work on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. And then as we wind through to the transition period into Creative Saskatchewan, there will be expertise that will be brought in to Creative Saskatchewan that could continue to do that work and therefore the funding would transfer over to Creative Saskatchewan as SaskFilm wound down.

And we've had that discussion with the board of directors — the board Chair, at least — at SaskFilm, and with senior management over there to put in place a plan for as we wind that program down and transition it to Creative Saskatchewan, that they prepare, at least for their purposes, the ending of government support or government financial support to

SaskFilm.

They're a non-profit entity that can continue to operate if they so choose with membership fees or whatever sources of revenue they can . . . If they choose to continue, and that is their decision. They'd have to find other sources of revenue other than the government support.

Ms. Chartier: — So SaskFilm will be wound down by the end of this fiscal year.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well again, our funding . . .

Ms. Chartier: — Sorry. Yes.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Our funding from the Government of Saskatchewan will be wound down as Creative Saskatchewan gets up and running. The discussions we've had with SaskFilm have indicated that we will be transitioning our funding over to Creative Saskatchewan.

Ms. Chartier: — The question around staff then. Again you've mentioned bringing the expertise over. Does that mean staff from SaskFilm will be moving over to Creative Saskatchewan?

[21:15]

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well again, you're asking me to manage Creative Saskatchewan and I . . . There's going to be probably an interim CEO [chief executive officer] or executive director or general manager, whatever the title is, until the board chooses a new executive director, CEO. They will be, that individual will be tasked with staffing of Creative Saskatchewan, that we will want to see, as I said, expertise within the different genres within Creative Saskatchewan to help provide support to the different creative industries.

So if staff at SaskFilm . . . Once it's, Creative Saskatchewan is up and running and the CEO or whomever the title is, whatever the, I think we use CEO in the legislation, whoever that individual is, either the full-time one or the interim one as the board determines, will, through allocation of budget, determine how many staff he or she will have at Creative Saskatchewan. And then it be will up to individuals at SaskFilm to apply for those jobs.

It's not my role or anybody in the ministry's role to say this individual from SaskFilm will move over to Creative Saskatchewan, because I'm not managing that entity and neither is government.

Ms. Chartier: — But you're anticipating that that's a possibility. That's where the expertise in film is here in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Again, I absolutely would agree that there is expertise within SaskFilm for the film industry. And it would be — again, I don't want to prejudice the process — but it would, you know, from my perspective as a layperson who's not experienced in the film industry, it would just make intuitive sense to me that somebody with that kind of expertise and experience who's working in SaskFilm would want to continue at Creative Saskatchewan, that the opportunity would

be there for them to move over. But again I'm not going to make those decisions here, but I would concur with your hypothetical that absolutely you could take the expertise there and transpose it to Creative Saskatchewan.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. So the 5 million obviously with the tax credit money in place this year — and I suspect that there's probably in the applications that came in up until the end of June there were probably projects that might not be wrapped by the end of this fiscal year — so I'm wondering what the budget allocation for the tax credit . . . And not the budget allocation, but how many more tax credit film projects can we anticipate here?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — We're not going to set the budget for next year sitting at this table tonight, but we will work with SaskFilm and then Creative Saskatchewan to determine how much work is outstanding because the applications that were received until the end of June of 2012 have until December 31st, 2014 to complete their work to qualify for the tax credit that have been adjudicated by SaskFilm. So we anticipate the number to be lower than 5 million next year. There will be a number, I'm quite sure. I just know definitively what that number would be yet.

Ms. Chartier: — Do you know the number of projects that will be wrapping before the end of 2014?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I don't have that information here. Gerry was showing me a total application number from last June, but those weren't the ones that were adjudicated or it was based on the number that we were given by SaskFilm for the film credits. So that number is really irrelevant. We can get that number from SaskFilm for you.

Ms. Chartier: — That sounds good. A question around the sound stage. Obviously SaskFilm operates the sound stage and, correct me if I'm wrong, but previously SaskFilm, the budget allocation for the sound stage was in the SaskFilm budget. Is that correct? Or was that under the provincial arts and culture organizations as is the case right now?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Sorry. Are you talking about the accommodation costs or the operating costs?

Ms. Chartier: — The operating costs.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — The operating costs.

So, Mr. Chair, we have another official who's . . . we're going to bring that official in and get the specific information. But there is accommodation costs obviously that are picked up through Central Services, or in accordance with Central Services, who looks after government-owned buildings through the government. And then there's an operating agreement with SaskFilm to establish a budget for the utilization of the sound stage. And then there's an agreement in place with respect to, if they exceed that budget, then there's a percentage that SaskFilm gets to keep. If there's not, then the ministry picks up the remaining costs for the operation of that. But we'll get that number for you and how the agreement works specifically, if we can just come back to that.

The Chair: — Mr. Minister, while you're waiting for the officials, it's 9:21 right now. Maybe it's a good time to take a quick break and we will reconvene at 9:30.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

[21:30]

The Chair: — Well welcome back to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. We are here this evening discussing vote no. 27, Parks, Culture and Sport, central management and services, subvote (PC01). Welcome back, Mr. Minister and I understand you had some officials changed to proceed with the questioning.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to get back to Ms. Chartier's question about the operating costs on the sound stage, we're just going to confer and get more specificity for you and be right back to you.

So, Mr. Chair, it's a rather complicated formula. But the short answer to the hon. member's question is of the 1.2 million allocated to SaskFilm, none of that money goes towards the operation of the sound stage.

There are accommodation costs on the capital side, if you will, or the rent side. Then there is a rate card that is established for the utilization of the sound stage. And it is a fairly lengthy, complicated document, but we can provide the hon. member a copy if you would like. I mean I can spend quite a bit of time here going through this if you want, but why don't we send a copy over to you?

Ms. Chartier: — That would be very good. Time actually goes pretty fast. It's already 9:30.

What is the plan . . . Obviously SaskFilm operates the sound stage or the production studio. So when SaskFilm is wound down or no longer receives funding from the province, what are the plans for the sound stage?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So again, Mr. Chair, the operation of the sound stage, the administration of the sound stage will be transferred over to Creative Saskatchewan.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. In this fiscal year, how many bookings are there at this point in time for the sound stage?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So official bookings right now, there are zero for this fiscal year at the sound stage.

Ms. Chartier: — And how many were there in . . . So zero bookings for 2013-2014?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Yes.

Ms. Chartier: — Yes, okay. And how many were there in the last fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, I'm informed that it's not based on number of bookings at the sound stage, it's based on what they call capacity utilization and the estimated number for 2012-13, '12-13, was 19 per cent.

Ms. Chartier: — What does that mean?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So of the available . . . So to give you some context, over the years the highest number that I see back to 2004-05 was 68 per cent. So available space, what they call capacity utilization, at the high of 2004-05 was 68 per cent. So it gives you some context. This past year it was 19 per cent.

Ms. Chartier: — And what is the anticipated capacity utilization rate for this fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, we don't have a number that's projected for this year on utilization, by virtue of the film employment tax credit, with respect to the number of productions that might qualify for that, may or may not use the sound stage, may or may not come to fruition with respect to their production. So we don't have a number projected for what the capacity utilization will be for the sound stage this fiscal year.

Ms. Chartier: — Traditionally though aren't there usually by this time of the year, looking at sort of the high season, summer productions . . . Is this not usually, there normally would be expected bookings of the sound stage?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — There are productions going on in the province that, depending on what time of the year they're going to do their production, they would may or may not be using the sound stage. I can't sit here and tell you that this time of the year is the busiest time of the year, whatever the case may be. It's up to the individual producers and their productions as to whether they're (a) going to utilize the sound stage, and (b) when they start their production.

Ms. Chartier: — Historically speaking, in the life of the sound stage, this time of year would it normally be booked?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well again, I'm informed that summertime is usually the busier time for the utilization of the sound stage and productions in the province, but I can't sit here and tell you that, you know, in April of any given year, this is the capacity utilization of the sound stage. Again it depends on . . . I mean the numbers fluctuate wildly with respect to capacity utilization during any given fiscal year. This year there's currently zero.

Ms. Chartier: — Obviously you mentioned the peak in '04-05, right before the crash. In the life of the sound stage, do you have that number for each of the years in the life of the sound stage?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I have, Mr. Chair, from 2002-03, and I can read into the record, if you will: 2002-03 it's 17 per cent; '03-04, 19 per cent; '04-05, 68 per cent; '05-06, 57 per cent; '06-07, 44 per cent; '07-08, 64 per cent; '08-09, 54 per cent; '09-10, 21 per cent; '10-11, 40 per cent; '11-12, 57 per cent; '12-13 estimated, 19 per cent; for an average of 45 per cent.

Ms. Chartier: — Obviously with right now nothing booked in the sound stage — and I know that you've expressed some thoughts on what will happen to at least one of the sound stages — can you tell me a little bit more about the plans for the production studios?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well again, government's been very clear that we continue to pay for the production studio; we continue to subsidize the operation of that facility to make it available. In consultation with the creative industries, one of the things that came out, obviously from the film industry in particular, was that we should continue to make that production studio available for commercial production or movies, film, digital, whatever the case may be.

It was also suggested during the course of the consultation process that we perhaps take one of the sound stages and use it for dance or theatre or collaboration amongst the creative industries. We think that that's a viable idea and potential. Obviously it's being completely underutilized as we speak. So you know, it is I think in the neighbourhood of 73,000 square feet over there. We've indicated that there is office space available. We've made that also available to the creative industries at cost. And during the consultation process it was suggested to us that there's no particular area or venue in the province where these creative industries can see each other on a regular basis to do collaboration efforts, if you will. And so we offered up the opportunity to have office space because there are offices currently at the production studios available to the creative industries to set up shop there. If they have an office in Saskatoon and they want to put a satellite office down here, they can certainly do so at the production studio, at cost, for a two-year period, and start to work towards that collaborative centre, if you will.

So the administration and the future direction of the sound stage will be determined by Creative Saskatchewan, and I suspect the market will drive how that particular facility is to be utilized in the future. It continues to be subsidized by taxpayers to make it available for specifically film and television production, which was said to us loud and clear during the consultation process, and government's committed to that for the foreseeable future.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. One thing that you had, just going back a little bit here, you had talked about the need to choose an interim director of Creative Saskatchewan. Was that before a board is in place that the interim director will be in place? How do you see that all working out?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So our goal is to have a board in place, first and foremost, and then a working collaboration with the board to have an interim. It will take some time, I suspect, for the board to do a search for a CEO. And so if Creative Saskatchewan is up and running, they have their governance structure in place with the board, we will want to see it get operational as quickly as possible. So I am anticipating that there will be a need for an interim CEO, in discussion with, once the board is in place.

Ms. Chartier: — So the board will be choosing the interim CEO?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — We will work with the board to decide on the interim CEO.

Ms. Chartier: — And when do you anticipate the board being up and running?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well if the legislature passed the

legislation with respect to Creative Saskatchewan, we could have it up and going sooner rather than later. I'm not saying that flippantly. I'm just indicating that there is a legislative timetable here with respect to the legislation being in place. We can't appoint a board until we have the bill passed, to have the legal authority to construct or create this entity. So as soon as the bill passes the legislature, we will work very quickly to get a board in place.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. So just to be clear then that in terms of selecting both the interim CEO and the CEO, the board will be choosing the CEO in connection with the ministry. Or how do you see that working?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, I want to be specific because the legislation speaks to this. Clause 17(1) says, under the chief executive office and other employees section of the proposed legislation before the House right now:

Notwithstanding *The Public Service Act, 1998* but subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the board shall appoint a chief executive officer for the agency and determine the chief executive officer's conditions of employment and remuneration.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that. Switching gears here a little bit but still along Creative Saskatchewan, so McNair and associates is working on the establishment of Creative Saskatchewan. Is that correct?

[21:45]

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Sorry, Ms. Chartier. Could you just repeat your question again specifically?

Ms. Chartier: — I understand that your ministry has engaged McNair and associates. In your . . . I'm having trouble speaking at this time of night. In January, I believe, when you had your announcement, there was \$150,000 from the last fiscal year to hire a consultant. Is that in fact McNair?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — That's correct, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Chartier: — And has that money already flowed?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — The \$150,000?

So, Mr. Chair, the \$150,000 that was allocated in the last fiscal year, of that government has expended \$48,000 to the end of this previous fiscal year. And the contract was for \$88,000 with McNair. So we'll have to find \$40,000 in Mr. Folk's budget to pay for the remainder of that contract with McNair.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that. So there are some budget implications obviously. Was this a tendered contract or was there an RFP?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — It's referred to as an invitational tender. So there's certain businesses in the province that have the capability of doing the work we were looking for, so they were invited to tender on this work.

Ms. Chartier: — How many organizations were invited to

tender?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, there were four firms invited to tender.

Ms. Chartier: — And did all four put in a proposal? And I know earlier in the conversation with my colleague, Mr. Vermette, we had the discussion about how you choose a contract around skill and ability, costs, those kinds of things. How did McNair fare in all of that?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So again not dissimilar to the answer to Mr. Vermette's question, it was based around obviously a set of criteria. These companies had thresholds they had to be able to meet, and in this particular case, McNair was the lowest bidder.

Ms. Chartier: — And they all met the threshold, but McNair was the lowest bidder. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — No. Mr. Chair, in answer to the hon. member's question, two didn't meet the criteria and two did. And McNair was the successful applicant or invitee, if you will, of the two that remained.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that. Just out of curiosity, there was no capacity in-house — and not that McNair doesn't do fine work — but there was no capacity in-house to do this work?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, in response to the hon. member's question, a couple of things. One is that during the consultation process it was impressed upon ministry officials that an outside agency or external advice would be welcome. And secondly, we were looking for expertise and start-up business acumen, if you will, which we don't have a lot of in the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. We have some very, very bright people in our ministry. Starting up new businesses is not one of our key areas of operation.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that. Totally changing gears here, the Conexus budget allocation was cut in half this year. And I think in the media immediately following the budget, you had mentioned that you wanted it to operate more like a business. And just a few things here. We also have an order in council dated March 27th, 2013. That's a wholesale change of the board with ministry people being put on the board. So I'm wondering, what is in store for Conexus?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the question on the Conexus Arts Centre. And it's an obvious question with the budget showing up as a line item where the operating subsidy from government to the Conexus Arts Centre has been halved in this fiscal year. I'll deal with your latter part of your question first on the change of the board.

The board had been in place for three years, whose terms had expired in December of 2012. We asked that board to continue on for an additional three months to get through the budget process with management over there for this fiscal year, which they agreed to do and complied with and went through that process.

On the operating subsidy itself, when I became minister, I met

with the board and had ministry officials working with the then board to determine if there was a way to, through the operations, to determine if there was a way to eliminate the operating subsidy altogether from government. It is the only facility in the province of Saskatchewan of its type that receives an operating grant from the provincial government to operate on an annual basis — has ever since its inception in 1967.

So one of the things that I was tasked to do as minister was to work with that board to determine if there was a way to eliminate the operating subsidy. Management subsequently came back and the board came back and presented a plan that they felt that they had a business plan in place that would allow them to operate with half of the subsidy for this coming year — at least this coming year. And so that was where we went.

Obviously as the spender of the taxpayer's dollar, if you will, we're always looking for opportunities to reduce that amount of money, that in a commercial operation — which what the Conexus Arts Centre is is a commercial operation — if we can reduce operating tax dollars to subsidize it, we want to find those efficiencies and try and do that. And that's exactly why we plugged it into the budget at that particular number.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. With respect to the board, so the board terms all ended at the end of 2012, which is fine, and you asked them to stay on. But why, first of all, why didn't you appoint a new board? And am I wrong in looking at this list of new board members and it's all ministry staff?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — No, that's not correct. It's not this ministry's staff.

Ms. Chartier: — I'm sorry — government, government's. My apologies.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Right. The hon. member is correct. They are all professional public servants and work within the Government of Saskatchewan, the executive side of Government of Saskatchewan. So when the term had expired in December with an additional three months, we put in place what we call an interim-based board, a skills-based board. We brought in specific expertise from different areas in government to sit on that board to work with management now to continue to look for ways to present two government options on what we might be able to do with that facility over the next 6 to 12 months. And they will be working with management. I'm informed that the new board met for the first time today.

A Member: — No, not the whole board.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Not the whole board. Okay I apologize. Met with management and is working with them on looking at an array of options, including the status quo, as to what we might do with that facility as we move into the future.

Ms. Chartier: — When you say what you might do with the facility . . . I know you've talked about, just a moment or two ago, getting rid of all money from the province, and I appreciate your point. I've talked to people at TCU Place in Saskatoon. There's a bone to pick between the two facilities, between Saskatoon and Regina. So my question then: lowering the operating subsidy from the government, but when you say what

we might do with the facility, I'm not quite sure what you mean by that.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well again there's a range of options we could look at. There may be, as you mentioned, TCU Place in Saskatoon. It is owned and operated by the city of Saskatoon. As I mentioned, there is no other facility of this type in the province that receives a provincial subsidy for its operation. So government is interested in taking a look at a wide array of options, everything from selling the facility to having a third party manage it to having the existing management in place and provide a budget whereby the taxpayer, provincial taxpayer, is not subsidizing it any longer to a point where government may say, you know what? It's a facility that we ought to be subsidizing, and therefore we'll continue to provide a provincial subsidy to it in some form or fashion.

So we've had expressions of interest from third parties to government to take a look at everything from managing the facility to purchasing the facility. And we felt it's time that, working with the current management team and the board that's been put in place now, to have options presented to government for their consideration on that.

[22:00]

Ms. Chartier: — Do you have a timeline on that? So this is your skills-based board that you've talked about. What is your timeline for your skills-based board?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I think I indicated in the next 6 to 12 months in a previous answer.

Ms. Chartier: — And in terms of the expressions of interest that you've had for Conexus, how many expressions of interest have you had?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I can say that we've had two informally.

Ms. Chartier: — And until this board does its work, you won't be entertaining any of those ideas until after the board has completed its work? Or will those expressions of interest be rolled into the process that the board is looking at?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I think it's fair to say that the options that we've asked the board to come up with will include the opportunity for these organizations who had expressed interest to perhaps partake in an RFP, if you will, or some type of a bid process if in fact government moves that way. But you know, I don't want to get ahead of myself here. This is a board that brings specific skill sets to the table to conjure up these different options and present them to government as to what may be the most viable.

Ms. Chartier: — So with two expressions of interest thus far, the board will be looking beyond those for other options as well.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — That's correct. They were both unsolicited, so they came into government as to, would you be interested in? So obviously I can't identify them or what their expression of interests are, but depending on where government ends up on this issue, they could be part of the process.

Ms. Chartier: — I don't know the area well, being the Saskatoon MLA that I am, but I understand that there's some land. Did any of the expressions of interest have anything to do with any of the land around Conexus?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — No.

Ms. Chartier: — Simply for the facility itself?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Yes. The building itself is owned by government. The land around the building is part of the Wascana Centre Authority, so it has different interests involved with the management of that land.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. Thank you for that. In terms of the military history project, there's \$50,000 allotted. Just out of curiosity, when do you see that . . . Well what is that going to look like? I've had some through-the-grapevine conversations and I understand that there's two different bodies who both — one in Regina and one in Saskatoon — who've been interested in actually a military history museum. So I'm wondering the who, what, when, and where of the military history project.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, I apologize for taking that time, but there's a bit of a complicated history with this particular project. And albeit \$50,000 doesn't seem like a lot of money, it's critically important to this project for our veterans and the families of veterans in the province of Saskatchewan.

So you mentioned in your preamble, Ms. Chartier, about a couple of different groups and whatnot. And I think it's fair to say that there are differing opinions in this province as to where a museum should be located, and it was difficult to talk about consensus, our discussion earlier. It was very difficult to come to consensus on this with respect to, should it be in Saskatoon? Should it be in Regina? Could it be in Davidson? Could be some other location in the province. And there's also a number of Legions in the province that have their own type of museums or artifacts and displays that they use to honour the veterans from their local communities.

So the 50,000 for this year is that we've kind of moved past the initial stages of what this committee had worked upon in talking about a virtual museum. And the 50,000 for this particular fiscal year is going to continue along the lines of the recommendations that came out of that committee, aside from establishing a set bricks-and-mortar type structure for a museum because there was quite a bit of concern expressed by different Legions that government was looking to take their artifacts and put them in this museum and take them away from the local communities. And I want to dispel any of those kinds of ideas. That's not what this is about at all. As a matter of fact we want to work with the Legions to preserve their heritage and their artifacts for the local communities.

But the 50,000 specifically for this year is another, a new committee that will incorporate the Legions and incorporate some historical organizations and some university professors that have expertise in this area, to integrate the regional community organizational members established by the province to identify, protect, and promote Saskatchewan's military history. So in other words to provide advice to those different organizations that already have artifacts, albeit whether they're

Legions or whatever the case may be, to develop an oral history project on film and audio, developed to interview surviving Saskatchewan veterans, those that we can find that are prepared to tell their story.

Because we think it's critically important for them, particularly for our young people, to hear first-hand accounts of veterans who participated, obviously not in WW I [World War I] anymore but World War II and subsequent conflicts. And then the province examining the feasibility of integrating more information about Saskatchewan's military history into our provincial curriculum in the school system. So they're going to explore these ideas. But primarily what we're concerned about is getting that oral history going now because, as I said, you know, our veterans are passing on.

Ms. Chartier: — Fair enough. Thank you for that explanation. In your plan for 2013-2014, you talk about working with the Western Development Museum — page 4 of the '13-14 plan. Can you let me know a little bit about what that looks like?

The Chair: — Excuse me, Ms. Chartier. Just as a follow-up before . . . The military question. I have a question over here if we could interject. Thank you.

Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Minister. And I appreciate the opposition just allowing just this brief question.

I really appreciate the vision, Mr. Minister, that you've articulated as far as being able to draw on these. Is there an opportunity to also perhaps engage, for example, some other institutions? For example, armouries and other places across the province where there may also be some artifacts or symbols of ceremony and celebration that may also be incorporated into the importance of the Legion? Some things specifically within Saskatoon, at the Nutana branch there's a really significant and impressive museum. But I'm just wondering about also potentially reaching out into the armouries.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Yes, Mr. Chair, I appreciate the question, and absolutely. Just speaking with the deputy, we're reaching out as we speak to these different organizations. So it's on the list now. And I'd invite the opposition, if you have any ideas or folks you're talking to, that you would like to see incorporated into this discussion, please by all means let us know.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Norris. We'll continue with Ms. Chartier. The Chair recognizes you now.

Ms. Chartier: — So back to page 4 of your '13-14 plan where you talk about working with the Western Development Museum. I'm wondering what that looks like.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the question on that. The Western Development Museum is the, again, another one of those projects started by my predecessor, and then when I came into the ministry to . . . Again one of the directions from the Premier, and coming into cabinet, was to work with them to determine if we are utilizing the dollars as efficiently as possible. And we've worked with that board.

What we do know is that in the first four years of our government, five years of our government, that we had provided almost 53 per cent increase in funding to the Western Development Museums. And so we had sat down with them, and ministry officials worked with them, to determine if there was things that we could be doing differently within the operations of the WDM [Western Development Museum] to ensure that they weren't just reliant on year-over-year-over-year increases to meet their budget requirements. And what I can tell you is that, with a relatively new CEO there who was a long-term employee of the Western Development Museum but only been CEO for a little over a year now as I understand it, Joan Champ has done a wonderful job there.

Last fiscal year we were told that they would probably run about a \$400,000 deficit. During the course of the year that was cut in half, and now we're quite confident after having done some work with again an outside business consultant that was hired to help them with some business planning and operational efficiencies, that that budget will probably come in balanced, if not in a small surplus position. So we again feel that in working with them, that they were able to accomplish exactly what their mandate is, and yet do it within the context of the monies that were allocated to them.

[22:15]

Ms. Chartier: — I don't want to get into this debate. I did this last year with your predecessor. But the reality is there were historical shortcomings that the previous administration had started to improve from the Janes report, that what chronically happens, whether it's a community organization under a different ministry or arts or cultural organization, when you have a year-over-year status quo budget nothing is static. There are always increases to organizations.

So when you hold the line, hold the line, hold the line, eventually services give and you will need a big top-up at some point. So the reality is I think the WDM is still feeling incredibly challenged, and I think it's a shame that . . . And obviously there are budget implications. But for any of the organizations that we keep their budgets static is a problem because heating, employment contracts, wear and tear on buildings all have an impact. And this status quo budget for them and other organizations has a very real impact.

And a lot of these organizations don't have the fundraising capacity. I know from my experience on the Children's Discovery Museum, it's very hard to seek outside dollars for operation. Donors don't want to give you money for operation; they like to give you money for capital projects. But I think the bottom line . . . And the other point is there's always limited money for organizations who are pressed to go and seek that outside support. And I don't think that there's any . . . I know that the WDM is willing to step up to the plate and try to do their very best with what they've got. But for organizations like them or Wanuskewin, status quo budgets over time cause great harm to organizations. And I think the line in your . . . I just discovered the line in your plan, the 2013-14 plan, about working with the WDM, and I think that it's ironic. But I'm not asking questions here. I'm sorry. I feel quite passionately about this and it . . .

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Well if I may, Mr. Chair. I mean, you know, the hon. member, I mean, went a little political there, and that's . . . I suppose we're in a political environment. And for someone who just in her preamble said I don't want to get into this, and then just gave me a five-minute lecture on year-over-year-over-year status quo budgets for the WDM — that if you have year-over-year-over-year status quo budgets, there will come a time when you have to have massive increases.

And I seem to recall that's the exact argument we've been making with respect to our utilities in this province over the last number of years — that holding the line on utility rate fees with respect to people that utilize utilities in this province with the lowest cost bundle in the country, that was held the line by your party for many, many years. And having come from SaskPower, I saw the effect that that has on the operations of those utilities.

Now I said to you that there's been a 53 per cent increase since our government took office. So how that translates into a year over year of status quo budgets . . . In the year 2007-08, when we just took office, a 15 per cent increase, 15 per cent increase. It was left with a zero in the year before. The year after that, 28 per cent increase to the Western Development Museum. That's not holding the line, year-over-year status quo. The year after that, 4 per cent. The year after that, zero per cent; I give you that. That was a difficult year for the province. After that, 1.5. This past year, zero. Fifty-three per cent on a cumulative basis over the course of the last five or six years is not holding the line year over year over year.

So what I said to you was, we were going to work with the WDM management team to determine if there was efficiencies to be found within the organization. These are four museums in the province along with their curatorial centre in Saskatoon. I understand that. It hasn't changed since when your party was in government — still four museums in the province. A 53 per cent increase over the last five or six years is not holding the line on the budget.

So I would suggest, Mr. Chair, that in working with the management team there, as I discussed in a manner with the hon. member, that when we were presented with a \$400,000 deficit, halved halfway through the year, coming in on a balanced perspective now, without having to provide additional taxpayers' dollars to a museum operation in the province, I think is good management by the organization, is good management. And reopening on Mondays, as they're doing as effective April 1st that they announced, is good management.

There are 200 museums in this province, not one of which can survive without community support, fundraising, or government support. We are working with the Western Development Museum to achieve all of those different objectives as a ministry, given everything we have to go on in government, given everything else we have to pay for in government. Now the hon. member can sit here and give me a five-minute lecture as to how we're underfunding this particular museum, and I would just simply ask you then: where would you take the money from to increase the funding for the Western Development Museum?

Ms. Chartier: — Point of clarification. Whose budget was it in 2007-2008 that that increase, the budget that came down in March of 2007, and . . .

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — It was zero the year before that.

Ms. Chartier: — Yes, and the reality is that came out of the Janes report and the need, the recognition. I fully recognize that there were tough economic times before, but it makes good sense to support our cultural organizations on . . . The reality is costs go up every year, and there's a huge impact to organizations when they don't see a modest increase to deal with those expenses. And we see that with organizations, not just like the WDM, and I'm not just speaking of the WDM, but don't . . . The 2007-2008, take that out of there for your 53 per cent.

But there's many more things that we can discuss here, and I would like to do that, moving on. I recognize that we have differing opinions here, but as someone who worked on a board, or was on a board for a cultural organization, there are many challenges that face not-for-profits and cultural and community organizations. And it can be very frustrating for people who are trying to do their very best with limited resources.

I'm moving on here to accommodation services. Last year that number had dropped, and I know that the explanation from the deputy minister was you were consolidating your offices from downtown to Albert Street and SaskFilm no longer needed its space rental. Looking at the budget line, accommodation is going up this year and I'm wondering what that reflects.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, thank you again for the question on the accommodation cost. In fact, overall accommodation costs have gone up in the budget by \$426,000. The actual accommodation costs for the ministry, as the deputy explained — I think last year you indicated that there was a question — the change in the 426, I'll just give you these figures: \$178,000 down, a net decrease given the change or the move from Sask Drive to Albert Street where we consolidated the entire ministry into one facility has reduced accommodation costs by 178,000.

There's a \$467,000 increase in amortization costs that are charged to my ministry for the parking lot at the Conexus Arts Centre. So the parking lot was completely redone. I'm sure you've seen it or been there to events and that. Lighting, sidewalks, the parking lot has completely been redone. So that capital allocation gets amortized over a number of years and that's, I guess it's a non-cash item that appears on our budget with respect to the amortization costs for amortizing that parking lot over a period of time, not dissimilar to a highway or some other capital construction.

And then there's \$137,000 increase to the T.rex Discovery Centre on a new agreement we negotiated with the T.rex Discovery Centre board of directors out there, the friends of the T.rex Discovery Centre in expanding our operations over there, out there, Eastend. I don't know if you've been to the T.rex Discovery Centre or not. But within the new lease agreement we have with that facility, there's an increase of \$137,000 for . . . We do some lab work out there and we have a couple of

paleontologists that work out of the lab out in that facility. So in the new lease agreement we have with them, those costs have gone up. So that gives you your \$426,000 increase in accommodation costs.

Ms. Chartier: — Just with respect to the T.rex Centre then, you are paying for the lease of the T.rex Centre? I know you took it over about two months ago or in that time frame. But the ministry is now paying for that in its entirety?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — We are leasing the facility as effective April 1st. You're correct. But we don't own the facility.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. In terms of just some general questions here, in around — sorry, I've got a million papers here on my desk — central management and services. Obviously we have many of the ministry officials here. But in executive management, I'm wondering what the 1.112 million represents in terms of staffing complement in executive management.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, I'm informed that that represents, just so we're clear, the executive management under central management and services. The 1.112 million represents the cost associated with running the deputy's office and my office.

Ms. Chartier: — So that executive management line item isn't . . . So the staffing complement in executive management is what I'm wondering.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Staffing complement? So, Mr. Chair, the complement is 10 in total: five in the deputy's office and five in the minister's office.

Ms. Chartier: — Would all the officials here or . . . All of them here wouldn't fall under executive management then tonight?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, with respect to the complement in the deputy's office, it is the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister, an executive assistant to the deputy minister, and two support staff are the five complement.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. And in your office, the five?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I have a chief of staff, two ministerial assistants, and two support staff.

Ms. Chartier: — That number's on par with . . . Just looking over the last four years, the executive management number's gone up by about 278,000 I think. I'm just wondering, does that just reflect increases in salaries, or has the complement changed since 2010-11?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — No. That's correct, Ms. Chartier. The complements have remained the same over the last number of years.

Ms. Chartier: — That 278,000 then, can you tell me a little bit about where that salary increase would have been? Is that across all 10 positions or . . . Sorry, 2010-11, it was \$834,000; and then 11-12, 890; 12-13, 1.104 million; and then 1.112 million.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, I'm informed by the deputy minister that when Ms. Young started off as deputy minister, there was two ADMs in that line item. Through some reorg, it went down to one ADM. And then a year ago, a new ADM was added back in too. So that would account for the majority of the increase of the 278.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. Thank you for that. Just looking at or thinking about contracts and small contracts under the amount for disclosure — the below 25,000 — how many contracts below \$25,000 is the ministry engaged in?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, I appreciate the question. We don't have a firm number for you this evening. We will endeavour to get a firm number for you. There are a number of different, what will be called contracts in the parks system that are utilized for maintenance service contracts. And we'll endeavour to get the firm number for you. You mentioned under \$25,000. Is that what you were looking for?

Ms. Chartier: — Yes, and a few other questions around that as well then. The number of those contracts, and obviously you have them. Are there any of those who are the same vendor, who you might have multiple contracts to the same vendor or with the same vendor? So that I'd like answered too.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, again we will endeavour to get that information to you as quickly as possible.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. Is it just in the parks branch that those contracts exist?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I'm informed primarily in the parks, but we will find all contracts throughout the ministry that meet the criteria you were talking about, and get that number to you.

Ms. Chartier: — Are you aware also of any contracts over the 25,000 that haven't been tendered?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, I'm going to ask the deputy minister to give you the breakdown of how it's done in the ministry.

Ms. Young: — Our processes that we follow — oh sorry, Wynne Young — that we follow the financial administrative manual, the FAM [financial administration manual] manual, and it sets out the criteria that we have to follow. And so for particular contracts of particular sizes, you can actually sole-source and not RFP. But they're laid out in the FAM manual and that is what we endeavour to follow. And again, in the parks we have a lot of contracts and so we follow the FAM manual.

Ms. Chartier: — So with that, there could be contracts following those guidelines over the \$25,000 that are sole-sourced.

Ms. Young: — 25 to 75 there's a short form, competition or invitational process, and so we do do those from time to time.

Ms. Chartier: — In gathering that contract information, would you mind adding that to the list?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, we will certainly endeavour to get that information to you as soon as possible.

Ms. Chartier: — So just to clarify what I'm looking for, for those under \$25,000 then, how many contracts do you have? Are there any duplications or are there multiple contracts for one company or is there any company or group of companies under the same umbrella; like subsidiaries of the same owner who have contracts? So that's what I'm looking at for below the 25,000. And then the 25 to 75,000, a list of those contracts would be great. Thank you.

In terms of communication staff throughout the ministry, how many communications positions or how many employees in the ministry have been tasked with or have in their job description communications or public relations or community relations?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, there's six communications people in the ministry.

Ms. Chartier: — And where are they located in the ministry?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So they're all located in the communications branch. There's a director, a manager, and four consultants that work in the ministry in the communications branch.

Ms. Chartier: — Has that number changed over the last four years?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I'm told no, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. Thank you. Going on to . . . Actually, one more question. It's sort of a general question as well. I know that lawsuits and litigation are often just a part of government. There's often people who are unhappy with the way government operates. I'm just wondering, are there any lawsuits or litigation under way? Is the ministry being sued for anything?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, I'm advised that there are currently three legal actions being taken against the ministry that . . . We can't determine how old they are, but they've been in the process for a long time, is what I'm informed of.

Ms. Chartier: — Can you tell me a little bit about them, without . . . I don't know what you can or can't tell me, but can you tell me what they involve?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, we don't have any lawyers here this evening. I'm being cautioned to not talk about them publicly because they are before the courts. I know that sounds like a standard answer, but we will endeavour to determine what we can share publicly and we will do that once we're advised by Justice what we can talk about in a public fashion. I'm not trying to dodge your question. There are three disputes ongoing as we speak. I just don't know what I'm legally allowed to talk about, so I'd like to get that advice before we disclose that.

Ms. Chartier: — Fair enough for sure. Just going back to something that you'd mentioned a little bit earlier. We were talking about contracts. And with the Commercial Revolving

Fund, something that I've noticed in the financial statements between 2010, 2011, and 2012, salaries and benefits were budgeted at a certain number all three years and came in considerably lower. And contractual services were budgeted at a certain level and came in considerably higher all three years. I can see that one year happening, but I'm a bit curious about that.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Sorry, Mr. Chair. I'm sorry, you referred to some line items . . .

Ms. Chartier: — Statement no. 2 in 2010, 2011, 2012 under expenses, salaries and benefits, and contractual services.

[22:45]

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, again there's a number of different issues with respect to why these costs vary like they do. On the salaries and benefits aspect going down, that's a cause of retirements. So you have higher salaried employees, longer term employees who would retire and you're replacing with more junior employees, if you will, in these vacancies, if you replace at all.

And therefore in a lot of cases it's not anticipated when an individual may retire. So if they announce they're retiring mid-fiscal year and there was no notice given other than the obligatory notice and that person gets replaced, it's typically at a much lower salary. So that would account for the differences on the salary side.

On the contractual services side, it has a lot to do with the disposal of sewage and the disposal of garbage, if you will, inside parks — that the environmental requirements now as they become more and more stringent with respect to waste management, either on sewage where you could do, as I'm advised, land spread with sewage, you cannot do that any longer. So it's requiring the use of contractual services to haul sewage away to a much further distance for the environmental requirements.

Similarly with landfills. We used to have landfills right in parks, and it's no longer allowed now. Environmental regulations are tightening up on that as well. So they continue to be more and more expensive as to where we can haul garbage to and through the use of contractors that do that. And as you can well imagine, out in the rural areas where all of the parks basically are, the costs go up increasingly when we bring in contracted services into any of these parks. So you budget for a certain amount. If you have more and more people visiting the park, there's more and more waste management to take care of.

Ms. Chartier: — For the contractual services, is that all that's reflected in that line item, is sewage and garbage?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, I'm advised that that does represent the majority of the additional costs, but there are other things. Like we have remote recreational sites that we contract where we don't have employees located near there, and it would be more expensive to have them travel to and from on a daily basis to look after these remote recreation sites. So that is contracted out. Those services are in that line item. We have people that manage the potable water system that are qualified,

obviously have to be credentialed in the management of potable water that we bring into parks, to manage the potable water system.

And I'm sorry, I forget the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh yes. And then there was some . . . whether there's some landscaping or road levelling, those are done by contractors that come in and do those kinds of things inside of our parks. So that's where the vast majority of those contractual services are paid for.

Ms. Chartier: — But the increase is specifically around disposal of sewage and garbage?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Yes. Well that's what I'm advised. That's where the majority of the increase is.

So again, Mr. Chairman, I'm advised again — dry waste, garbage; waste water, sewage; and water treatment. Those three represent the vast majority of the increases in costs associated with that line item.

Ms. Chartier: — And again just to clarify that that's due to fluctuations in park visitations.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — We have more people using our parks, so that increases the amount of sewage, increases the amount of garbage. We also have more and more strict environmental regulations, so as we shut down in-park landfills and we have to haul garbage to an external area, there's a cost with that. It's the same thing with the hauling of waste water or sewage outside of the park and where it has to be disposed of as per environmental regulations.

Ms. Chartier: — I get that, but it was the budget year . . . It's not the year-over-year changes, but I just found it curious that three years in a row that those changes, both on the salaries and benefits and on the contractual services, varied. So environmental regulations you'd know about and would ostensibly plan for in that budget year.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Again if environmental regulations change during the course of a year, you know, the budget process starts well in advance of when the budget is announced, as you're well aware. So a number gets placed into the budget. If during the course of that year environmental regulations change, you have to adhere to the new regulations. And regulations may or may not have been shared with our ministry well ahead of time.

But secondly, again the usage of our parks, the utilization rate of our parks has gone up dramatically, as you well know. The last three years we've set records every single year, and we anticipate, if the weather would change, we would probably set another record this coming year. So we have more and more people utilizing our parks that provide the garbage and the waste water.

Ms. Chartier: — And on the salary side, you attribute that whole fluctuation in retirement.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So again, Mr. Chair, it is primarily retirements. It is higher end salary people leaving, retiring

during the course of any particular fiscal year, new people. If in fact we replace that position, I'm also advised that there is difficulty in recruiting in some of the different parks. Back in my day, you know, it would be a dream job for a summer job to go and work in a park for the summer.

Now there's tremendous opportunities for young people to work in urban centres, and it's difficult finding living accommodations if you're not from the local area and don't have family living there. As a student, for the most part, that's who we hire. I think we're the highest, the largest employer of students during the summertime in the park system. But if they haven't got accommodation nearby, a lot of them opt not to come back for a second year if they can find a job elsewhere. So we do have difficulties from time to time in some of the more remote parks to attract employees there.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. I'm thinking about full-time equivalent staff. On the ministry side, you've actually over the last four years remained fairly steady. You've lost about four positions I think on the ministry side of full-time equivalents.

But in terms of the full-time equivalent staff for the Commercial Revolving Fund, there's been more than 40 positions no longer in existence. So on the Commercial Revolving Fund side of things, I'm wondering what those 40 positions represent?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Chair, again we want to be sure that we're dealing with what the information . . . You're talking about individuals or you're talking, like, people or FTEs [full-time equivalent]?

Ms. Chartier: — FTEs.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Okay. So I'm going to ask the deputy minister to explain that, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Young: — So we, PCS [Parks, Culture and Sport], just like every other ministry, has been working on workforce adjustment in trying to create efficiencies throughout the ministry. And so it's probably important to know that over 75 per cent of our ministry FTEs are parks, and most parks are in the Commercial Revolving Fund. So it would not be unusual to see our efficiencies over those years, to see most of them out of parks because that is the nature of our organization.

And so with somewhere just over 75 per cent of our staff in parks, you will see, over those years you will have seen a reduction in the numbers. And of course those are full-time FTEs.

Ms. Chartier: — Yes. But I'm wondering what those . . . Do you have a sense of what those 40 positions represent?

Ms. Young: — Represent?

Ms. Chartier: — Like, what kind of . . .

Ms. Young: — What skills, what kind of . . .

Ms. Chartier: — Yes.

Ms. Young: — Oh, okay.

Ms. Chartier: — Yes. What actual jobs, what actual FTEs were lost?

Ms. Young: — Yes. So thank you. Wynne Young again. It mostly is just because of sheer numbers. It would be our seasonal labour service employees just because they are the vast majority of our staff. And so that doesn't necessarily mean that they would be overall reduced in numbers. We may change their seasons up, their work year up, and a shorter season would add up to an overall reduction in FTEs.

We did do some work in parks, also again trying to create efficiencies and leaning out our organization. We did do some reorganization at the management levels, and so we took our areas down so that we would have nine park areas. We went from nine to seven, so some of that structure went there too. But again, you know, we're focused on customer service, so that was our priority. And wherever we could manage, that's what we did.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. Within the ministry, how many, at let's pick this point in time, how many vacant FTEs are there right now? So positions that exist but are not filled?

[23:00]

Ms. Young: — I don't have a specific list today, and it does vary of course. But I can say that we run very tight. We do have very few vacancies throughout the ministry.

Ms. Chartier: — Well what would be the definition of very few vacancies? Not exact, I'm not looking for an exact number. But what would you consider very few, that ballpark?

Ms. Young: — And again this is a generalization, but the non-labour service, the non-park staff, we may have five-ish, something a little more than that. It's difficult to describe it as vacancies when we talk about seasonal labour service though because they're off for such an amount of time and they're back on. Their hours differ and their callback and their finishing-up times. So what is a vacancy in that? And so you know, it's difficult to answer that question because we have such a big staff that comes on around May for the parks to wind up and then finish up after the park season.

Ms. Chartier: — If we took parks and those specific seasonal employees out of the picture, what would that look like in terms of vacant FTEs?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Okay, Mr. Chair. Our consensus is it's between 5 and 10. But the difficulty here is that there's active processes under way as we speak for recruitment for these positions. And so we'll endeavour to get you a number if it's important to you — and obviously it is — as of today. It may change tomorrow, but we'll endeavour to get a firm number for you as to how many full-time equivalent vacancies exist outside of the seasonal labour force in the ministry.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you for that. I think we're running out of time here for questions. I have one last question here I think. A few years ago, before your time in the House, Mr. Minister,

there was one of your colleagues wrote a minor football report to the tune of about \$20,000. And I'd asked some written questions a few years ago about what had happened with the recommendations, and I was told that they were received. It was very general language, but I'm asking specifically.

Right now in Saskatoon, Gordie Howe Bowl . . . I'll go back here. One of the recommendations on page 3 is "The provincial and municipal governments develop capital funding programs that would be eligible to support new/upgraded minor football facilities where needed." Actually in my constituency, Gordie Howe Bowl is there, and I think the Friends of the Bowl has been looking for money. They've got some money from the city. They are actively doing fundraising. Part of their project is turf, and the other part of the project is a new clubhouse basically.

And this just doesn't impact football. This is about all kinds of other sports that could use artificial turf earlier in the year. So in light of the fact that one of the . . . There is no, from my understanding, there is no program specifically in place that would allow the ministry to do this. But are you aware of the issue around Gordie Howe Bowl at all? Has that been brought to your attention?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — The short answer to that is no, I'm not. I'm familiar with Gordie Howe Bowl. Don't get me wrong. But the deficiencies as identified as you suggested has not been brought to my attention from any official from the city of Saskatoon at this point in time.

Ms. Chartier: — Not just the city but the separate entity which is the foundation basically. I guess my question is, what happened to the recommendations from the Makowsky report then? This has a very real impact on something like Gordie Howe Bowl, or could.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — So, Mr. Chair, in specific response to the report that you referenced, I have not seen the report. Quite frankly I wasn't aware that the now MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Regina Dewdney did that report. It was before my time. I am assuming it was before your time as well.

But let me say this about infrastructure with respect to recreation or sporting facilities in the province. I don't think there is a week goes by that I don't get a request from some community or organization, foundation, what have you, about the need to upgrade or even build new a facility in their community.

We do have the community vitality program through the Community Initiatives Fund that is available up to \$50,000. I'm not sure of the capital requirement needed for the project you are talking about. But those are our gaming dollars that go out to communities throughout the province. I don't have a capital budget in my ministry specially for what you are talking about. I have had conversations with different . . . whether it's Tourism Saskatoon or Tourism Regina now or people that are involved with both summer and winter games in the province obviously at the amateur level, the talk about the need for upgrading facilities. And we are mindful of that.

One of the things that we are anxiously awaiting is an infrastructure fund from the federal government that we think or hope — at least certainly from my perspective; I won't speak for my colleagues at the cabinet table — but I hope that there's a provision in there for these kinds of projects throughout the province and the country to provide some type of financial assistance for the football fields, the hockey rinks, the curling rinks, the ball diamonds, the sports grounds, if you will.

We of course do have the community rink affordability grant in place. It's heavily subscribed here in the province. And for some facilities, it's not a lot of money. But for other facilities, it could mean 20 per cent of their utility costs for the year. When I was at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] — I don't know if you were at the SUMA convention or not — one of the sessions I had with community leaders was a discussion around that kind of thing. All levels of government need to work together on trying to come up with a program or come up with some type of a capital allocation program for these kinds of facilities throughout the province.

So I'm mindful of I have not seen the request that you might have from the foundation or from Gordie Howe or the city of Saskatoon. If you want to pass it on to me, we'd be glad to look at it and see if there's anywhere else in government we can provide assistance there.

But you know, I can go down a whole different array of areas where, revenue sharing with respect to these municipalities, it's unconditional monies that go towards them. It's up substantially. What they do with those monies is their decision at the local level. But the city of Saskatoon I'm assuming is up. I know the city of Regina is up some 160 per cent on revenue sharing. I'm looking over to my colleague from Saskatoon. I don't know what the city of Saskatoon might be up — in a similar neighbourhood, 175.

So there are different avenues that government's provided funding towards these municipalities to say, you know, invest them where you believe it's absolutely critical and necessary. But we've got aging infrastructure in this province, and that includes our sporting facilities. And so we as a government are mindful of that.

And it's not that I'm not an advocate for it at the cabinet table. It's just again competing priorities with respect to where we allocate these dollars. And you know, when you're up against health care facilities and educational facilities and highways and infrastructure, those kinds of things, water and sewer systems, it's not that they take a back seat, but we've got to allocate the dollars on a priority basis. But I am mindful of the need for capital dollars in the province for these facilities.

Ms. Chartier: — Just for the record, I think the city is contributing 600,000. And the organization is committed to fundraising for sure, and they have a fairly ambitious goal. They'd like to have the turf in fairly shortly. It's a health hazard actually. The Hilltops play there, as do the minor football, all the high school teams. So the city has kicked in some money.

But I think for me, my question is, what was the Makowsky report? And this was before your time, but I'm sure you've got officials around who could say what the \$20,000 spent on the

football report, what became of that then? Because this seems to me to be a very important or key recommendation that could have practical applications. But I'd like to know what happened to the report.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Again, Mr. Chair, I'm advised . . . I'm not trying to dodge your question. We will endeavour to find out, to go back and find the report and take a look at it and see what the recommendations are. But literally the bench you're looking at, none of us were here when that report was delivered to the ministry, and so we'd have to do a little bit of homework to determine what was done with it at the time that it was presented to this ministry.

Ms. Chartier: — That would be very appreciated. The answer that I got in written questions I think the first year that I was here wasn't . . . It was very much along the lines that it's been dealt with. But I'd like to know how it was dealt with or what . . . Did anything become of any of the recommendations? So that would be fabulous if you could find that out.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — We shall.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, Ms. Chartier, for your questions. It now being 11:11 and past the hour of our appointed time, we will adjourn. Mr. Minister, did you have a few closing remarks?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I would. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank colleagues on the committee and thank the opposition critic, Ms. Chartier, for the discussion this evening. I thought it was very thoughtful and useful, and I hope we were able to provide answers to most of your questions. And we'll endeavour to get the other answers that we weren't able to provide this evening.

I just want to thank the officials. It is a late hour, but they do tremendous work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, and not only serve me well but serve our government and the people of Saskatchewan well. I just want to thank all of them for the hard work that they do, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister Doherty, and thank you to the officials. Some have been sitting here all night and have not had a chance to partake, but we appreciate you being here for sure. And thank you from my committee members. This committee is now adjourned to the call of the Chair.

[The committee adjourned at 23:12.]