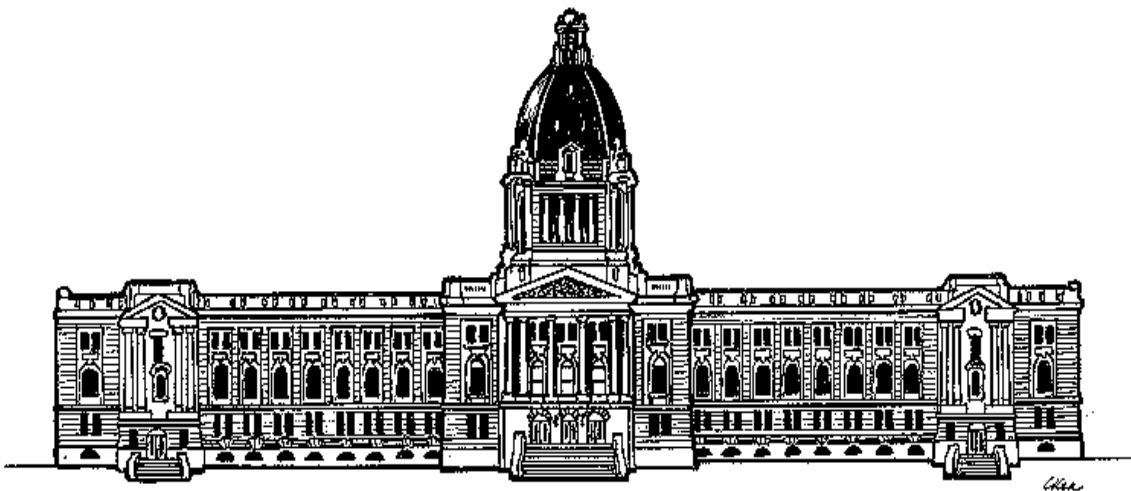




STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
2004**

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Mr. Kevin Yates
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The committee met at 10:30.

The Chair: — Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call the meeting to order and welcome our committee members and our guests.

We have two items on the agenda that we want to cover this morning. The first one is succession planning for the public sector agencies. That's chapter 4 of the 2002 Fall Report. The second item on the agenda is reporting on infrastructure, chapter 12, 2003 Report Volume 3.

Again we have some guests with us. Before I introduce the guests, I would like to note that Jason Dearborn is substituting for Glen Hart as a voting member of the committee this morning.

We have Provincial Auditor Fred Wendel and his officials from his office. From the comptroller's office we have Mr. Paton and Mr. Bayda. And we have some guests who I will ask to introduce themselves in just a moment.

But first by way of introducing the first item on the agenda, succession planning for public sector agencies — Mr. Wendel.

Mr. Wendel: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me today I have two people that have worked on that chapter. I have Jane Knox immediately behind us and Judy Ferguson, who will be giving you a presentation in a few minutes after everybody's introduced, and Rodd Jersak, who attends all your meetings.

The Chair: — All right. And then we have the witnesses sitting at the other end of the table. Would you please introduce yourselves and tell us what your responsibilities are.

Ms. Young: — Good morning. My name is Wynne Young, and I'm the Chair of the Public Service Commission. To my right is Clare Isman, who is the executive director of human resource development in the Public Service Commission. And I'll let Don introduce himself.

Mr. Ash: — Good morning. My name is Don Ash. I'm the director of Crown management practices with the Crown Investments Corporation.

The Chair: — Good morning and welcome here. We will now let the auditor's office make their report. Ms. Ferguson.

Ms. Ferguson: — Thank you, Chair, members, and government officials. As indicated I'm going to be presenting chapter 4 and it deals with an important human resource issue — succession planning. If you're following in our report, we're on page 46 of our 2002 Fall Report Volume 2.

In this chapter we don't make any recommendations. Rather, as Fred mentioned last week, at times we publish information chapters. And this is really an information chapter. Through this chapter we highlight the importance of succession planning as one way for public sector agencies in Saskatchewan to address the risk of inadequate human resources.

In addition we set out best practices for succession planning.

We encourage public sector agencies to use these best practices to reflect on their own current practices. In addition we hope that these best practices will simulate action to revise existing practices and to manage the human resource risks that the government faces today.

So what do we mean by succession planning? In short, succession planning is a systematic process making sure you have the right skills with the right . . . people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. Succession planning is a key and integral part of overall human resource planning.

So why did we do this chapter in the first place? Well a number of factors make succession planning critical for the government at this point in time. First off, the province employs about 10 per cent of Saskatchewan's workforce. And that's overall, including the Public Service Commission, Crown agencies, health districts, etc., etc..

Secondly, baby boomers are starting to retire. As a result the government expects a sharp increase in the number of retirements over the next two decades, particularly starting in the year 2008 going on to 2015. This is higher than that expected in the private sector since on average public sector employees are older than their private sector counterparts. In some respects the impact of this average age has already begun within the government, as employees choose to job share or work part-time or move to positions with less pressures or responsibilities.

The next aspect is that the government's going to have to compete with the private sector, other provinces, and other developed countries for future employees, as all of these jurisdictions have the same problem due to the prevalence of baby boomers in the population. Saskatchewan actually is perhaps fortunate in that its population is a little bit older than elsewhere. As a result, our government has the opportunity to address the problem before others face it.

Next, during the last decade, the government has employed fewer youth due to the prevalence of baby boomers, the out-migration of youth, and economic constraints. This means there are fewer people to draw upon within our existing workforce to fill the shoes of those who leave.

And lastly, Saskatchewan has the highest youth of all provinces. This means we have a potential pool of candidates. Also, one in five of our youth are Aboriginal. At present this youth is less likely to have the required qualifications, so it is important that the government act now to ensure that our youth get the education and experience that will be required.

As indicated earlier, in this chapter we set out best practices for succession planning within the public sector. Literature in this area is quite broad. While some is specific to the public sector, most is private sector oriented. As an office, we benefited from the work of other auditors, particularly those in Australia and New Zealand, where governments face a similar risk and have begun to address it.

In addition we vetted the best practices with an expert in the areas of human resources, succession planning, and public

sector renewal. We confirmed them with key government agencies who are the province's major employers, government employers. These include Public Service Commission, Crown Investments Corporation, personnel policy secretariat, and SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations). Each agreed that succession planning is an important part of dealing with human resource issues and human resource planning, and they confirmed that the best practices were reasonable.

I just want to highlight the best practices in this chapter go beyond the traditional view of succession planning. Traditionally, succession planning was viewed as the process of identifying immediate job vacancies for personnel needs and filling them. Rather, best practices that highlight succession planning is a coordinated and considered effort to prepare human resources for the demands of the future.

More specifically, succession planning in the private sector must address three broad areas: first, it reflects the agency's long-term strategic direction; secondly, it requires government leaders to take action to build a talent pool for succession; and third, but not least important, is it coordinates key human resource strategies across the government. Further detail on each of these practices starts at page 55 in our report and I'm not going to go through them in detail this morning.

So in summary, we hope that these best practices will serve as a guide for public sector agencies, that they will help public sector agencies to use succession planning to manage human resource strategies and risks that they face. In addition, as set out in the chapter, we plan to use these best practices to exam and report on human resource planning and succession planning practices of selected public agencies. Our next report to the Assembly includes the results of some of this work.

So as a final thought, the government needs good succession planning now. It takes time to get ready and we all know that time passes quicker than we think — 2008 is not that far off. Agencies that fail to plan are at an ever-increasing risk of being unable to provide public services at the expected level. We encourage you to ask questions of officials to make sure that they are addressing this issue today.

This concludes my presentation and we would be pleased to respond to questions. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Ms. Ferguson. First of all, if there any opening comments from our witnesses, I would ask you to be as brief as possible but cover any additional areas that you want to from your perspective. I would like to make enough time for members of the committee to ask questions, and they will ask questions then of both the witnesses and of Ms. Ferguson or Mr. Wendel. Are there any comments?

Public Hearing: Public Service Commission and Crown Investments Corporation

Ms. Young: — Yes, Mr. Chair. I have a few comments and I will certainly try and keep them brief. To make the comments around executive government in terms of human resource planning, I should clarify that what the auditor's office, I've come to understand, refers to as succession planning, we in fact

talk about it as general human resource planning because as they have said it's much broader than what the traditional view of succession planning is. So my comments will address broader human resource planning in government, and we believe succession planning is an important subset of that.

We have, in the Public Service Commission, designed and had approved and implemented, a corporate human resource plan for all government departments. The plan was approved in 2002, although the Public Service Commission had its own human resource plan prior to that.

What's important about the corporate human resource plan in 2002 is it includes all departments and it is a joint initiative with the Public Service Commission and departments. Departments must be involved with human resource planning as the planning must relate to their own business lines or strategic plans of their own department. The corporate human resource plan, as I said, is corporate. It belongs to everybody and it is for the government as a whole, and it really does provide direction for the way ahead.

We certainly agree with the auditor's office around the demographic challenges that we face, and also the opportunities that we have in front of us and the transition period that will be ahead as retirements increase, the opportunity of the young Aboriginal population that we have and the work that we have ahead of us in trying to take advantage of that opportunity.

What I will do is just highlight very briefly the corporate human resource plan, just in terms of the three areas that seem to be really providing good direction for us. The corporate human resource plan has an overall goal not dissimilar to the auditor's goal of the right people at the right time in the right place.

Our corporate human resource plan has three overall goals. The first is that the Saskatchewan public service has talented, innovated, and dedicated employees. This goal really talks about three areas: attracting and retaining high quality employees; the continuity of knowledge, that is the knowledge transfer; and having skills in key positions as we need them.

And in that area there's a couple of things I would highlight. We have got a lot of partnerships, that Clare Isman will speak about, with educational institutes to prepare the path from the transition from education into employment. We have developed a marketing strategy, particularly around youth and around diversity groups and in particular, Aboriginal groups.

And I would — the auditor's office spoke about best practice — and I would certainly want to highlight our best practice, and it's certainly best practice in Canada, around our new career centre, our on-line career centre which is ability for people to apply and be assessed on-line, to put their name into a database. And currently, although we've only had it up for a couple of years, we have got just over 20,000 names in the database.

The second goal I would mention of the corporate human resource plan is of the public service being a healthy, productive, and collaborative work environment. It isn't enough to attract good employees and new employees; it's also important to have a healthy and supportive workplace. And under that goal we have objectives of leadership and

management capabilities, constructive employee relations, enhanced learning, and also enhanced employee accountability and performance, and organizational health. We also have a specific objective towards providing good human resource systems for the government.

The final goal I would speak of, and it is particularly important in a province like Saskatchewan, is the goal of a diverse workforce — that the public service has a diverse workforce. Under that goal we have the objectives of a representative workforce at all levels of the organization, increased attraction and retention of youth, improved organizational culture to support diversity.

All three of these things we think are important — the attraction of a new, more diverse workplace but also the retention and the support of the new, more diverse public service that includes the traditional equity groups, that includes Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and people of visible minority members . . . members of visible minority groups. It also includes youth. As we look at our demographics in the way ahead, it was important for us to include youth in that category.

So I think in summary — and I will it turn it over to Clare Isman to speak about some very specific succession planning initiatives we have underway — but I think that on balance these three goals and the objectives and actions underneath them are helping us to move ahead and make sure we are ready for the transition. There are certainly . . . It's always a balance between available resources and what one can do with that. But we think we have got the pieces, the fundamentals in place to move ahead.

And the plan was made available with the release of the budget, but I have brought copies of the plan along in case anybody is interested. And I'd like to just turn it over to Clare Isman to talk about a couple of succession planning initiatives in particular.

Ms. Isman: — Thank you, Wynne. Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, I think as the human resource plan identifies, succession planning is a key priority of government, based on our demographic profile. And the work that the auditor has done, I think, is well aligned and very consistent with the approach the government has taken in this area.

I think the approach we have been working on is based on best practices. It is an interdepartmental piece of work that we are doing collaboratively. And first of all we've established a couple of key networks so that we have the departments working collaboratively with the central agency, so that we are not duplicating efforts and creating redundant kinds of programs and initiatives.

One of the first things we did in 2002 was develop a succession management framework for government which we then shared with all of the departments. The framework identifies the areas that the Public Service Commission is responsible for and then goes further to also identify what the departments are responsible for.

The split there, particularly, is the central agency dealing with government-wide needs and executive and senior leadership needs, whereas the departments are more focused on lower

levels of supervisors and front-line managers, as well as in the key technical areas, understanding that some of the needs with regard to succession planning will not only be in management but in technical areas of expertise.

In addition the framework is based on a competency model, so that we are looking at the competencies that we currently have against the future competencies that will be needed based on the strategic agendas of the department, measuring the gap and then working to close the gap through competency development and/or recruitment strategies.

One of the first things we needed to do in terms of succession planning was to really understand the demands and the supply. And like most organizations — I think Judy spoke to this — is that the time frame was coming quickly and we knew that we needed to have a very good understanding of that.

So we carried on a project where we did a very thorough analysis of our demographic demands and projected retirements. We worked very closely with Doug Elliott in terms of establishing a forecasting model to look at our trends and projected them out in terms of retirement right to 2020. That information has been shared with all departments and we've increased the competency of our human resource people to do the analytical research about assessing that demand model.

Right now we're working jointly again with Doug Elliott and with CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) in terms of the supply side. Because it's one thing to understand the supply side in an anecdotal and general way, another is to really have a strong understanding of what the supply market looks like. That piece of work is currently underway and we hope to have it concluded by about the end of June.

A second thing that we've done is in terms of some of the key actions directed at recruitment and retention of youth. I think as we've identified as well, we've been out of the hiring business for quite a long time. Our workforce has been extremely stable.

But knowing that, we are going to see that demographic shift. We've tried to do some things in the short term that will start to prepare us and prepare the foundation for recruitment efforts.

Some of the things that we've done is increased and enhanced our partnership with the schools, the university, SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), and some of the other educational institutions so that we're out in front of the students more. So looking at a career in the public sector does not become a foreign concept to them.

We've become more actively involved in co-op programs with both the universities as well as with SIAST. We're currently working with the University of Regina to implement a graduate level internship program with masters of public admin students. And that's a new initiative that we are just in the process of negotiating.

We've also initiated an Aboriginal management and professional internship program whereby we're bringing recent graduates, Aboriginal graduates, into the workplace for two-year internship programs, with the hope then that they will then consider a career in the public sector and will have a good

body of knowledge in order to be able to compete for jobs.

We also have established an Aboriginal speakers bureau this year which was launched last week, whereby we have Aboriginal employees of government and the Crowns going out and talking to school-age students with a message of staying in school and consider a career in the public sector.

Another thing that we've done in terms of retention is established a new professionals network. As new professionals have come in to the service, because the numbers are relatively small, we felt it was important that they created a network whereby they would start to not only network amongst themselves, but also establish some solid networks with senior officials in government and then be able to establish coaching and mentoring kinds of partnerships. So those are the things that we've done in terms of recruitment.

In terms of retention, because although our demographic profile says that we have a lot of people that will exit the system, we also have a strong cadre of middle managers that will be here and will become our strong leaders of the future. So some of the things we are doing in that area, in terms of retaining these people, are around establishing succession programs for leadership and management competencies across government as well as an executive succession management program.

Some of the things that we're looking at in terms of specifics there, are things like job rotation, developmental assignments for employees, stretch project assignments for employees, as well as more traditional learning and development in terms of the development of the management competencies that they need.

Another initiative that we've implemented is the establishment of learning plans for all employees of government. So learning plans will be established in a more formal way aligned to the business needs of the department.

We're also developing more targeted recruitment strategies for hard-to-recruit positions. So where we have assessed a high-level need, we're going out and doing broader recruitment in terms of trying to attract people to come into the public service in those key areas.

The last area that I would mention is the initiation of a phased retirement program, whereby we're actually changing and enhancing the ability for people to change their pattern of retirement away from here one day and gone the next to a more phased approach whereby people can reduce their hours in the later stages of their career without a negative impact on their pension. And thereby they will be here to coach and mentor employees of the future as they move forward.

I think some of these efforts will help in terms of our retention in the longer term — although retention hasn't been a problem to this date, we anticipate that it will become a greater concern as more people exit — as well as our ability to be out in front of the marketplace as an employer of choice and to enhance our recruitment efforts. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Ms. Young, and Ms. Isman. Mr. Ash, did you have anything further to add?

Mr. Ash: — Very briefly, thank you. I guess first of all thank you for the opportunity to come and speak to the committee. As one who works in human resources, it's always great when we have an opportunity to talk to people about what we do. I also want to thank the provincial audit for the work they did on sort of raising the profile with regard to the work that a number of us have undertaken over a number of years with regard to human resource planning.

The Crown sector has been actively involved in human resource planning for a number of years as individual Crowns, and I think that's an important point. Each Crown and each entity had looked at human resources from their own perspective. And in the spring of 2001, CIC undertook a complete review of human resource planning as part of a long-term strategic process with regard to planning.

And really we started that work as a result of three things. The review of literature that we in human resources tend to do from time to time in terms of what are the trends, what sorts of things do we need to be looking forward to in the future, and certainly the retirements and the notion that baby boomers were going to retire at breakneck speed caused some concern there. The individual human resource plans in the Crowns was another factor. Basically the Crowns were looking at a three- to five-year window in terms of their planning. We at CIC felt that we needed to look beyond that and went out to 2010, and also the focus of the Crown corporation themselves.

When the senior officials of the Crowns were asked where they thought their Crowns from a business perspective were going to be in 10 years, consideration around human resources just simply wasn't there and . . . which caused us, or a number of us at CIC to be somewhat concerned about that.

So we undertook a major review and, like the Public Service Commission, used the talents and skills of Doug Elliott, a demographer, to pull information together for us. And based on the information, based on the literature research, and based on what we felt we needed to do from a Crown sector perspective, we put forward a plan to the CIC board in July 2003 that covered six strategic areas.

The first was to provide opportunities for Saskatchewan youth and Aboriginal peoples. Another strategic area was leadership development for that same group. The third area was workplace and career mentorship. We felt it was really important that we engage our existing workforce in mentoring and supporting the youth coming in over the years. And I guess that has to do with the intellectual capital and knowledge management that us in human resources tend to deal with from time to time.

Workplace preparation and development. Crown corporations have been very, very successful over a number of years. But as we begin to work and understand the next generation of workers, there's some significant change that needs to take place in the Crowns to not only attract but to retain the next generation of workers. And the trick will be making sure that all the generations can co-exist inside the same work environment. So some work around that.

Youth engagement and awareness. One of the tasks that we undertook was to do focus groups throughout the province with

youth and talk to them about Crown corporations and jobs in the public sector and that type of thing. And we needed to do a far better job of marketing the great opportunities that we have here in Saskatchewan, not only in Crowns but in the public service as well.

And the last element was supporting youth and Aboriginal initiatives in the communities and success in educational institutions because, of course, we see this as a supply and demand issue into the future. We know we're going to have the demand based on the demographics that we've got; we've got to work with the supply side. And we're, you know . . . And it's important for us to work through the educational institutions starting at elementary school right through to post-secondary education.

So the board approved the six-point plan July 2003 and we are working on implementing that plan as I speak. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Ash. I will call on my colleagues to ask questions. But I think, just for the need to have our bearings, we're talking about 50,000 employees in the province of Saskatchewan — I'm using round numbers. Of those 50,000, how many would be involved in government departments? How many would be Crown employees? And how many would be the ABCs — agency, boards, commissions, others?

Ms. Young: — For executive government, it depends on the season, but it's between 10 and 12,000.

The Chair: — And the Crowns?

Mr. Ash: — The Crowns have 9,500 permanent employees. And again depending on the work cycles, they would have another 1,200 temporary part-time casual type employees.

The Chair: — That's less than 50 per cent of the employees. Where do the other employees fit in?

Ms. Young: — The health sector I think is in the number.

The Chair: — The health sector is in the numbers. Okay, very good. I think that helps my colleagues. I'll open the floor to questions. Mr. Dearborn.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you. I have two questions. The first one is just a terminology. Could you explain what a learning plan is and how that works with the development of an employee? Sorry, I'm just not familiar with that terminology.

Ms. Isman: — Sure. A learning plan is basically an individual plan whereby a manager sits down with an employee and determines, based on the current needs of the job or future opportunities that the individual may aspire to, what their learning and development needs are.

So for example, if they need technical development skills in an area, that would be identified in a current learning plan. And then the manager and the employee would work together to determine the best way of gaining that body of knowledge — either through self-study and learning, whether it needs to be through an educational program of some sort — so that it's a

very planned approach to learning as opposed to ad hoc, when I have a need, I have to go and find it immediately.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you. The second question just focuses around retention. And looking at page 52 with the graph, with the demographics, and the growing First Nations population that we've got coming forward and the 2001 census saying roughly only one in five has a high school diploma, my question is this: what are the Crowns and the Public Service Commission doing for removing barriers of individuals that don't have a high school diploma to enter the workforce and continue upgrading while employed, to better paid positions and full lifelong employment, meaningful and decent paid employment? Thank you.

Ms. Young: — A response to that and probably less than complete . . . we are only partially involved in terms of getting the supply ready. I would say that where our focus is, the limited work we're doing there, our focus is on young Aboriginal students. And I think it was mentioned earlier that we are working with our Aboriginal Government Employees Network, our government employees, to go out to schools, and speak to — and we've targeted grade 7 through 9 — to speak to them about staying in school, about the importance of completing their high school, and then also the interest in trying to increase their interest and awareness of government jobs.

I'm just asking Clare if she can actually identify this, but the fact is that the good majority of our jobs, almost all of our jobs require a high school or more education. And so our focus has been . . . where it has been working with supply to try and increase the level of education rather than changing the nature of the job. Clare, do we have that?

Ms. Isman: — Twenty-five per cent of our jobs actually do require a university degree, and closer to 45 per cent require some sort of post-secondary or supervisory or technical skills, and the other 25 percent with regard to an intermediate level. But virtually all of them require a high school education.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you. And with regards to the Crowns, is it similar? Or are there apprenticeship programs for persons possibly, who haven't finished high school or the equivalent, to enter the workforce and continue upgrading in the Crowns, specifically in the trade sectors perhaps?

Mr. Ash: — Thank you for the question. Yes, it's very similar to . . . You know, our situation is very similar to the public service. We look forward. We recruit at the grade 12 level for the majority of positions because of the trades. Some of the things we do internally though, inside, if people have less than a grade 12 or less than the specific classes that they're required to move up into the trades, is we provide educational reimbursements, you know, time off work to take educational classes, those type of things.

But we too are concentrating very heavily on the supply side, spending a fair bit of time with educational institutions, community associations, speakers bureaus, career days, to encourage our young people to get an education, stay in school because there are jobs in the future. It's very important.

One of the programs we've been working with the last couple

of years is FSIN's (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) science camps. FSIN set up a program some years ago where they would go around the province and provide on-reserve science camps to young kids. And these kids would be in grade 3, 4, 5, 6, that type of thing. And the Crowns have got behind that program in a big way to stress the importance of science and maths because we're very technically driven as organizations and science and maths are important to us, and secondly to showcase some of the jobs or some of the career opportunities that are in the Crowns. So we're trying to balance a number of things.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, I've one final question. It's just about . . . for both the Crowns and the Public Service Commission, is there any formal hiring process to meet the demographic realities in an affirmative action type, you know, consistent with section 15(b) of the Charter? Is there anything in place around that, and how is that manifest, and where is it in legislation?

Ms. Young: — The response is yes; there is a program in place. It's been in place since 1989. It's called now a workplace diversity program. It was formerly called affirmative action and then employment equity. And it allows some special initiatives for hiring in areas that are allowed by the Human Rights Code, and those are the four designated groups. And those would be people of Aboriginal descent, people with disabilities, members of visible minority groups, and women in non-traditional or management occupations.

And so we have a variety of programs ranging from education and workplace readiness, respectful workplaces, to try and make the workplace as open and supportive as we can for a more diverse workforce. But under the Human Rights Code, we also are allowed to designate hiring positions for members of . . . equity group members if we choose.

So for example, if we have a position that we believe might be appropriate and we might have a supply that we can tap into, we might designate a position so that only equity group members would be considered for that position. We have used that ability, I think, a fair amount since the program has been in place; I guess 15 years now. And at this point, in terms of how it's manifested itself, I don't have all the numbers right in front of me. But I do know that the Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan, workforce population, is somewhere around 13 per cent. And in the Government of Saskatchewan, executive government, we're at 10.5 per cent. And certainly, part of that has resulted from the targeted hiring that we've done.

The Chair: — Thank you. Mr. Krawetz.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm interested in the demographic challenge that we face in Saskatchewan, and my question is to Ms. Ferguson. If you look at exhibit 3, as my colleague has indicated, in the year 2001 we approximately had 70 per cent of the general population that attained at least a high school diploma. And the statistic that you've indicated there for the Aboriginal population was back to 1996.

First of all, is there anything more current than 1996?

Ms. Ferguson: — Unfortunately not at this point in time there

isn't anything that's publicly available that's more current in terms of StatsCanada information, which is what we were drawing upon here.

Mr. Krawetz: — Okay. The Boughen report has many, many charts included in that report. And one of the charts indicates that since probably the early '70s when the enrolments in Saskatchewan schools peaked in that, you know, nearly 250,000 range, and the projections of course indicate that we're going to be down to, you know, 140,000 people approximately in the K to 12 system (kindergarten to grade 12), so we're starting to look at a situation where we're probably short about 8,000 students coming out of grade 12 in 10 years time than what was available to the workforce in the early '70s. That's a huge challenge because when we start to look at the availability of students to enter the schools and the universities and SIAST, as you've indicated, that pool of available people is now 8,000 short.

What do you see as a challenge, or how do you see the public sector dealing with the challenge that, you know, no matter how good a job you do, you're still going to have the . . . there won't be as many potential students available to even fill those positions? Are we looking at other avenues of being able to have, you know, skilled people available to fill those jobs? And I guess my question is both to the auditor's office and the Public Service Commission.

Ms. Ferguson: — If I could just add, the Boughen report focused on the K to 12 public system, and the information that was provided in that report has that focus. That does not include the First Nations system, and so I think the numbers that you're referring to actually aren't complete in that it doesn't include that other sector.

I think when you look at the school systems in Saskatchewan, you have to keep in mind that there is the K to 12 system that's provincial jurisdiction, and then there is also the First Nations system which, given our demographics, has a lot of students within that system and a growing number of students within that system. So you'd have to take the two pieces together.

Mr. Krawetz: — No question. I understand that. But based on the chart that you provided for 1996 data, you're showing us that only 21 per cent of the Aboriginal population in fact attains a high school diploma, at 1996. So while there may be an additional 4 to 5,000 students in the Aboriginal system, that still is far short of 240-some thousand students that were available to the workforce.

So what do you see as a potential for filling that void of 8,000 graduates coming out of the grade 12 system?

Ms. Young: — If I can just supplement, the work that we're doing now, the supply work . . . and we're doing this in conjunction with CIC as a joint project working with Doug Elliott. We are working a lot with the Department of Learning because what we'd need to determine is very much more specifically what we're training, what kind of areas we're training in, and what the skill levels are. And then we need to try and match our demand with supply.

And so where we find the gaps, which is what we're after is

trying to identify those gaps, we may have to be very specific in the future. Whereas we're being general now about interest in the public service, we may need to be very specific. And that could be specific education, specific marketing towards certain groups, but could also be things as specific as scholarships and bursaries for particular areas that we're going to need.

But because our workforces are so diverse, it wasn't helpful for us to just have a general view about this. We need to get in and be very specific about the areas where we know we're going to have a gap between the supply and demand so that we can target very specifically, not unlike in some ways what happens with certain areas of the health sector where they target bursaries and scholarships very specifically towards certain kinds of professions.

But that's the work that's underway right now is trying to identify the biggest gaps.

Mr. Krawetz: — As you identify gaps in the public sector — and you mentioned health as one of those concerns — one of the concerns of course is in the area of education as we look at universities and the turnover of the baby boomer age group. And we start to look at even the problems that confront the K to 12 system — a definite void in very specific areas.

We look at the science area. For instance, I have heard from many school divisions that the prospects of a number of applicants for a science position is just not on any more. There are, you know, as little as three or four graduates that are graduating from the universities with physics degrees in education, and that poses a tremendous problem as you've pointed out, or as the auditor's office has pointed out in the charts that Ms. Ferguson used. As the baby boomer group exits the workforce in the next 10 years, where will the fills be?

And I know you're talking about, you know, scholarships and trying to attract people, but if we're not . . . if we don't have the graduates coming out of the grade 12 system as we once had, and we see the voids in so many areas, how will we fix the system for the province of Saskatchewan to ensure that all areas have available workforce?

Ms. Young: — In some ways the question is probably more appropriately responded to by the Department of Learning, but we certainly believe that probably one of the major things we need to do is to be able to identify to the individuals, the potential workforce of the future, and also the learning institutes, what our needs are.

Something else additionally I'll mention to you is we are working very much — it's an effort that is spearheaded by the Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs department — trying to put together a listing, and it's quite a momentous task, of all of the organizations that they have partnerships with, trying to put together a listing of what our jobs are and what jobs we'll need. And that listing is going to be trying to get it out to the students that we're trying to get to so that they can see for themselves what kind of jobs will be available, so that they can get the sense of where they should direct their education.

So that's the kind of the thing that we've been working on in

some ways. But again, our work in terms of filling that gap is probably in the early stages.

The other area that hasn't been mentioned here and I'll only just mention it, is the considerations, also in the Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs department, around immigration. And it's an open question and a question that we are in early discussions with in terms of whether or not immigration needs to . . . we need to have a different kind of a view or a look at immigration in terms of that potential, that that's some of our workforce of the future.

Mr. Krawetz: — One other area. You mentioned that filling the void in some areas is done now by retirees remaining in the workforce for extended periods of time, etc. Do you foresee a conflict at the Crown level or the public service level that has occurred at the education level, where there has been a significant change in The Education Act that allows now retirees to enter into contracts and not being penalized for being back in the workforce on their pension. Do you see a problem there or . . . What I'm hearing from many young teachers is that they are trying to attain permanent employment and there is a retiree who is still being employed. And while there may be, as I've indicated, in the science areas tremendous, you know, shortage of that type of manpower, in other areas there are not.

So I'm wondering how . . . what kind of balance you're going to use to ensure that, you know, retirees who fill a void that is so necessary because someone isn't available, is not a blanket policy that is adopted throughout and then prevents a young person in Saskatchewan who's graduating to attain full-time employment. We need to ensure that that balance is there, and I'm hearing from the education side that that's not there right now and there are some problems. How do you . . . How will you handle it in both the Crowns and Public Service Commission?

Ms. Young: — Certainly speaking to it from our perspective — and it's a chance to clarify, too, the phased retirement initiative that Clare spoke about — is not necessarily looking at retirees, people who have already retired. And in fact, the program has just been, or the policy has just been put into place recently, about a year ago. And in fact, we have a large group of individuals. Our average age of retirement in the Public Service is about age 59. And people under our new pension plans can make their own choices around after age 50 of when to retire.

And we very much saw that we are going to need to manage the transition as baby boomers leave and new young people come in, and so we put this in place for when the employee and management agree that there is a need to keep the person on, there's a need to mentor the young person as they're coming in or we actually have a void. And we need to keep that gap where both management and the employee agrees, we can move to different options for that individual.

For example, sometimes individuals we don't want to lose and they're 59 years old, we could convince them to stay for two more years to help with the transition and instead they could move to part-time employment so they can start to begin to enjoy other aspects of their life, but we keep . . . get to keep their experience. But it has to be, it has to be a joint decision.

At this point the policy applies to out-of-scope only and that's simply because we haven't had discussions with the union around this. And as I said it's a new . . . And in fact we only have a few people who have taken us up on it. It's quite early. But the intention is, actually more or less what you've said, it's around when we find a gap, either a skill gap or a gap in mentoring or a knowledge transfer, that we think this is a very useful thing to do. So we don't see this as a policy that will be across the board and it doesn't have . . . you can't apply to it and be granted; it has to be a mutual decision between the manager and the employee. So we hope that it's going to meet exactly the need that you talked about.

Mr. Ash: — In the Crown sector we're looking at the same thing. I mean, we've got a situation now where you're a worker on a Friday and you're retired on a Monday. And so what we're looking at is maybe more of a flexible retirement process where you can retire but in fact come back and do some mentoring, coaching, those types of things, with the youth, very similar to what Wynne is talking about in the . . . within the Public Service Commission.

When I talked about some of the, you know, initiatives that we're looking at, this is one of them that we are looking at right now because in conventional organizations like we've got now, the rules are set up that everything is very cut and dried. And out into the future I think some of those human resource practices will need to be changed. And that's certainly one of them.

We wouldn't be looking at a situation where a number of people retire, for us just to simply hire them back. I mean that doesn't serve anyone's interest. So it's certainly from the Crown's perspective, something we're looking at very, very closely. It's important.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Hagel?

Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. Do we have time for one quick question?

The Chair: — Go ahead.

Mr. Hagel: — Okay. I'm very conscious of the time. One of the groups in society that tends to be underemployed and often times with a fair degree of qualification, is people with disabilities. Could you just very, very quickly — I am conscious of the time — let us know what you're doing to increase the ability to attract and retain a group which I think has the potential to be long-term, loyal as well, in terms of staying with the employer, if meaningful employment is found?

Ms. Young: — From executive government there's a couple of things. Of course people with disabilities are a recognized group that we can do a specialized hiring for and we certainly do use that provision from time to time. We also have accommodation policies in the workplace for, for example, a physical disability. There may be certain accommodations, and there is a policy requiring that kind of accommodation. We also have special programs about rehabilitation of return-to-work people who, through an illness or an injury of some kind, may need a special kind of provisions in returning to work — maybe a different kind of job — and we have those policies in place.

This is a very difficult — as you know, Mr. Hagel — a very difficult area, and we haven't made as much headway as we certainly want to in being representative of people with disabilities.

Last fall we joined with the Department of Community Resources and Employment to put a special pilot into place where we have . . . It's our experience that hiring people with disabilities is always a one-by-one proposition. And so we have hired somebody who is working in our staffing area who is doing nothing but that — who is one by one meeting with departments, meeting with employment agencies, and trying to make up the matches.

And I'm pleased to say we've had some successes and the program is working, but it is not something that you can put a policy in place and you have a huge impact. It is one by one. But that's in place now, and it seems to be working fairly well.

Mr. Ash: — In the Crown sector, each of the Crowns have diversity coordinators. So, you know, it's a central focus for them and their responsibilities. Certainly the Crowns have worked very hard with the various associations, community groups, employment agencies over the last number of years.

Have we made a significant difference? No, I won't sit here and say that we have. We have made a difference, and I guess out in the future our job is to, you know, better focus our efforts certainly in that area. It is a group that we work with every day. But like Wynne, it's a one-on-one situation because of the needs. We've got all of the policy in place. More effort needs to be expended in that area, no doubt about it.

Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you. We've gone slightly beyond our scheduled time, but there's one area that I would just quickly want to ask Ms. Ferguson to respond to, and that is in regard to the ability to pay for succession that we know is going to happen. There's going to be golden handshakes and there's . . . we're talking about easing people into retirement. We're talking about pension repercussions. We know that these are, you know, issues that involve mega-millions of dollars.

Is the Provincial Auditor's office looking at the cost of succession, and do you feel that both the Crowns and the government departments have a handle on the cost of succession and will have the ability to pay that cost?

Mr. Wendel: — Well I'll try and answer that. It's going to be a judgment call at each and every government agency as they work through their budgets and what they're facing. They have important public services they have to deliver, and succession will happen regardless. It's just a question of not . . . whether it will happen in an efficient way, and to make it cost effective they're going to have to make those judgments as they go along.

I won't be commenting on that as we audit them. I'll be looking to make sure they have good practices, and they'll have to manage their costs within the money that's given to them.

The Chair: — Is there any way to speculate on what the cost of

succession would be, and is that a role that the Provincial Auditor's office would be involved in?

Ms. Ferguson: — I'll attempt to respond to that, Fred. Mr. Chair, I think really the whole idea of succession planning has to be something that's integrated throughout the organization, and it's not just the human resources unit even within an organization. So it's probably one of those areas that the cost of actually the planning activities and those types of activities may be very, very hard to pull out.

What you may have, though, is costs associated with decisions that you're making in terms of how you are actually carrying out your succession plan, as opposed to the actual cost of the succession planning themselves — if that makes any sense. So I don't think you can pull it straight out but, you know, obviously the decisions that you make are going to have costs. They're really going to be reflected in your salaries, costs that you have both now and in the future, and those trendings as things go out.

What we as an office are saying, is that one of the things that should happen within the public sector is to have coordination across the government through the various parts of government so that the whole process is as efficient as possible, so that you aren't creating duplicate programs, etc., and to keep the costs and the whole process as efficient as possible.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. I think that we could probably spend a fair bit of time and I would wish we had time to address some of these questions to our witnesses as well, but I'm sure this issue is not going to go away and we will have to deal with this again in the future.

I want to thank the witnesses for appearing before us, and we will now move on to the second item of our agenda, reporting on infrastructure, chapter 12 of the 2003 Report Volume Three.

We have officials here from the Saskatchewan Transportation Company and the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. If we could have the senior officials perhaps from both take . . . there's three chairs, so there's two for one and one for the other group. And if you could have your other officials sitting close to you, I think that would expedite the time that we have.

I would ask the witnesses just to identify themselves. There may be a very brief comment by the Provincial Auditor though we have been into this issue before, and I don't think much detail is required. If there are, again, just very brief statements from the witnesses following, then we'll get into questions as quickly as we possibly can. Would you, witnesses, would you introduce yourselves please.

Public Hearing: Saskatchewan Transportation Company and Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation

Mr. Millar: — My name is John Millar. I am director of strategic planning and communications for the Saskatchewan Transportation Company.

Mr. Clayton: — I'm Ray Clayton, president of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. And I have with me Donald Koop who is the vice-president of our

commercial services division. I also have with me Garth Rusconi, vice-president of our accommodation division . . .

The Chair: — Beg your pardon?

Mr. Clayton: — . . . accompanied by Jason Sherwin who is assistant controller for STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company).

The Chair: — Okay, thank you very much. Ms. Ferguson.

Ms. Ferguson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, members, officials. As indicated we did cover actually reporting on infrastructure in quite a bit of detail last week. In the view of time, what I would like to do is actually just go directly to the recommendations that we've made in this report, as last week our focus has been on the adequacy of the public information that each of these agencies has provided.

And so if you go to page 269, we'll look at SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) first, and you'll find that we've actually made two recommendations for each agency. The first is on page 269. So we recommend that SPMC provide the public with additional information about the capacity of its facilities and vehicles including their current condition and potential volume of infrastructure.

For example, for its facilities SPMC could state the square metres available of office space or cubic metres of storage space or occupancy rates of its facilities. For its vehicles, it could set out the average number of standby vehicles. This type of information would help the public better understand the capacity and also the extent of unused capacity of the infrastructure that SPMC manages.

The second recommendation for SPMC is on page 272. It's at the top of the page there. And for that one, we recommend that SPMC provide the public with additional information about the extent to which the use of its key infrastructure — for example, its facilities, its vehicles, and aircraft — achieved its operational and financial plans and explained differences between actual plans and planned results, the actual and planned results.

As an office we recognize that SPMC is starting to use the government's accountability framework to plan and report and that this framework focuses on reporting of results. We strongly encourage SPMC to continue its application of this framework and keep in mind when it does so . . . the information that the public needs about its infrastructure.

So if I can move on to the two recommendations that we made for STC, Saskatchewan Transportation Company. The first is on page 268, again at the top of the page. So we recommend that STC provide the public with additional information about the current condition of its facilities to help explain the capacity. The second recommendation is on 273, again at the top of the page. We recommend that STC provide the public with additional information about the strategies used to manage major risks facing its facilities by describing the actions it has taken to reduce these risks to an acceptable level.

I want to draw to your attention that both of these recommendations focus on STC's facilities as opposed to its

fleet, equipment, and operations. And its facilities include its depots and garages. The ongoing availability of these facilities could impact the overall costs of STC's ongoing operations. For example, STC could provide information on the average age and condition of its facilities. It could answer the questions, are they in good shape or in need of extensive repairs. And it could set out its key plans to ensure the facilities provide the level of services and availability that it expects to support the operation of its overall fleet.

So in summary, as an office we think it's important to keep the public informed about infrastructure. With better information about infrastructure, legislators and the public will be better able to assess whether corporations who manage significant infrastructure manage that infrastructure properly.

So that would conclude our presentation, and we'd be pleased to respond to questions. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Ms. Ferguson. Is there a response from SPMC and STC? And again, if it could be brief that would be appreciated.

Mr. Millar: — Mr. Chairman, in STC we appreciate the comments that we received from the auditor's office as a result of this audit. We have undertaken, I believe, to deal with it.

We have put in our 2003 annual report, within our management discussion analysis, a discussion of the situation with our facilities. And as you may know, there is a government directive that Crown corporations will now publicly publish quarterly reports. This will be coming out at the end of May and that quarterly report from STC will contain further information of what we are doing with our facilities.

The Chair: — Mr. Clayton.

Mr. Clayton: — SPMC agrees with the directions that have been set out by the Provincial Auditor, and we're in the process of endeavouring to follow those directions.

The past year was the first year for which SPMC had a performance plan that followed the regular format that applies to executive government. In our annual report pertaining to that past year, we will include some of the reporting items that the Provincial Auditor has recommended. We are trying to develop our performance measures further, and accordingly as we move into subsequent years of our performance, our accountability framework, we will have additional detailed reporting, all of which will support the general direction that the Provincial Auditor has recommended.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Clayton. I will open up the floor to questions. Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. A question for the officials from STC — in your new reporting mechanism, do you believe that you have complied fully with the recommendations put forward by the Provincial Auditor?

Mr. Millar: — We believe that we have attempted to comply. We leave it to the judgment of the auditor whether or not further information is needed. We will accept that judgment as

it comes from the auditor, but we have attempted to comply.

The Chair: — That's all, Mr. Yates?

Mr. Yates: — That's all.

The Chair: — Mr. Dearborn.

Mr. Dearborn: — My question is for the officials from the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. The first couple will be somewhat generic in scope. I'm just wondering, is it SPMC that is officially responsible for the procurement and in essence ownership of all software and hardware that go throughout the government across departments?

Mr. Clayton: — In terms of the policy directions that applies to the acquisition of what the member has set out, that comes under the direction of the Information Technology Office. When departments proceed to actually purchase items, then they go through our purchasing branch. Then the policies that apply to those . . . the purchasing protocol will apply.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you. The question that I would have then is, in those purchasing protocols is SPMC . . . has it been responsible for putting specs on all the machines, hardware, software, so the departments have the ability to interface one with another?

And if this hasn't been the case in the past, what steps are being taken so that this will be able to be achieved in any further purchases or rentals or whatnot, and also to allow upgrades in the IT (information technology)? Because having sat in on estimates of the Information Technology Office, it seems there's a vast problem here and at the base of it, it comes down to where you're getting the computers from. So it would seem to me that the solution first and foremost would be with your department, SPMC, and allowing the purchases to be consistent, one with another, across departments regardless of at what point in time the purchases are made.

Mr. Clayton: — Mr. Chairman, the directions that the member has set out are certainly valid ones, and one of the initiatives that the Information Technology Office is pursuing is to endeavour to attain that type of standardization and commonality across government. We do endeavour to work to some extent with the departments in that respect. But at the current time basically SPMC follows the desires of the departments as they set out what they wish SPMC to purchase on their behalf.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, sir. I would ask if you'll be addressing this problem because I mean this seems to be the source of it is that . . . I'll just put it. You may have the Department of Health purchasing computers and software, and they're going to run it in on a Linux system and the Department of Agriculture also coming to you, purchasing a system that's going to run on Microsoft, and for whatever reason, they need to have a cross between the two of them and this can't occur. It would seem to me that the starting position on this would be through the clearing house where they're purchasing the hardware and the software.

Now I understand that there's going to be specific tasks from

time to time that need to be contracted for very specific department purposes. But from the broad base, it's not unlike a decision that we all agree to drive on the right-hand side of the road. And so what steps will you be taking — in two parts — number one, to assure that this starts to occur from the purchasing side of it, and second, to be able to report on the ability of, you know, how much memory, how much capacity that we have?

You're not doing that reporting right now — are you? — on the infrastructure of the computer systems that we have, the IT systems, the bandwidth. Will you start reporting on that, and will you start having a . . . do you have plans for the procurement of new IT technologies, that they be compatible one with another between departments?

Mr. Clayton: — Mr. Chairman, endeavouring to obtain the kind of standardizations and compatibilities that the member is referring to is certainly something that is required. It is a deficiency at the moment, and I think we all recognize it. The Information Technology Office does have responsibility for the policy in this respect, and I expect that over the coming months that there will be a collaborative endeavour from the ITO (Information Technology Office) office and our purchasing area to follow up along the lines that the member has indicated.

At the moment, SPMC does not own the software or the hardware that's acquired. This is the property of the individual departments and agency that request the assistance for the purchasing process that we go through. Whether or not that changes in the future remains to be seen, but I think the bottom line here is that one of the very reasons for the existence of the Information Technology Office is to address this particular point. And that agency, as opposed to SPMC, has been designated as the agency to pursue these points.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you. That clears up where the jurisdiction falls.

And I would just ask for . . . Just to clear up, the final question I would have is, has SPMC been given direction over the past five years from that particular . . . from the ITO about, you know, procurement and whatnot? And not to put you in a difficult situation, but what progress has been made towards that if it's not occurring in your department and you're requiring that direction for it to occur?

Mr. Clayton: — I think it's recognized within government that this has been something that's been lacking, having more of a central focus to the purchase of information systems. There really has been a relative lack of central direction in this area.

If I could observe, quite a number of years ago when the mainframe computer operations seemed to dominate, there was a very high level of central control and direction. And that had both its pluses and minuses. It did have the advantage of central planning. It also brought with it certain rigidities. With the advent of the desktop computer, there was a lot more advantage taken in terms of individual initiative and looking at the specific needs of individual departments and areas and so on.

But at the same time, what happened is that certain elements seemed to grow a bit like Topsy, and so we ended up with these

incompatibilities and overlaps and so on along the lines that the member has identified. And those certainly are going to be addressed as the Information Technology Office pursues the directions that they have indicated they are going to pursue.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Mr. Krawetz.

Mr. Krawetz: — I know that we have four recommendations to deal with, so just a question to SPMC officials, Mr. Clayton. In the report from the auditor, the auditor makes reference to facilities that include health care facilities. Could you explain what health care facilities are under the control of SPMC?

Mr. Clayton: — I'll ask Mr. Rusconi to address that point.

Mr. Rusconi: — We have, I believe, four health facilities that we have ownership for: the North Battleford regional care facility; the Sask Hospital, North Battleford; the Souris Valley facility in Weyburn; and the Palliser facility in Swift Current. We have ownership for those. We don't necessarily operate and maintain them on a daily basis.

Mr. Krawetz: — Are any of the acute care or long-term care facilities owned or leased under the control of SPMC?

Mr. Rusconi: — Yes. Pardon me, actually there is another. Lakeside Home in Wolseley is leased by SPMC on behalf of the Health department.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you.

The Chair: — All right. Any questions over here? There was concern expressed by the auditor about STC providing more information regarding capacity of garages and depots. Mr. Millar, could you tell this committee how much excess capacity STC has in its garages and depots?

Mr. Millar: — Current, Saskatoon garage would have no excess capacity. We do a lot of what we call foreign coach work, Mr. Chair, where we do repair and service work for other coach companies. And we do a lot of storage at our Saskatoon garage, mostly for the city of Saskatoon but for others. We have no excess capacity at Saskatoon.

We do have some excess capacity in Regina. Right now, we've changed our focus of how we operate the Regina garage, such that we no longer do major maintenance there. We only do safety checks and minor maintenance in Regina. That has left us with some extra capacity in that garage for the time being.

The Chair: — And as far as depots are concerned?

Mr. Millar: — There is in our Saskatoon facility; our Saskatoon depot has, I believe, one empty office. The Regina depot has no unused space. The freight shed in Saskatoon and in Regina are both run to capacity.

The Chair: — All right, thank you. And, Mr. Clayton, SPMC owns some airplanes. Can you tell me how much they're utilized, what capacity are they operating at?

Mr. Clayton: — I don't know if there's a quick, simple answer to that. But if there is, I'll ask Mr. Koop to answer.

Mr. Koop: — SPMC owns five aircraft and leases one other. Three owned aircraft are for the air ambulance service, which is based out of Saskatoon. And there's three aircraft with the executive air service, two of which are owned and one leased.

In terms of their utilization, air ambulance is more heavily utilized. I'd have to check to see if I had the information here, but I think they fly in the range of 500 to 600,000 miles a year providing medevac service. And I should mention this is under contract with the Department of Health.

In terms of executive air, the annual distance flown is about 320 to 350,000 miles a year. That one fluctuates, as we have some limitations during an election call that the aircraft are not made available for elected officials. So there are times when the amount of utilization goes down because of other circumstances.

The Chair: — Mr. Koop, in a non-election year how would the utilization of executive air compare with utilization in the private sector?

Mr. Koop: — I don't know how to answer that question, quite honestly. You know, is a plane available when requested? We do our utmost to provide that service, and if we're not able to, we on occasion need to charter an aircraft because the aircraft are in use or down for regular maintenance. If you're in the private sector, you may have your planes waiting for business or you may have them all committed.

I'm at a loss to really sort of give you a simple comparison of capacity utilization. I suppose one way to try to articulate it is to look at the amount of hours each aircraft might incur. And that's something that we are endeavouring to provide in terms of information to the public, and it's one of the elements that we took from the auditor's report.

But I don't know if I would be able to draw a comparison to, let's say Regina charter companies. At best we could probably use industry averages in terms of the number of hours a certain aircraft is typically used. And that would give you some indication whether we're using our aircraft more or less than the industry average.

And on that basis I would suspect the air ambulance is being used more than the industry average because of the call for that service. And I would speculate that the executive air would be used less than the industry average because it is a dedicated service. It's not open to all government. It's open to the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker, the members of Executive Council, eligible MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) who live a certain distance beyond Regina, and senior government officials and senior Crown corporation officials. So it's not the same sort of clientele as the private sector would be available to serve.

The Chair: — Would it be possible for you to provide that information by letter to the committee? Could you compare usage to industry standards and provide us with that information?

Mr. Koop: — Well that's what we're, that's what we're endeavouring to put together currently. I'm not sure if we even have that readily available, but that's the intent is to provide that information.

The Chair: — Thank you very much.

Colleagues, we are a bit pressed for time. With your permission I would suggest that we move the motions on the recommendations at the next meeting, either at the beginning or at the conclusion of the next Public Accounts Committee meeting. Is that acceptable to all of the members?

We did cover quite a bit of territory in this committee meeting, and I think both of the issues probably deserve a little more time. So in fairness to all members to ask some questions and in fairness to the witnesses to provide adequate answers, I pushed things a little farther than I normally would. I appreciate your indulgence in that regard. Thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us.

I now declare the meeting adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 11:56.

