STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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Saskatoon Riversdale

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Saskatoon Sutherland

Mr. Larry Doke
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Mr. Glen Hart
Last Mountain-Touchwood

Mr. Warren Michelson
Moose Jaw North

Mr. Rob Norris
Saskatoon Greystone

Mr. Randy Weekes
Biggar

Mr. Trent Wotherspoon
Regina Rosemont

[The committee met at 09:01.]

The Chair: — Good morning everyone. Welcome to Public Accounts on this beautiful day. I did hear some talk from one of the members earlier thinking or suggesting that we should move outside, but I don't think that that's in the realm of possibilities today. So I think we'll remain in this committee room to do our work here today.

I'd like to start by tabling a document, PAC 39/27, which you have before you, the first report of the steering committee: Provincial Auditor selection process, dated September 23rd, 2014. I'd like to ask for leave to consider this report since it wasn't on today's agenda. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Mr. Merriman, would you like to make some comments, as this was a steering committee report?

Mr. Merriman: — Absolutely. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, as well as Kathy for helping our steering committee go through this process of working out the details of hiring the new auditor. We have some pending legislation coming up in the fall that might change the terms of reference, but the committee thought it only prudent to move forward with basically the framework of hiring of a new auditor. And I guess in saying that, I would like to say thank you to you for absolutely helping us through this process in the temporary auditor's position, and we look forward to the process of the new auditor.

So with that, I will move the motion:

That the first report of the steering committee be adopted; and

That the steering committee be authorized to make decisions on process and procedure relating to the selection of a Provincial Auditor; and

That if a non-committee member is unable to participate in the process, the steering committee shall be authorized to select another Legislative Assembly Service employee or subject matter specialist.

I so move.

The Chair: — Is the committee ready for the question? Mr. Norris.

Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much. If I can, and mostly just because I'm new, I'd like to get a better sense of just the external subject matter expertise that's available. I think that's important for me and perhaps others to have a better sense of. It's on page 4. I'm just wondering if someone might be able to speak to maybe past practices on that and what that looks like.

The Chair: — I think that would be good. We have two members, Mr. Hart . . . And my apologies, I realize I didn't introduce anybody here today. As I look around the table, we've got Mr. Hart here today, and Mr. Doke, Mr. Michelson, Mr. Weekes, Mr. Norris, Mr. Merriman, and Mr. Wotherspoon.

So welcome, and welcome to the officials here today with the Provincial Auditor. I skipped over that part.

I think that two of our committee members who served on the last hiring process, Mr. Hart and Mr. Wotherspoon, might want to speak to that. Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So the technical experts or the external subject matter experts, I believe, are drawn from the audit committee that's appointed by this committee. And maybe I'll punt the ball over to the auditor to describe where those members come from, but they are appointed by different bodies as defined by our Act and represent the accounting profession. The accounting faculties at the universities, the chambers of commerce, and other bodies have a role in putting forward those individuals.

Just speaking to the last experience, what we were able to achieve is to have two individuals who are already entrusted with that role on the audit committee, who have the technical expertise and respect within the profession of course within the accounting community, would certainly assist this committee. Because when you're interviewing an auditor or that prospective auditor and going through that process, the reality is that as legislators we likely don't have that technical expert background in accounting, and it's important to entrust that to an external independent body to answer questions to us, or even to probe further questions in a certain subject area.

So I've found the inclusion of those individuals add to the process in a significant way and add to the confidence of the committee and throughout the process.

The Chair: — Mr. Hart, do you have any comments that you'd like to add?

Mr. Hart: — Sure. Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I'll just echo Mr. Wotherspoon's comments that the external subject matter experts, which are drawn from the advisory committee, were extremely helpful. They provided the technical expertise that none of the committee members possessed. And without them, I don't think we could have done the job that was required of us because we just don't, at least at that time the committee members, none of us had the expertise. So we relied heavily on those external advisory members that the committee had appointed.

The Chair: — Does that answer your question, Mr. Norris?

Mr. Norris: — That's helpful, very helpful.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you. Are there any further comments or questions? Are we ready for the question? Okay. I'll read the motion again one more time. Mr. Merriman has moved:

That this first report of the steering committee be adopted; and

That the steering committee be authorized to make decisions on process and procedure relating to the selection of a Provincial Auditor; and

That if a non-committee member is unable to participate in the process, the steering committee shall be authorized to select another Legislative Assembly Service employee or subject matter specialist.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. All right. Thank you. So back to our meeting agenda here. Today we will be looking at Provincial Auditor's reports from Justice, the Corrections and Policing division and then later this afternoon from Central Services. But we'll start this morning with the Corrections and Policing division.

So I'd like to introduce Judy Ferguson, our Acting Provincial Auditor. She'll introduce her folks here with her today. And we also have Dale McFee who is the deputy minister of Corrections and Policing, who will also have an opportunity to introduce the officials with him here today as well. So I'd like to pass it off to the Acting Provincial Auditor.

Justice — Corrections and Policing

Ms. Ferguson: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair, Deputy Chair, members and officials. With me today, I've got Kelly Deis. Kelly has led the work at Corrections and Policing previously, when it was at a ministry level, but now it's at the division level. And behind him is Charlene Drotar. Charlene also participated actively in a number of the audits that are before us today. And beside her is Kim Lowe. Ms. Lowe is our committee liaison with this committee.

So this morning we're going to provide you with an overview of eight chapters that are on your agenda. And before I launch into that, I'd like to actually just pause and thank the deputy minister and his officials for the co-operation that we received on the numerous chapters that are before us today here. It's quite a whack of work.

I also would like to remind the committee members that effective May of 2012, Corrections and Policing became part of the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety became part of the Ministry of Government Relations. Now the reason I want to remind you of that is the chapters that are on your agenda, some of them are before the reorganization, some of them are after. So if you keep that in mind, it might help you kind of figure out the road map as we go through here because at times it is a little bit complex. I even thought so too when I was prepping for this meeting.

So this morning, what we're going to do is provide an overview of these chapters in three separate parts, and you'll find that each part will include a portion of chapter 4 of our 2011 report volume 2. So if it feels like we're going back to that chapter again and again, we are.

Okay. So the first part, we're going to focus on the three chapters containing the results of our annual integrated audits. And then the second part, we're going to cover the three chapters related to the results of our audit and follow-up work for the rehabilitation of adult offenders in the community and the follow-up related to the rehabilitation of adult inmates. The third part's going to cover two chapters related to the results of our work and follow-up on monitoring municipal policing.

The first part doesn't contain any new recommendations for your committee's consideration. The second part contains seven new recommendations. The third part, six new recommendations. And so at this point I'm just going to turn it over to Mr. Deis to present that first part.

Mr. Deis: — Thank you, Ms. Ferguson. Part one covers three chapters on your agenda today that report on the results of our annual integrated audits. Chapter 4 of our 2011 report volume 2 reports results for the year ended in March 31st, 2011. Chapter 4 of our 2012 report volume 2 reports the results for the year ended March 31st, 2012. Chapter 14 of our 2013 report volume 2 reports the results for the year ended March 31st, 2013.

As Ms. Ferguson indicated, there are no new recommendations in these chapters. Because of the reorganization of the ministries in May of 2012, some recommendations are no longer relevant. I will focus my comments on the most recent chapter, and that's chapter 14 of our 2013 report volume 2.

By March 31st, 2013, the ministry had three recommendations outstanding. Two relate to IT [information technology] and one relates to time cards of the correctional facilities workers. We found that the ministry needs to better monitor the security of its IT systems and data. We found that the monthly reports it receives from ITO [information technology office] — and that's now the Ministry of Central Services and within that, the information technology division or ITD — that reports contained limited information on the security of the availability of its IT systems managed by ITD. As a result, the Ministry of Justice was not receiving sufficient information to know if ITD was addressing its security and disaster recovery needs.

Also we continue to find that the ministry did not promptly remove IT access to individuals that it no longer employed. We found that as at April 2013, Justice had not yet tested its business continuity plan. And finally we continued to find that all time cards of correctional facilities workers were not properly approved or supported; thereby Justice is at risk of paying employees incorrect amounts. In August of 2013, Justice amended the collective bargaining agreement to require management approval of all shift trades.

For the recommendations included in the tables at the end of each chapter — for example exhibit 5.1 on page 115 of the 2000 report volume 2, chapter 14 — we'll be discussing the status of those either in the next parts today or they'll be in related discussions at future agenda meetings of this committee. That concludes my presentation for this part.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Deis. I've realized too that I didn't introduce the officials from the Provincial Comptroller's office today. So my apologies about that. Today we've got Chris Bayda who is the executive director of the financial management branch. Thank you so much for being here, and sorry for my oversight, and Lori Taylor who's the manager of the Provincial Comptroller's office. So thanks for your time here today.

So now, Mr. McFee, I'll pass it off to you if you'd like to make any remarks on that first section.

[09:15]

Mr. McFee: — Thank you, Madam Chair. And certainly I just want to echo the thoughts that it's a pleasure to be here today. Before I introduce the folks that are joining me today, I just want to thank Ms. Ferguson and the team at the Provincial Auditor for the good work that they do. And it is appreciated, and I think it is the thing that obviously measures us to do better each day. So we appreciate that, and we appreciate the positive work in relationship that we obviously have with the auditor's office. And we certainly always welcome these reports as they serve as a guide, as I say, for areas of improvement.

Moving on to our officials today, I just want to take a minute to introduce, I've got Dr. Dennis Cooley, associate deputy minister, custody, supervision and rehabilitation services; Dr. Brian Rector, executive director, research and evidence-based excellence; Doris Schnell, executive director, offender services; Dale Larsen, executive director, policing and community safety services; Heather Scriver, executive director, custody services; Dave Tulloch, executive director, corporate services; Monica Field, executive director, strategic systems and innovation; and Clinton Griffiths, director of risk management and audit.

In addition we have Rick Peach joining us, who is the executive director of the Saskatchewan Police Commission. Obviously there's a distinct relationship between us and the commission. Mr. Peach will answer the questions in relation to the commission.

In relation to the statement, annual ministry audit, year-end March 31st, 2011, '12, and '13, certainly there are a number of recommendations found in the 2011 and '12 reports that have already been addressed. So I don't plan to cover those at this time, but would be happy to answer any questions that committee members may have on these after I provide my initial comments. My comments will be focused only on recommendations that remain outstanding as outlined in the 2013 report.

Recommendation 1, found on page 113 of chapter 4 of the 2013 report volume 2, relating to the monitoring and security of the ministry's information technology systems and data, this particular recommendation contains two main components that the ministry is working to address. The first relates to the monitoring of systems and data, while the second relates to promptly removing user access.

Key actions taken in the timeline for implementation, certainly in relation to this, regards the monitoring of our systems and data. We continue to work with Central Services, where the information technology division or ITD is housed, to develop reporting necessary for full compliance. The information needed to monitor the security of our systems and data is continually being assessed, and new reports are being incorporated as they become available. In addition, all major projects have a detailed security and privacy impact assessment completed. Recommendations are addressed and developed along with the technical development.

With regards to prompt removal of user access, the ministry has now implemented a process using an automated form to initiate notifications to all necessary parties when a user leaves. We anticipate this will completely eliminate all user access removal issues going forward.

Recommendation 2, found on page 114 of the report, related to completing and implementing the ministry's business continuity plan. The ministry has developed a solid business continuity plan; however we recognize the disaster recovery portion needs to be enhanced. To address this, the ministry has asked ITO to prepare estimates for the development of recovery plans for four of our critical applications. Over the longer term, the ministry plans to incrementally address the need for a disaster recovery plan for all of its systems using a risk-based approach. In addition any new initiative will have a disaster recovery plan as a deliverable within the project, including the sustainment plan going forward.

Timelines for this, certainly for implementation, we don't have solid dates as of yet. We won't have this information until ITO provides us with a concrete timeline related to recovery plans of our critical systems.

Recommendation 3 on page 114 of the report related to supervising employees to ensure that they follow ministry policies and procedures for paying amounts owed to employees. The ministry has spent considerable time and effort on a number of payroll-related initiatives, including the development of a revised payroll manual which is currently being implemented. Timeline for this, the payroll manual will continue to be rolled out over the coming months, and we expect this recommendation will be fully implemented by the end of fiscal '14 and '15.

Madam Chair, those are the outstanding ones, and certainly happy to answer any questions by myself or my officials.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. McFee. I'd like to open up the floor for questions. Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well thank you to the deputy minister and officials for being here today, and also thank you for the work to, I guess, achieve compliance on many of the recommendations. That's important work. I also just want to say as a matter of observation that the presentation that you provided as deputy minister is actually really helpful for us, as a committee, as a bit of a template that focuses in very directly on the recommendations. Sometimes it's difficult to ascertain when someone's . . . what recommendation someone's speaking to and from what chapter, so thanks for the direct, focused report that you provided.

Maybe just on the first recommendation that's outstanding, although you noted significant progress on it, this is the adequate monitoring and, I guess, agreements in place to protect information. You may have mentioned this, but I'm just wondering if you have a timeline at this point in time at which point there would be compliance in place as it relates to that recommendation.

The Chair: — Just before the officials speak, if you could announce or let us know who you are for the first time that

would be great.

Ms. Field: — Hi there. I'm Monica Field, executive director of strategic systems and innovation at the ministry. We're working, continuing to work with Central Services to ensure that we're able to comply with relation to monitoring of the systems and data. Right now we're currently working with them in as far as the account removal and the timeliness. So internally we've already implemented a system for the removal of all of the people within there. So it is effective now. We're just refining the process as we go along with the timing.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well thanks for that information. And when we're talking about the information that's contained and why security's important, can you just speak to, I guess, what's potentially at risk if there weren't adequate protections in place?

Mr. McFee: — I mean keep in mind that when a person leaves the building, they don't have access to our system, but you know, other folks perhaps certainly could access those systems. So what we have to do is make sure that there's a connection, as soon as a person leaves, to actually cut that off at the first instance. So the risk of an outside environment is minimal, even with that said, but minimal is not good enough. We want to make sure that it's nothing, as in zero.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks so much.

The Chair: — Are there any further questions on these chapters or these . . . Mr. Wotherspoon?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well maybe just I heard a timeline for the third recommendation that was there with the new manual in place. And that's great; I suspect that's been a significant amount of work to accomplish that.

Just back to the other recommendation around business continuity and disaster recovery in these areas, is there a timeline in place on that front, and what actions are required to achieve compliance with this recommendation?

Ms. Field: — So with respect to the existing systems that we have, the four critical systems that we're looking at, we are in negotiations right now with the Ministry of Central Services' IT division to get those four systems ready to go for this fiscal. As far as benchmarking in any ones that go forward, any of the major initiatives that we have, we're going to ensure that one of the major deliverables is a disaster recovery plan within the business continuity plan. So we, you know, go forward, it will be set.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Any further questions? Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So I guess these were some of the outstanding recommendations. Now there's also another graph that contains, on 5.1, a host of recommendations that are at various states of implementation. I know there'll be follow-up on these from the auditor as well. Maybe just scanning that graph on 5.1 with a host of recommendations from 2011 through to 2009, I recognize from the 2013 report that there's a range of implementation in place from partially implemented to

not implemented.

I'm wondering if simply, by way of a brief update, if you could scan those recommendations and let us know which ones now have been implemented, as in actions taken to ensure compliance, and maybe speak to any of those recommendations that if there's a barrier or a challenge for the ministry to accomplish compliance or to implement the recommendation in a timely way.

Mr. McFee: — So, Mr. Wotherspoon, I'm assuming you're referring to page 115 and kind of the whole thing. So the first two there are implemented, and then of course the security awareness we just talked about. The one below that we're going to talk about later, that one still needs to have some work done on it, as well as we will be dealing with the last three coming up with Dr. Rector as well. So okay, thank you.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Yes, good. Thank you very much for that information.

The Chair: — Are there any further questions? Seeing none, I'd recommend that for the 2012 report volume 2, chapter 4 because there are no new recommendations and the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 14 no new recommendations, that perhaps we conclude considerations jointly on those. But is there a motion from the committee or what is the will of the committee with respect to those two chapters? Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Merriman: — Madam Chair, I'm wondering if we can include 2013 volume 2, chapter 14 as there's no recommendations in that one as well.

The Chair: — That was the one. We would be looking at 2012 report volume 2, chapter 4 and 2013 report volume 2, chapter 14. We'll have to get back to the 2011 report because it's on municipal policing a little bit later. So the only two on which we can conclude consideration are the 2012 report volume 2, chapter 4 and 2013 report volume 2, chapter 14.

Mr. Merriman: — Okay. Well I would move that we conclude consideration for those.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Merriman. Mr. Merriman has moved that we conclude consideration of the recommendations in the 2012 report volume 2, chapter 4 and the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 14. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay. We'll move on to the next portion on the rehabilitation audits, but I'll pass that off to the Provincial Auditor for her comments.

Ms. Ferguson: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to continue to turn it down the table to pass it on to Mr. Deis.

Mr. Deis: — Thank you, Ms. Ferguson. In this part, I'll provide an overview of the results of our follow-up related to rehabilitation of adult inmates and of our audit and follow-up related to rehabilitation of adult offenders in the community, starting with their second follow-up of recommendations related to the ministry's processes to rehabilitate adult inmates reported

in chapter 4 of our 2011 report volume 2, and that starts on page 93.

In our 2008 report volume 1, we made four recommendations related to our audit of the rehabilitation of adult inmates. This committee concurred with those recommendations on August 28, 2008. The ministry implemented one recommendation in 2010.

The three outstanding recommendations related to following its policies to assess inmates' needs and to plan relevant programs on a more timely basis, monitoring inmates use of relevant programs, and evaluating the effectiveness of its inmate rehabilitation programs. By August 31st, 2011, while the ministry was making progress towards implementing these recommendations, it had not yet done so. We plan to complete our next follow-up of these recommendations in 2015.

I'm now going to move on to chapter 3 of our 2011 report volume 1, and that starts on page 29. This chapter reports the results of our audit regarding rehabilitation of adult offenders in the community.

At the time of the audit, Saskatchewan had the highest per capita crime rate in Canada. If offenders do not receive rehabilitation services that meet their needs at the right time, they are more likely to commit further offences. We concluded that during 2010 the ministry had adequate processes to rehabilitate adult offenders likely to repeat crimes, including serious or violent crimes, who were serving a community sentence in the Regina Qu'Appelle region, with some exceptions, and those are related to the seven recommendations we made.

[09:30]

In our first recommendation on page 37, we recommend that the ministry consistently follow its policy requiring risk assessments and case plans for adult offenders to be completed within six weeks of starting the community sentence. The ministry's policies require probation officers to complete risk assessments and case plans within six weeks of the offender starting a community sentence. We found the region often did not complete the risk assessments and case plans timely, many taking more than 10 weeks to complete. Not completing assessments and case plans promptly delays offender rehabilitation and can decrease effectiveness of offender rehabilitation programming.

In our second recommendation on page 37, we recommend that the ministry consistently follow its policy to use integrated case plans for adult offenders that coordinate rehabilitation strategies between the community and provincial correctional centres.

The ministry's case management policy records integrated case plans for offenders such that one case plan would address offenders' court orders, including both provincial correctional centre and community sentences. We found probation officers did not use case plans prepared in the correctional centres but instead prepared new case plans for the community sentence. These new case plans did not recognize rehabilitation progress achieved in the correctional facility.

We also found little evidence of consultation between the region's probation officers in the community and caseworkers in correctional centres, as required by the ministry's policy. Not using integrated case plans as required increases the risk of ineffective and inefficient rehabilitation.

In our third recommendation on page 38, we recommend that the ministry consistently follow its supervision policy for high-risk adult offenders in the community to have required contacts with probation officers or alternates. The ministry's provincial supervision policy requires high-risk offenders to have weekly contact with a probation officer or an alternate. An alternate would be somebody such as a treatment provider, a police officer, or an employer. The policy required that probation officers verify with alternates that the offender contacted them. We found offenders' case files often did not document weekly contact with the probation officer or alternates or explain why the planned contact did not occur, and actions taken to make contact if necessary. Insufficient contact by the offender with a skilled probation worker increases the risk of reoffending.

In our fourth recommendation on page 39, we recommend that the ministry use criteria to select rehabilitation services provided by other agencies and evaluate if high-risk adult offenders in the community benefit from these services. The region worked with various community agencies to rehabilitate offenders. We found that it did not have criteria for selecting services from other agencies. While it monitored if offenders attended planned services, because it did not have criteria it did not have processes to evaluate if services provided met the ministry's objectives and effectively contributed to offender rehabilitation.

In our fifth recommendation on page 40, we recommend that the ministry monitor whether high-risk adult offenders have timely access to priority community rehabilitation programs. Even though the ministry had identified that high-risk and serious, violent offenders are important target groups for rehabilitation, it did not identify all priority programs for rehabilitating them or determine whether these offenders had timely access to rehabilitation programs. Monitoring access to the most critical programs to rehabilitate high-risk offenders serving community sentences would help the ministry deliver the right programs in a timely manner.

Our sixth recommendation on page 40, we recommend that the ministry consistently follow its case management policy to prepare regular reports for adult offenders in the community, as an offender's case plan ranks the individual offender's needs and planned rehabilitation. Ministry policies require probation officers to prepare progress reports at least every 120 days to document progress or changes to case plans.

We found that the case plans we examined did not consistently identify the amount or type of progress, for example behaviour change, that probation officers expected offenders to achieve during census. While probation officers monitored if offenders received programs listed in their case files, for most of the files we examined they did not complete progress reports as often as required by policy or include changes in progress. Not keeping complete and timely records of the offenders' progress or required changes to case plans increases the risk that

rehabilitation may not be effective.

In the seventh recommendation on page 41, we recommend that the ministry establish a policy to evaluate rehabilitation programs for high-risk adult offenders in the community. While we found that the ministry had processes to evaluate programs before adopting them to rehabilitate adult offenders in the community, it did not have a process for evaluating if these rehabilitation programs were effective over time.

The ministry monitored how many offenders started various programs and how many successfully completed those programs. The ministry did not examine how many offenders should have taken the programs to determine if sufficient program capacity existed. The ministry did not report sufficient information to allow senior management to identify program delivery issues. The ministry needs information about which programs are most successful in rehabilitating high-risk offenders to help it deliver the right programs at the right time.

As reflected in chapter 28 of our 2013 report volume 1, and that starts on page 303, by December 31st of 2012, while the ministry had made some progress on each of these recommendations, it had not implemented them yet.

This concludes my overview of these chapters. I now would pause for your consideration.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Deis. Mr. McFee, if you'd like to make some comments. And I know the committee would really appreciate in those seven new recommendations if you could give us a sense of where you are with each of those.

Mr. McFee: — Okay. Madam Chair, just in relation to the agenda, I maybe ask permission that I deal with the first two first because of all the substance here. And then you could ask questions, and then I'll do the statement on the other one. Would that make it . . .

The Chair: — That would be very helpful, yes.

Mr. McFee: — Okay. All right, thank you. As for statement three, rehabilitating adult offenders in the community audit — 2011 report volume 1, chapter 3 and 2013 report volume 1, chapter 28 — with regards to the community rehabilitation audit, we were pleased to see that the auditor's overall audit conclusion stated that the ministry has adequate processes to rehabilitate adult offenders serving a community sentence. This confirmed to us that our overall processes are meeting their objective, which obviously we're happy about.

But with that said, we certainly appreciate there's always room to be better in our processes, and we've used the auditor's recommendations to help us do that. Before moving on to some of the more detailed actions we've taken to address these areas, I'd like to take a moment to provide some additional context to the issues for this committee.

The recommendations brought forward are not fixes that happen overnight. While the recommendations were based on a file review from Regina Qu'Appelle region, the recommendations have a province-wide impact. The changes required are highly complex and they impact the entire provincial rehabilitation system. As you can imagine, these types of changes take time to fully implement. Due to the amount of work required, the ministry has taken a prioritized approach to address the auditor's recommendations.

So while a number of these recommendations are not yet considered fully implemented, much work and progress has occurred in these areas. We have taken these recommendations very seriously and have a number of significant initiatives under way to address each of them. We've made the recommendations a priority and will continue to do so in order to achieve compliance, which will strengthen our overall impact on community safety. I'll now take some time to take you through each of the individual recommendations in a little more detail.

Recommendation 1 found on page 37, chapter 3 of the 2011 report volume 1, and page 304 of chapter 28 of the 2013 report volume 1, related to preparing risk assessments and case plans according with ministry policies. We have completed a lean event made up of participants from across the province, which the end goal of creating a simplified assessment and case planning process that can be implemented consistently within six weeks of starting a community sentence. Recommendations from the lean event have been presented to the provincial steering committee for further consideration. We expect the adoption of lean recommendations will enhance the ministry's ability to complete risk assessments in case plans for adult offenders within the time frame set out in ministry policy.

Recommendation 2 found on page 37 of the 2011 report, page 305 in the 2013 report related to the following: the ministry policy which requires integrated case plans for adult offenders that coordinate rehabilitation strategies between the community and the provincial correctional centres. Planning to place reintegration officers within each of our correctional centres; the role of these employees will be to work with the community, develop resources for offender releases as well as the work with probation to develop a supervision strategy. Timeline for implementation: the recommendation will be met upon staffing of reintegration officers. We expect these to be staffed before the end of the current fiscal year.

Recommendation 3 found on page 38 in the 2011 report, page 306 in the 2013 report related to the following: the ministry's supervision policy for high-risk adult offenders in the community. Key actions taken: the ministry has entered into an agreement with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and made arrangements with municipal police to include joint planning supervision for chronic and serious violent offenders.

We have also performed numerous file audits involving the serious violent offender response initiative which has demonstrated that when multiple partners are involved, our supervision standards are being met or exceeded. The recommendation will be addressed upon the expansion of the SVOR [serious violent offender response], which is our serious violent offender program initiative, to other regions.

Recommendation 4 found on page 39 on the 2011 report, on page 306 of the 2013 report, related to using criteria to select rehabilitation services provided by other agencies in evaluating if high-risk adult offenders in the community benefit from these services.

The ministry has recently developed a partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association Saskatchewan division to provide mental health services and supports for serious violent offenders with mental illness. The contract specifies admissions criteria and as well requires quarterly reports. The contract with the Canadian Mental Health Association will serve as a template for contracted services we develop and, per intent, the purposes of the auditor's recommendation. The ministry considers this to be fully implemented.

Recommendation 5 found on page 40 in 2011 report, page 306 in the 2013 report, related to monitoring whether high-risk adult offenders have timely access to priority community rehabilitation programs. The key actions taken in this area include the recommendation as being addressed through the creation of a director of programming positions. These positions are responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality of case plans and ensuring that high-risk offenders are prioritized as per policy. The ministry considers this recommendation now to be fully implemented.

Recommendation 6 found on page 40 in 2011 report and page 307 of the 2013 report related to consistently following the ministry's case management policy to prepare regular progress reports for adult offenders in the community. The key actions taken in this, as I referenced a bit earlier, we struck a task team to examine this area and completed a lean event which looked at all aspects of the case management system. This included designing and simplifying the process to allow more timely preparation of progress reports. The event resulted in a number of recommendations which are now within a provincial steering committee to determine an implementation plan.

The timelines for this, we expect the adoption of the recommendations will enhance the ministry's ability to complete the progress reports for adult offenders within a time frame set out in ministry policy. It is anticipated that all staff will be trained in new streamlined case management process over the next four fiscal years.

Recommendation 7, found on page 41 in the 2011 report, page 307 in the 2013 report, related to establishing a policy to evaluate rehabilitations programs for high-risk offenders in the community. The ministry is in the process of developing a policy regarding the evaluation of the rehabilitation programs. We expect this recommendation to be fully addressed by the end of fiscal 2014-2015 when the policy is implemented.

Madam Chair, in these particular areas, I certainly myself or my officials would be happy to answer any questions.

The Chair: — Thank you for that, Mr. McFee. That was very helpful. I'd like to open up the floor for questions. Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well thanks for those comments. And I thought the recommendations from the auditor's report were really constructive as well in making sure that the services that are provided to offenders and to the community are being utilized as effectively, as efficiently as possible. I appreciate the work that's been noted by the deputy minister here today.

There was a couple mentions of a steering committee that's taking a look at some work right now, both as, I think, as it related to case plans and then also the second piece being the progress reports. And I believe it was noted these came out of a lean exercise with the ministry. My question is, I guess, the steering committee, who is the steering committee? And what do, sort of what area or specialty or focus do each of them bring to the table?

[09:45]

Ms. Schnell: — Good morning. I'm Doris Schnell. I'm the executive director of offender services. So the steering committee was struck in order to look at the rehabilitation processes right across the process for Corrections. The steering committee is comprised of myself; Dr. Cooley is on the steering committee as well, the associate deputy minister; Kim Gurnsey who's our executive director of community corrections; and Heather Scriver, who's the executive director of custody services, comprise the steering committee. There was a task team that was comprised that reports to that steering committee as well.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. So it's important work of the steering committee, and certainly thank you to those participants. Certainly they have an important job where you've gone through an exercise to ensure that assessments are able to be accomplished in a matter of timelines and to make sure that reports are able to be maintained.

Of course it's going to be critical as well for that steering committee to, sort of as we discuss the technical expertise, to be able to take that technical expertise and make sure that in that, whether it's a simplified process or that the information that is contained in there is important and making sure that we're not missing any key pieces within that as well. So important work, and we look forward to progress on that front.

As far as the actual lean exercises, which consultant were you dealing with as a ministry to lead the lean reviews?

Mr. McFee: — The process was Westmark. But that particular lean event, most of that was housed in-house.

The one thing, that I want to kind of tie the two things in that you mentioned and the important work, because what we really looked at is our whole system in the last year and a half. And although we're dealing with the violent offenders, how are we going to reduce demand on the system, and those particular offenders, to look at that and actually drive the data, what drives your business. They're responsible for roughly 50 per cent of re-contact.

So what we really need to do is link all these things together in the strategic direction, as the auditor has pointed out, needs to ensure that we're not only having the technical expertise in relation to making sure that we're getting those events, but we actually have to have it linked in to the general direction of reducing demand and creating a synergy within the system.

So that event was a launch pad for us to actually see what drives the business and then focus on our big six areas of priority of what it is that actually drives the business to change the nature of the work, in ensuring that those particular aspects, being such

a significant portion of what we do, we have to have success in those areas. And the only way to have success is to have those accountability measures in place.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Right. No, it's important work and we'll certainly track it. And you know, we're thankful for those involved that are making it happen. The extension of resources and making sure that case plans are integrated and that services are extended in a timely way are really critical pieces, both for rehabilitation but also of course for community safety.

The recommendation no. 2, there was mention of the reintegration of workers and sort of, I believe, a bit of a new role or a focus there to make sure that case plans are integrated. Certainly that makes sense, that there's continuity and understanding between the planning that's going on within a facility and then back into the community. So maybe if someone can just speak to what this process looks like.

I believe it's been stated that the goal is to have this in place or these individuals in place by the end of this fiscal year, which is really good. How many people are we talking about? Where will they be located and where are we at in having those people in place?

Mr. Cooley: — Dennis Cooley, associate deputy minister. The plan is to have the one reintegration officer placed in each adult facility by the end of this fiscal year. And the idea is to . . . I mean, you can think of it in terms of an institutional probation officer, so that that individual would be the link between what the case plan that's being developed in custody and the case plan that will be developed or the follow-up that would be required as the individual transitions into community.

One of the key initiatives that we're working on, for example, is federal employment. And our goal is to turn inmates into taxpayers, and if we can do that, then we can resolve a number of issues, not the least of which will be recidivism.

So one of the roles of the reintegration officers, as well as our offender employment people within facilities, is to actively work with private sector employers to find jobs for these inmates, offenders, and place them in jobs and ensure that they have the wraparound supports that they are required in order to maintain that job over a period of time.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I think the wraparound supports piece is really critical, and certainly employment in connection to that's really important. And I know that dealing with some of these individuals, there's some, you know, those wraparound supports to make sure that when you hit a hurdle or two that there's some supports and able to work through are important.

So the number of reintegration officers, how many workers, how many are you hiring, and where are you at in having them in place?

Mr. Cooley: — We will be hiring one per facility. We haven't started the hiring process yet. So it's, I mean, it's linked to a larger initiative that we have under way within facilities in terms of our reorganization, but we hope to have those officers in place by end of fiscal year.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Great. Thank you for those updates. I also like your Regina Pats little piece there, especially with the P.A. [Prince Albert] guy sitting beside you there. I appreciate seeing that there. And you know, I think that Sam Steel, he's pretty special out there this year. I think a great name, and he's looking good on the team, but thank . . .

Mr. Cooley: — It's a class organization.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Right. And no comments about Prince Albert here today. But thank you for your responses.

The Chair: — And the Chair is a Saskatoon Blades fan, just to be clear. Are there any further questions from other committee members? I do have a couple myself if . . . Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Merriman: — I just had a comment, Madam Chair. I just wanted to say, on the transitioning of workers, I think programs like the urban camp in Saskatoon are a huge step forward in getting offenders out into the community and getting them within the public view to be able to see that yes, they have offended, they have made a mistake and they're back in the community. And I know Giles up there has done a great job in getting that and working with businesses as far as transitioning them from the normal penitentiary system into the urban camp, which would be considered, I guess, light, lighter security and moving them out — working with seniors, working with the food bank, working with a lot of organizations to be able to help that.

And I think that is great as far as the businesses, but I also just wanted to make a comment. I think as far as the offenders, it's a huge step for them to be able to have that kind of trust back in the community that they are just another part of the community. So I just want to make a positive comment on that. And I think it's very good, and I would hope that we could find some more champions to be able to have that across the province because the benefits of it certainly, certainly outweigh the costs of it.

Mr. McFee: — Thank you for that, Mr. Merriman, and you're bang on. I mean we have a successful thing that works and that's exactly, as Mr. Wotherspoon also asked, is to link all these things together. Employment is huge, and it's one of our other pillars that we're going to be working on. And more good things to come, because at the end of the day we need to link these folks to jobs and then support them. But it also needs to be meaningful employment that they actually can provide for their family and their kids and take them out of the system.

And as Mr. Cooley said, our goal is to make them taxpayers, but more importantly is to give them the services they need to remove them out of the back-ended system and obviously get a better outcome for them. And for us, certainly something that's way more cost effective and drives results and outcomes. So appreciate that and very much appreciate that you noted on Giles as well. He's very strong, and his work we appreciate each and every day.

Mr. Merriman: — I just want to make an additional comment if I can. In your, what it would be, the fourth recommendation, you said that you were working with a partnership with mental health as far as getting them involved. Is addiction services in there as well, just to be able to link that side of it, kind of close

off that door? I know mental health and addiction services kind of go hand in hand, and I'm assuming that they're heavily involved in that type of transition.

Mr. Rector: — Yes, sir. Dr. Rector, executive director of research and evidence based excellence. The context with the Canadian Mental Health program, it's a very innovative program and the first of its kind, as far as I'm aware of and as far as the Canadian Mental Health Association is aware of, working with serious violent offenders. Approximately 50 per cent of those individuals who have committed those high-end offences have mental-health-related issues and corresponding addictions issues.

The program with Canadian Mental Health is they provide . . . Mental illness is so debilitating there requires more ongoing daily supports for individuals. And they focus on daily living skills and making sure there's proper medical care in relation to the mental illness. If they also have addictions, the role of the mental health program is not to do the addictions treatment but work to get the appropriate mental health authority, for example, or NGO [non-governmental organization] that involves with addictions services to provide that service.

And I think that whether it's the discussion around employment or whether this conversation here, I'm going to refer to Mr. McFee's earlier statements that the recommendations of the auditor have broad implications. It's not just sort of one-dimensional in nature.

And one of the key aspects to all of this is, first of all, you have to work with all the recommendations simultaneously and not in isolation. But the other one is, what is our partnerships? Because we can't do it. We are not the employment agency. We're not the mental health agency. We're not the addictions agency. There are certain things that we can do, but when we focus on the high-risk offenders, they have all these requirements. And so the principle of aligning the service to target those needs that are determined by the assessments is critical.

But how do we work with partners? So the comment about working with . . . [inaudible] . . . and municipal, it's not just around supervision, but it's active engagement and working with the offender not just for surveillance purposes but to actually change the behaviour, recognizing the high-risk situations.

So when we work within that kind of environment, Mr. Deis referred to progress reports of once every four months. You know, with the serious violent offender response, the team members meet weekly. And that's what's required, not every four months. So you know, we have these policies that relate, and I'm just saying the recommendations move us along in a certain direction. Like not all offenders are the same. We have to prioritize, and we prioritize high risk. The research says those are the individuals that account for the major amount of the court activity, the police activity, the correctional data. We need to provide, you know, focus to that part. And that's where the greatest intervention and achievements can be attained, but you can't attain that in isolation.

So all these recommendations — whether it's how do we plan

in the facilities and how that connects to the community, how do we work in the community because that's where the offending occurs — requires multiple partnerships. Sentences end. Now that's the role of Canadian Mental Health and involvement with other systems. Whether it's employment, whether it's daily support living, those are the things that we're really working on. We do audits around all these things because this is the direction that we're moving in.

And the issue that I think is the challenge is, first of all it's a different way of thinking for everybody around the partner, so it's not just around how probation thinks, but it's around policing thinks, it's around . . . We work with prosecutions on this as well very closely. You know, how do we all work together so that it has accountability for offenders, no doubt about it. When the line is crossed, there needs to be an appropriate accountability response, but what are the things that we can do that prevents them from getting there to begin with?

The evaluations that we've done show that whether it's process, you know, how frequently do we contact. That sounds really simple, supervision once a week with offenders, that sounds like such a simple thing, but we live in an environment historically of isolation. So a probation officer identifies what they do, police identify what they do, other systems identify what they do, all in separate files. So how do we really know what the total picture is? And that's some of the things we're working on using technology to help with that.

[10:00]

So in the serious violent offender response the comment was made, we're actually far exceeding the contacts, far exceeding the case planning. It's a way of thinking about how we do business. You go to a website that's secure and there's the monthly, you know, there's the month in front of you: who's doing what on what particular day. When's the CMHA [Canadian Mental Health Association] person there, when's the police there, when's the probation there, whether it's a home visit or whether it's in offices, and so that at a glance, you could take a look at so you're not fumbling and meeting the person on the same day. You could spread it out and, you know, what are the high-risk times that are not being captured. That's the kind of technology that we're doing and we're moving them on.

But I see this as sort of like a template for the bigger picture. You know, so we start with serious violent offender response. It has the principles of prioritization, case planning standards, monitoring that, linking these new resources like the program director that was identified in Mr. McFee's comments. How do all these pieces come together to align and generate, not only compliance with each of those standards, I mean that's just minimum, it's how do we exceed all of that to actually have long-term impacts. And that's what's driving us. And how do we develop that consistently, and that's the challenge that we're working on. And I think we've made a lot of progress but, you know, the whole system, it's more work to be done.

Mr. Merriman: — Yes, I was just going to make a note as to the auditor's office and certainly the ministry that this is why the process is here. This is why the auditor can make a recommendation for the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and that recommendation can be implemented provincially. That's

how this process should be working, is the auditor should be catching stuff that is sometimes in plain sight, sometimes very . . . for a specific area. And then the response is on a provincial nature to be able to help out to make sure that the offenders don't reoffend and there's no backtrack into the system.

So I just wanted to again say that that's a very good process to make sure that when the auditor does recognize one thing, that it is looked at in a bigger picture provincially and across all levels of the system including the police, social services, and that. So again thank you very much for taking that recommendation and implementing it on a bigger picture and not just sticking to the letter of the auditor's recommendation and making it provincial. So again thank you for that. So thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. McFee: — Thanks, Mr. Merriman. And it's interesting because of our six priorities of strategic direction, and you guys have already hit three of them: mental health, jobs, and certainly serious violent offenders. And you know, that's the whole purpose. If we're going to make success in reducing demand, it's all about alignment. So thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. McFee, and Dr. Rector. Trent . . . or Mr. Wotherspoon, sorry.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — That's fine. I've been called worse. Thank you very much for the information. And it does I think exemplify how the system works well when, you know, the auditor's laying out some of the measurements that are in place, some of the processes in place, and then the focus as has been provided by the ministry in certain areas and quite good comments around. Certainly it's important to have a report and certainly have that done consistent with policy — very important pieces. But it's then also important that whatever is within that integrated report and that integrated case plan is going to have the lasting, meaningful impact in the life of those that we're working to rehabilitate, reintegrate back into community and build certainly as taxpayers — yes, very important — and as citizens that are reducing harm within their life and within our communities.

The comment around, as well it's important to connect those services with mental health and as well addiction services that were highlighted. And just by way of anecdote, sitting down with community leaders throughout La Ronge here this week, it was pointed out time and time again just how important those services are. And from their perspective — and I'll just leave this with you as you move forward — they're feeling that it's very important to have those as well based within the community and that in their case a feeling that the addictions services, the detox, the mental health supports aren't necessarily in place and funded within that community. And certainly they made some very practical observations about the challenges it causes to have individuals leaving the community for those sorts of services and then coming back in without having sort of the community strengthened with those supports. So important work on these fronts. We look forward to tracking it.

I do have one question. There was, around the progress reports, there was a comment that this . . . And I understand these take resources and they take time. I believe it was stated that it will take about four years to train and work with those involved to

achieve what's recommended in recommendation no. 6. Maybe just if the deputy minister or if the ministry could speak to if that's the case and then just speak maybe either to the complexity of why this would take four years or what other barriers might be in place, whether that's resources or otherwise.

Mr. McFee: — In relation to that, I'm going to let Ms. Schnell give you the details in relation to that. But I think what you're seeing here, just to get back to your earlier point, is it's important that we're making changes that make sense and connect everything else. And we're a fairly large, as you know, complex system, which you know very well. And what we're trying to do is making sure that we have an implementation plan, that we actually change the way we do business, focusing on the demand side but most importantly putting the client at the centre of that. And certainly case management is absolutely critical to that, and that's going to be a challenge because we obviously have to, in some cases, retrain. We have to merge, and we have to amalgamate various aspects of our business to get to where we want. But I'll let Ms. Schnell speak to the details.

Ms. Schnell: — Hi there. Earlier there was reference to a task team that examined the case management process, and that is a big task. And it examined the case management process like right across the spectrum, right from when we, you know, first meet with a new offender right through the assessment, the case planning piece, the progress report piece, which is the piece you've identified. And that task team has been examining that whole process in how do we make that process more efficient, a more effective process. So as a result of that, what we've planned is a four-year training rollout. And the four-year training rollout will address all of those pieces. So it's not just the progress report piece because the progress report fits into the bigger picture of how do we do case management. So that's the process of training all our staff.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Mr. Norris.

Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much. Actually on that, on that same subject if I could, I'm just interested in the metrics and what that would look like if those are already been developed or will be developed. Really it's a question of efficacy and trying to get a better sense of how that might be measured or even conceived. It's an area that I'm interested in and probably can learn to know more about.

Mr. Rector: — Actually as a province, Saskatchewan is one of the leaders around this particular area around, you know, how does . . . defining in a quantitative way what is integrated case management and looking at long-term effects. One of the studies that we did was actually a very detailed 200-file review — we partnered with the University of Regina — that really looked at two communities and examined to what extent they met the requirements of integrated case planning that would indicate impact on reduced offending. So we also looked at . . . so a scale for looking at the quality of the case planning, but we also looked at recidivism over a long period of time. And this is a report we also shared with the Provincial Auditor's office, so it's available through them if you wish to see that.

But what it showed was that one particular community where there was high compliance with the particular standards, there was a 40 per cent reduction in recidivism compared to the other community. And so this is a good news, bad news. The good news is that we have an entire region. So the file review done by Provincial Auditor was about 25 files. This is 200 files and very detailed. So what it showed was an entire region actually met all the requirements, but it also showed that another region scored very poorly. And so that's the issue of consistency.

And what are the variables around that? So some of that is training. Some of that is making the case management system that lean process. Some of that is priorization of cases. There's a number of things. Some of it is supervision and how business is done. So there's many dimensions to be able to deal with that.

The serious violent offender response, we have metrics associated with that. We work very closely in that regard. If we were going to submit budget proposals to treasury board around expansion, they'll want to know, so is any of this effective? We have metrics associated with that. What it shows for example . . . And these are — and let me give you context here — these are violent offenders. You know, here's sort of an average case: someone with 21 previous convictions, most of their life in custody, most of those convictions of violent offending. They may actually come out federal custody with special supervision warrants, so their supervision . . . Their sentence is actually over, but they're so high risk that there's a supervision order in place in their 810 order. So we have a number of individuals that fall within that category at this point in time.

Research is showing two very important variables, the length of time . . . Because the program is marching in time, the length of time for reoffending is going higher and higher and higher every time we look. So at this point in time, we have a 20 per cent increase in free time of no offending, and next month's will be another month added to that, etc. But the other important variable is when people do reoffend, the severity of offence, because there's ways of scaling severity, goes from, on a scale that was previously a five down to like point two. So you're dealing with administrative charges and that type of thing.

People that would have never been in the community without offending seriously for shorts periods of time are now, you know, we're into a year, a year and a half history of no offending whatsoever. And they're engaging with us in terms of . . . because we've linked into them, so they don't want to reoffend. And so this is really important. So we do have all kinds of metrics around this. We're certainly improving with this.

As a ministry, we are partnering with both the University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan around some of these projects. I've indicated one of those with a 200-file audit. But we partner with the forensic behavioural sciences centre at the University of Saskatchewan around a number of projects there, and we're working to get better at this. So you know, we want to look at some of the people that are . . . You know, we provide our own expertise, but then there's certain categories that will really assist us, and so we're really partnering with those individuals, like from computer science departments between both universities that know how to work with large databases

and be able to assist us better on some of the predictability issues that we can use here to improve our behaviour.

But I just want to comment here, this four years, let's not . . . Like that doesn't mean that nothing is . . . that things aren't achieved until four years. You know, think of it as being implemented office by office, region by region. And so you're improving them on all those dimensions as you implement, but it's going to take four years for the entire system to get there. But it's not like well everybody gets part one and everybody gets part two and eventually after four years everybody gets the 10 parts. It would be systematically implemented by office and by region. So that's really important, plus the serious felony offender issues. That's happening now on all those areas, so it's a priorization of those highest cases. We're not waiting four years for that. You know, the training around those issues, around case planning has happened right away as soon as they're introduced into the program. So I just wanted to give that context there.

The Chair: — Mr. McFee.

Mr. McFee: — I just have one comment to add to Dr. Rector's comments, Mr. Norris. One of the measurements that we've also started to incorporate here is a value for money. And what we basically are starting to do is we partnered with the University of Regina, have an economist, and we're actually looking at making sure that what we're spending in our particular area is making a difference for people and obviously reducing the demands. So it's important that we're doing all of this stuff at the same time, so the hard measures as well as ensuring that our resources of our people and our assets are being used in the most effective and efficient manner.

The Chair: — Mr. Norris.

[10:15]

Mr. Norris: — Great. Thanks very much for that comprehensive overview. I'm pleased to hear about that kind of collaboration especially with post-secondary partnerships and even tapping into some of the results of big data analysis. Really what we're talking about is helping to make sure that you continue your good work, and it's very good work, on keeping Saskatchewan families safe. So thanks very much for that.

The Chair: — Any further questions? Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Not related directly to this report, but certainly to the ministry. I know that you have the opportunity to engage in a broader questioning through these committees. And I don't know, maybe you can endeavour to provide this information back to me. I had never come across this concern before, and I'm just wondering if the ministry has any response, any programs in place, or any accommodations.

It's been highlighted to me that of course we're small communities, and it's very important to communicate to the community when a high-risk offender is released through the provisions and programs that you have in place. Also of course they go through the process in the courts. What's been identified to me is that I know a circumstance where somebody

has almost the same name as a high-risk offender who of course has that name, has been in the media. And through the paper and communication, rightfully so, we need to make sure communities are aware of the risks in their presence. I'm wondering if — and as I say, maybe there's some follow-up that you could provide — if there's any practical supports or any programs in place to work with individuals or recommendations to work with the individuals who may have almost the same name. And in this case, it's identified to me that this individual has been mistaken, they feel quite often, as the high-risk offender, which certainly has had an impact, they've related to me, on their family and themselves.

Mr. Peach: — Good morning. Rick Peach with the Saskatchewan Police Commission. And although this question doesn't directly relate to the Police Commission, prior to moving to the commission I was on the ministry side, and one of the programs that I dealt with was the public disclosure committee. Although there isn't a program per se in place to address the sorts of situations that you've raised, the public disclosure committee in providing advice to police services has always been concerned about those potential situations.

For that reason, each time they provide advice to a police service which recommends disclosure, it includes a number of conditions or caveats perhaps. And they include a warning to the public that the purpose of public disclosure is to enable them to take precautionary measures, that it is not target identification. It's not about vigilantism. It warns them about the legal consequences of that and also provides a contact number at the police service where any person with concerns may contact them directly. So the committee seeks to address through those caveats at least in part the concerns you've raised.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks for that information. I may follow back up with the individual case and the minister's office and have folks work directly with that individual as well. And then just to be clear here, I mean the communication to the public and protection of the public is of utmost importance. It's sort of this concern around mistaken identity and actually, you know, some impacts that have been shared with me that have been fairly significant.

Mr. McFee: — Yes, Mr. Wotherspoon, I would just suggest that you forward that through the minister's office. And you know, we'll make sure that that individual, wherever the locale is, the police service is connected, and they can certainly have a discussion. Thank you.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any further questions? I do have one around employment myself. I know that that's been emphasized, that employment . . . I think, Mr. Cooley, you talked quite a bit about employment. And I know in my own office, two of the things that I hear from people who may have a criminal record is employment and housing. If you've got a criminal record, it's incredibly difficult to find either on occasion. So I'm wondering if . . . And I know, Dr. Rector, you said that the ministry isn't an employment agency. So I'm wondering how or what organizations you're working with in terms of finding those employers who are willing to be supportive. Again it's about linking them. It's about those

wraparound services and eventually about meaningful employment. So I know that it would be a challenge sometimes to find employers, but I'm curious how that works for you.

Mr. McFee: — Certainly. And it's a great question. As I said it's one of our pillars. And it's not just employment. It's jobs and literacy. And when you actually look at literacy and you look at correctional facilities and you think of Texas, Texas used to build jails based on grade 3 literacy level, and they were pretty close to nailing it. Our literacy levels are grade 2 to grade 5 in our adult correctional facilities. So when you actually look at that, it's a comprehensive strategy that works with the employers. And quite frankly we need to repurpose, and Mr. Merriman mentioned, you know, build on the stuff such as Urban Camp. It's not about skills just as skills. It's about connecting the employer with the job and then the skills so that you actually bridge that gap to actually get in the employment. And then you put the wraparound services.

So I think you'd be pleasantly surprised. We've got a lot of these things that we're starting to forge. I mean there's a demand for the labour force right now. So there's niches out there that we're actually identifying with the economy in relation to how we could maybe service some of the needs of that the niche or what's needed and then look at meaningful jobs and meaningful employment that ultimately rely on the individuals being able to pay the bills for their kids. So lots of good things to come there.

The Chair: — That's work obviously in progress.

Mr. McFee: — Oh yes.

The Chair: — Very much so.

Mr. McFee: — And very much a priority.

The Chair: — Okay. The housing piece, I'm curious if that comes up for you as well.

Mr. McFee: — Well housing again is certainly something that's obviously under the basic needs, right? So we haven't had as many housing issues as we've had poverty, you know, mental health, and addictions and stuff. But when you're talking about it and as Dr. Cooley said, one of the things in relation to those wraparound services is basic housing needs to be met for a person obviously to meet the needs. And so I mean it is part of the equation, but it's not solely just focused on housing.

The Chair: — Thank you for that. I also do have a question around the recommendation no. 4 that you've said is fully implemented around the criteria used to select rehabilitation services. So you've got this agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association that you've said you've developed and will serve as a template for working with other community organizations or rehabilitation service providers. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about the criteria that are used to select those kinds of organizations.

Mr. Rector: — There's two dimensions I think to that recommendation from the Provincial Auditor. First of all it starts with the assessment, the risk assessment. So the risk assessment looks at things like substance use, the degree of

substance use; looks at pro-criminal companions or not; pro-criminal thinking; the type of family supports; whether the family is supportive of crime or supportive of social behaviour, positive social behaviour; employment and education; and some mental health-related issues.

So when the comment is made the assessment needs to be done in a timely fashion, everything is kind of a domino. In order to make proper referrals, you have to have that assessment done. Our research shows that actually when you start that assessment process, it's a form of intervention already with the offender because that's an engagement process.

But it's from that information that determines first of all, are they high risk or are they low risk? So there's a priorization piece, and that's number one. If they fall within the category of high risk, what are the nature? So if they don't have a substance abuse treatment issue, obviously there's no referral. So the criteria there comes from the assessment, the degree to which the risk factor is in place.

So if the offender scores very high in the area of pro-criminal thinking, you know, that's an engagement. There's an engagement process that the probation officer themselves can deal with that particular factor. If it's involved with employment, what are the connections? So in case of serious violent offenders, they could connect with the mental health program that could then connect with them with employment or housing, that type of thing. So that's key. It's the assessment.

You know, we're not evaluating the regional health authorities and how they do addictions treatment. That's not our . . . You know, they themselves have their own criteria around how they develop and determine treatment services, whether it be for sex offenders, whether it be for domestic violence. All their treatment structures, they're responsible for looking at what their criteria is involving.

So what we're looking at is saying, okay, what about ones where we contract services for? Because it's a little bit different. You know what I'm saying? I know where the recommendation is coming from: the expert that was on their committee. You know federal systems contract with everything, but as a provincial system we use as much as possible the generic existing systems. We're not trying to generate parallel systems. So we work with the health authorities that have those standards.

And what we're saying is, for all the other program areas that are not within that health authority structure, we will set those criteria and standards as per the policy. So the contract with CMHA for example says you will work with high-risk offenders. You will work with offenders that have identified mental health areas. These are the kinds of activities you will do. You will report. And I get those reports and review those reports, and we will do evaluations and outcome measures with reference to them.

So what I'm saying, that there's a number of sort of CBOs [community-based organization] as we march on in sort of this collective approach. We will use that nature of that kind of a contract so we will get a better sense of . . . We rarely know right now what the profile of all the offenders are that go to

CMHA and what are their risk levels. Are they complying with our contract?

We already are evaluating outcome measures on all of those pieces, and so we see that as the purpose and intent of that recommendation, not that we're supposed to change the regional health authorities. And so I'm differentiating between those two. And we're saying where we can make a difference, and an important difference, we're doing it. And we will march on with that template. That's the short answer.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you. Thank you for that. I appreciate that, not wanting to create parallel systems for sure. I'm wondering about . . . So we know you work with the Canadian Mental Health Association. I'm wondering some of the other CBOs you might engage with or are currently engaged with.

Mr. Rector: — Well another, their specialized program is the Circles of Support. It's a volunteer organization that works with very, very, very high-risk sexual offenders that have passed their . . . finished their regular sentence, but they may be on some of these special supervision orders that I referred to earlier, or they're completely finished and yet they're being engaged with on a voluntary basis.

So at this point in time, you know, we are looking at establishing a formal, potentially a formal arrangement with them. And if we did so, we would incorporate the same kind of contract. You know, if we were going to fund some of the supportive mechanisms, what would be the expectations and what are the impacts?

That particular program has had a national review. I mean I think one of the comments in the auditor's report . . . We don't select any programs that don't already have an evaluative history of effectiveness. Like none of the programs that we provide, whether it's in custody or in the community, do you look at it and say, gee, where did that come from? Like there's usually a systematic review of what that program has been. And has it been evaluated? And we operate on that basis.

[10:30]

The Chair: — Thank you for that. Are there any further questions from other committee members? No. Seeing none, I think that we are ready to think about what we'd like to do with respect with these recommendations. So for the 2011 report volume 1, chapter 3, what we'll deal with is seven new recommendations. What is the will of the committee with respect to those recommendations?

Mr. Merriman: — Madam Chair, I think just for efficiency purposes if we can group them together, I believe we have recommendation no. 1, recommendation no. 2, recommendation no. 3, recommendation no. 6 and 7, that we concur with the recommendation and note progress towards compliance.

The Chair: — Mr. Merriman has moved for the 2011 report volume 1, chapter 3, that this committee for recommendations no. 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 concur and note progress. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you again, Madam Chair. And I would move that the recommendation 4 and 5 that we concur with the recommendation and note compliance.

The Chair: — So for the 2011 report volume 1, chapter 3, Mr. Merriman has moved that for recommendation no. 4 and 5 that this committee concur with those recommendations and note compliance. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you. Moving on to the 2013 report volume 1, chapter 28 where there are no new recommendations, we should conclude our considerations. Do I have a motion as such? Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Merriman: — Yes, Madam Chair, I would move that we conclude our considerations on that.

The Chair: — Mr. Merriman has moved for 2013 report volume 1, chapter 28, that this committee conclude our considerations of that chapter. Again for the 2013 volume 1, chapter 28, Mr. Merriman has moved that we conclude consideration of that chapter, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. We'll move on to the next portion here, I'll pass it off to the Acting Provincial Auditor for the 2011 report volume 2, chapter 4 and the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 45.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Did we miss a piece?

The Chair: — No. Which piece?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Did we . . . There was going to be a second . . .

Mr. McFee: — The auditor's office covered it, but we didn't cover it in our response. So the last part, I certainly am prepared to do that if . . .

The Chair: — Mr. Wotherspoon, we haven't voted it off and we'll be covering it in the third section here. So it's listed under, in terms of your notes, under . . . actually the first two sections as well, but we'll cover it off in the third. You're referring to 2011 report volume 2, chapter 4, is that what you're concerned about?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — It's tricky. We're bouncing around on some of these pieces, so I just want to make sure. I've got my paper here. There was two pieces spoken to about the auditor's, from the auditor's reports moments ago. And then we broke that into two pieces and dealt with one of them here. What was the other piece that would have been in response to the auditor's report?

The Chair: — Ms. Ferguson would like to speak to that.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Sure.

Ms. Ferguson: — Sure. So in part 2, we actually covered off another portion of the chapter 4. We covered off pages 93 to 97 of that report, and in this upcoming presentation we'll cover off the rest of it. So you know, as a committee you can deal with them together or with part . . .

The Chair: — We haven't voted on any of that chapter yet.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Wotherspoon, for your comments, making sure we're on the ball here. Ms. Ferguson, if you'd like to carry on with . . .

Ms. Ferguson: — Sure. So what we've got in part 3 is we've got the remaining portion of chapter 4 of the 2011 report volume 2, and then also chapter 45 of our 2013 report volume 2, and both of those aspects deal with monitoring municipal policing. So I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Deis to make the presentation.

Mr. Deis: — Thank you, Ms. Ferguson. In this part I will provide an overview of the results of the audit regarding processes to monitor provincial policing as municipal policing as reported in chapter 4 of our 2011 report volume 2 and the related follow-up as reported in chapter 45 of the 2013 report volume 2.

In 2011 municipal police services in Saskatchewan had over 1,000 police officers in 13 municipalities, and that excludes RCMP officers. In chapter 4 of our 2011 report volume 2, and that starts on page 84, we concluded that for the 12-month period ended August 31, 2011 the ministry and Saskatchewan Police Commission should have had more effective processes to monitor municipal policing to ensure that municipal police services uniformly safeguard the communities they serve. We made six recommendations. In my comments I will highlight the status of each of those recommendations as reported in chapter 45 of our 2013 report volume 2. In other words, I will include the effects of the follow-ups in my general thoughts here.

The first two recommendations are related. In our first recommendation on page 89, we recommend that the ministry and the Saskatchewan Police Commission have a written agreement that sets out their respective roles and responsibilities for promoting adequate and effective policing throughout Saskatchewan. Our second recommendation on page 89, we recommend that the ministry ensure that the Saskatchewan Police Commission has adequate resources to fulfill its mandate under *The Police Act, 1990.*

The Police Act, 1990 assigns responsibility for promoting policing through Saskatchewan to both the Saskatchewan Police Commission and to the minister. This dual assignment of responsibility creates clarity issues as to who does what to monitor municipal policing to ensure uniform safeguarding of communities. To further complicate the roles, the ministry provided the commission with staffing. The commission at the time had no employees. The employee that did work for or on behalf of the commission was actually a ministry employee at the time of our audit. We found there was no agreement between the ministry and the commission that outlined the

duties that the ministry employees or employee were to fulfill on behalf of the commission.

The Police Act, 1990 gives the commission the power to conduct audits and reviews of municipal police services' compliance with standards. We found that neither the commission or the ministry carried out such reviews. We also found that the commission's resources related solely to administration, its own administration, and to funding for the Police College and did not include resources to conduct such audits and reviews of police services. Not having an agreement between the parties increases the risk of the ministry and the commission not having a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each party, including the responsibility for key activities to monitor municipal policing. By the fall of 2013, the commission and the ministry signed a memorandum of understanding that sets out the process through which the ministry and the commission will set out the respective roles and responsibilities.

In our third recommendation on page 89, we recommend that the Saskatchewan Police Commission, in partnership with the ministry, develop strategic and operational plans for effective monitoring of municipal policing. The commission did not have a strategic plan that outlines the strategic goals and objectives for monitoring municipal policing. The commission did not monitor municipal policing services to ensure compliance with standards. Not having clear strategic goals and objectives increases the risk that the commission may not fulfil its role to monitor municipal policing. By the fall of 2013, the commission had not yet documented its strategic and operational plans.

In our fourth recommendation on page 90, we recommend that the Saskatchewan Police Commission ensure policies and procedures that municipal police services comply with the Saskatchewan Police Commission's policy manual. The commission's policy standards manual requires each municipal police service to operationalize policies in the manual through written procedures; that is, each of these police services would develop local policies and procedures. By the fall of 2013, the commission had implemented processes to monitor such compliance.

In our fifth recommendation on page 91, we recommended that the Saskatchewan Police Commission meet regularly as planned to carry out its roles and responsibilities. We found during our audit that year that the commission did not meet regularly. By the fall of 2013, the commission was meeting regularly.

In our sixth recommendation on page 92, we recommend that the Saskatchewan Police Commission and ministry implement a process for monitoring compliance for municipal policing standards and ensure action is taken to address non-compliance. As previously mentioned, because the roles and responsibilities of the commission and the ministry were not well defined, we found it unclear who was responsible for analyzing the statistical information provided by municipal police services. As such, they had not determined what information about municipal policing they required from municipal police services to carry out their respective responsibilities.

Also, as we mentioned, we found that neither the commission nor the ministry conducted audits or reviews as allowed for under *The Police Act, 1990*. By the fall of 2013, the processes to monitor compliance were improving. For example, the commission had implemented a process to review municipal police services' policies and procedures for compliance with its policy manual.

Madam Chair, that concludes our comments.

The Chair: — Thank you for that. Mr. McFee.

Mr. McFee: — Before I stay with five, monitoring municipal policing, 2011 report volume 2, chapter 4; 2013 report volume 2, chapter 45; before I get into discussing the recommendations from the municipal policing audit, it's worth noting some of these are directed jointly at the ministry and the commission level while others are directed specifically to the commission. I'll quickly clarify to the committee who is responsible to address each recommendation. Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 6 are considered to be joint responsibility of the ministry and commission to address. I'll be speaking to what action has been taken with regards to recommendations 1 and 2 in a moment. Recommendations 4 and 5 fall directly under the responsibility of the commission to address.

After I provide my initial comments on recommendations 1 and 2, I'll be passing it over to Rick Peach, who will speak on the recommendations that fall under the commission's direct responsibility as well as recommendations 3 and 6.

Recommendation 1, joint responsibility found on page 89 of chapter 4 of the 2011 report volume 1 and page 312 of chapter 45 of the 2013 report volume 2, creating a written agreement between the Saskatchewan Police Commission that sets out respective roles and responsibilities for promoting adequate and effective policing throughout Saskatchewan. The key actions taken is the ministry and the commission signed an MOU [memorandum of understanding] on June 25, 2012 which establishes the administrative and working relationship between them. In addition the ministry and commission have now drafted a supplemental MOU which sets out the operational roles and responsibilities of each party. We expect to have this all finalized and operational MOU implemented before the end of 2014-15 fiscal year end.

Recommendation 2, again joint responsibility, found on page 89, chapter 4 of the 2011 report volume 1, and page 313 of chapter 45 of the 2013 report volume 2, relating to ensuring the ministry provides the commission with adequate resources to fill its mandate. The ministry has transferred a senior manager to fill a recently established full-time executive director position within the commission, allocated additional funding to the commission through the ministry budget process. We consider this recommendation to be fully implemented, but recognize that resourcing will be a matter of requiring an ongoing review to ensure resource levels are maintained at the adequate level going forward. I'll now pass it over to Mr. Peach for his comments.

Mr. Peach: — Good morning once again, and thank you for the opportunity to address recommendations 3 through 6.

Let me start with recommendation 3 which is found at page 89

of chapter 4 of the 2011 report volume 1, and page 313 of chapter 45 of the 2013 report volume 2. That recommendation relates to the commission working in partnership with the ministry to develop strategic and operational plans for effective monitoring of municipal policing. In regard to key actions taken in that regard, as Deputy Minister McFee has indicated, the commission and the ministry are now in the process of developing a supplemental operational MOU to outline the roles and responsibilities each will play with regard to meeting their shared mandates with reference to monitoring municipal policing. We anticipate that that supplemental MOU will be completed and signed before the end of the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Recommendation no. 4 is found at page 90 of chapter 4 of the 2011 report volume 1, and page 312 of chapter 45 of the 2013 report volume 2 and relates to the commission ensuring policies and procedures of municipal police services comply with their policy manual. To address the recommendation, the commission established a new policy compliance audit program in 2013. Under that program, the commission audits police service local policies for compliance with the commission's policy requirements and policing standards. Where police service policies are determined not to be fully compliant, the commission works with the police service on a continuing basis to amend their local policy to achieve that level of compliance. That process included contracting the services of a policy standards and compliance officer.

[10:45]

It is anticipated that all high-priority audits of large and medium size police services in the province will be completed by the end of this fiscal year. With regard to implementation, as noted by the auditor's office in their follow-up report in here this morning, this recommendation has now in fact been fully implemented.

Recommendation no. 5, found at page 91 of chapter 4 of the 2011 report volume 1 and page 312 of chapter 45 of the 2013 report volume 2, related to the commission meeting regularly to carry out its roles and responsibilities. The commission is now doing so, as noted by the auditor. This recommendation has now been implemented.

Finally recommendation no. 6, found at page 92 of chapter 4 of the 2011 report volume 1 and page 313 of chapter 45 of the 2013 report volume 2, relates to the ministry and the commission implementing a process for monitoring compliance with municipal policing standards and ensuring action is taken to address non-compliance. The commission and the ministry in fact already have a number of processes in place for monitoring compliance with municipal policing standards which enable us to address incidents of non-compliance. These processes and a process for jointly planning a response to address non-compliance are set out in the draft operational MOU, which we are now currently working on with the ministry.

The auditor's expectation is that the implementation of this recommendation would take the form of a predetermined process for addressing incidents of non-compliance. The commission and the ministry have explored the viability and effectiveness of establishing a predetermined process, but we believe it lacks the necessary flexibility to respond to the ever-changing and fast-paced environment of modern policing.

While we agree that processes to monitor compliance with municipal policing standards must be in place, we are of the opinion those processes are already in place and provide us with the flexibility necessary to plan jointly with the ministry a scalable response appropriate to each situation. What has been lacking to date, however, is documentation of those processes in a consolidated format, which will be accomplished with finalization and signing of the draft operational MOU the commission and the ministry are currently working on.

As previously indicated, with regard to our timeline for implementation, we expect that the draft operational MOU will be finalized and signed before the end of this fiscal year, and from our perspective certainly we will consider the finalization of that MOU to constitute full implementation. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you for walking us through each recommendation. That's very helpful. I'd like to open up the floor for questions. Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So thanks for the reports and thanks for many of the actions that have occurred as well and the work of many to achieve implementation. Just wanting to I guess zero in on some of the last comments about maybe a bit of a different perspective on what's required to ensure proper monitoring, the recommendations around . . . the sixth recommendation. Maybe I wouldn't mind hearing from the auditor's perspective, based on your comments here today and what the plans are and the content and process of the MOU as to whether or not that will satisfy the concerns over, you know, formal monitoring.

The Chair: — Ms. Ferguson.

Ms. Ferguson: — Thank you, Madam Chair, members. Thank you for the question there. Really where we're coming at from, for that last recommendation, it's really there's two dimensions. It's first, as management indicated, the need to have actually written guidance for staff when they're working in this particular area. We haven't had the opportunity to actually assess the draft operational MOU to see if it has sufficient guidance in that regard.

With respect to the predetermined process, really what we're looking at there is if a predetermined process doesn't really work, what we're trying to do is make sure that there is a sufficient process so that the ministry and the commission knows that situations of incidents of non-compliance are being addressed on a relatively consistent basis. There is lots of different avenues to do that. Perhaps it's impressing upon the values and the principles that are underlying when making those types of decisions. You know, so as an audit office we don't have . . . we're not advocating a definitive how, but it's the principle that the guidance that they're providing to staff is sufficient so that the outcome of handling those cases, they're done on a relatively consistent basis. Okay?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Sure. Okay. Well thank you for that piece. And it seemed to also be addressed that, from the ministry's perspective and the Police Commission's perspective, there are measures that you've brought forward to ensure some of these pieces are in place reflecting certain needs of the environment you're working in.

So I guess on this front here, what I look forward to is certainly tracking the progress of the ministry and then also the further evaluation of the auditor. And I think I heard as well that you're not suggesting that there's one way to do this, that there's potential flexibility in how this could be achieved. So certainly we'll just keep track of that progress, and thanks for the work of both parties on that front.

Mr. Peach: — Thank you. And I'd like to thank the auditor for your comments which certainly are of assistance in clarifying what your expectations are and provide us some further guidance so that we can reach an end product that will meet everyone's needs and expectations. As indicated, we are well in the course of developing that operational MOU. We're in the process of finalizing its terms at this point so that we can have it executed, and we will certainly be sharing that with the auditor once we have done so, so that the auditor will have the opportunity to assess that process once we have it finalized. Now I believe Deputy McFee would also like to comment. Thank you.

Mr. McFee: — You know, and again I just want to really echo what the auditor said. I certainly think that there is a purpose for this. And I think I'm going to just go back to my old life as a police chief in this particular environment. And these I think will set the way and the shape forward of accountability, but I think at the same time is they need to have a practical application, and I think that's exactly what we're going to focus on here, to make sure that it has a practical application and that the two things mesh going forward.

The Chair: — Thank you. Are there further questions from committee members? Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Now I don't know if you want to deal with them here. I just want to make sure that we've touched on them, and I'm not sure that we have or haven't. I think a lot of them connect to a lot of the comments that Dr. Rector was commenting on though I suspect, so you may not need to go into great depth here. But I never want to sort of have some of the recommendations fall off the table, and maybe there were comments specific to these recommendations that were outstanding.

And I would reference the outstanding recommendations from the 2008 volume 1 report, and there's various statuses that are updated, and this relates to the rehabilitation of adult inmates. And there's three recommendations on page 116 of the 2013 volume 2 report, and maybe if we could just get a scan and an update of where those are at by way of implementation and then what actions are required and what timelines are in place to achieve a compliance. And I recognize that a lot of these do connect back to some of the recommendations that we've previously discussed.

Mr. McFee: — Yes. That's a great point and that's the one that I said that we were splitting, so I do have comments in relation to that one. So statement four, rehabilitating adult inmates, this first follow-up to 2011 report volume 2, chapter 4, with regards to the rehabilitating adult inmates audit, I would like to point out that in our original audit the auditor provided an overall conclusion and stated, ". . . the Ministry had adequate processes to rehabilitate sentenced adult inmates . . ." We are happy with

that result. But this being said, we do recognize we have work to do on these recommendations that remain outstanding in the auditor's report.

We've taken a prioritized approach to address the recommendations and continue to work towards full compliance. I'll take a moment to provide the committee with the information on the key actions we've taken to address these issues as well as provide an expected timeline for the implementation.

Recommendation 1, found on page 94 of chapter 2 of the 2011 report volume l, related to consistently complying with the ministry's policies to assess inmate needs and plan relevant programs. Some of the key actions taken here is the ministry has increased its capacity to complete risk assessments and case planning purposes by training assistant deputy directors of programming throughout the province. We are also working towards improving the quality and timelines of assessment to meet our case management standards. The timelines for this is we expect to have all of the necessary operational plans in place to fully implement this recommendation by the end of fiscal '15-16.

Recommendation 2, found on page 95 of the report, related to the monitoring of the proportion of inmates accessing planned rehabilitation programs before inmates are released into the community. Key actions taken here, the ministry has purchased specialized software that can produce the reports required to meet the auditor's recommendation. Several staff have already received the training in the use of this software. With reference to this recommendation, the ministry will initially prioritize offenders with sentence lengths ranging from 12 months to two years less one day. Recommendation is expected to be fully implemented when the first set of reports are made available. This is expected to take place during 2015-16.

Recommendation 3, found on page 96 of the report, related to the monitoring inmate reoffending rates in relation to rehabilitation programs to better evaluate the rehabilitation of inmates. Key actions taken here is the ministry has ensured that all new programs are either evaluated internally or in collaboration with other university partners. The ministry only adopts programs that have been previously demonstrated to reduce offending.

We are also continuing to collect data on reoffending rates which we'll enter into our specialized software for analysis. Completion of this recommendation is linked to implementation of recommendation 2, which is anticipated to complete in 2015-16. The ministry will work on recommendation 3, followed completion of recommendation 2. We expect to have full components needed to address this recommendation by the end of '16-17.

Madam Chair, we'd certainly be happy to answer any questions in this area.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. McFee. I'd like to open up the floor for questions. Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No questions but certainly comment. Thanks for the focus here. And there's a lot of good work that is

being led and achieved by the civil servants in this ministry, and we're thankful for that. Just the ability to have, as best one can, an understanding of the effectiveness of those rehabilitation programs and of the supports required to meaningfully impact recidivism or reduce recidivism is really critical in allocating those resources and certainly speaks to the value-for-money approach that should be in place.

I know there's a significant cost of course to lock someone up for a year, and certainly it has its place and it has its importance. But when resources can be allocated in a smart way that reduces recidivism, we're really working towards the meaningful outcomes that are important to the community. So thanks for the work on this front. We'll continue to track it.

Mr. McFee: — Mr. Wotherspoon, certainly I appreciate your comments in relation to my staff, and I reiterate that I feel humbled and honoured to actually lead this ministry in some of the directions we're going in. To your point about the importance of this, this particular area of our business is responsible for 50 per cent of recontact, up to 50 per cent of recontact with the justice system. We have to get this right, and we have to lower the demand on this side if we're going to truly impact our numbers in our facilities. So thank you for those comments.

[11:00]

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. McFee. Are there any further questions or comments? Seeing none, with respect to the 2011 report volume 2, chapter 4 and the six new recommendations, what is the will of the committee? Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Merriman: — Madam Chair, I would like to group them into two categories. I would like to note recommendation no. 1, 3, and 6, that we concur with the recommendation and note progress towards in compliance.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Merriman. Mr. Merriman has moved that for the 2011 report volume 2, chapter 4, recommendations 1, 3 and 6, that this committee concur with the recommendations and note progress. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you again, Madam Chair. And with the final three recommendations, recommendation no. 2, 4, and 5, I would like to recommend that we concur with the recommendation and note compliance.

The Chair: — Mr. Merriman has moved for the 2011 report volume 2, chapter 4, recommendations no. 2, 4, and 5, that this committee concur with the recommendations and note compliance. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you for that. Moving on to the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 45, there are no new recommendations. Is there a motion to . . . And I know we've discussed them now. If there's no further questions, can I have a motion to conclude consideration? Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Merriman: — Madam Chair, I'd like to make a motion that we conclude consideration on that chapter.

The Chair: — Mr. Merriman has moved for the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 45, that this committee conclude its consideration. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you for that. That concludes our business for the morning. Thank you to the Justice officials and to the Police Commission official here. Thank you so much for your time. Mr. Wotherspoon, you've got some further comments?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Many long, prolonged comments. No. I'd just like to thank the deputy minister and the officials that are here today and for the work they do throughout the year. I'd also like to thank Mr. Cooley once again for sitting just in the right direction there with that lanyard for the Regina Pats behind the deputy minister, who I believe, you know, continues affiliations with those Prince Albert Raiders. So thanks for representing those Pats proudly.

Mr. McFee: — Thank you very much.

Mr. Merriman: — I would just echo my colleague's comments and thank you very much for everything you guys are doing. You are working with the auditor's office, which is exactly what the ministry needs to be doing on an ongoing basis — making improvements, implementing them quickly, and making them provincial. So again, thank you to you, Mr. McFee, and all of your officials and all the people that are in the background behind, supporting you, trying to make this system a better system for the offenders and make sure that they do not reoffend. So again, thank you for everything that you do.

Mr. McFee: — Thanks, Mr. Merriman. Certainly I just want to just echo from my staff, it's appreciated what you do. And certainly as the auditor, really do appreciate what you do. And I think that relationship is one that we continue to obviously value and look forward to, going forward in the future. So thank you very much to all.

The Chair: — And thank you and for explaining everything in such a clear and concise way. It was very appreciated. So with that we'll recess until 1 o'clock.

[The committee recessed from 11:03 until 13:00.]

The Chair: — Welcome back to Public Accounts this afternoon. We will be looking at reviewing the Provincial Auditor's reports for Central Services this afternoon. So welcome to the acting deputy minister, Richard Murray, and all your staff here and other folks. I'll let you introduce them in a few minutes, but we also have someone else who's joined us here today. We've got Jane Borland who's the manager of the financial management branch of the Provincial Comptroller's office. Thank you for being here this afternoon.

And with that, we'll just get down to business. We'll be looking

at, as I said, Central Services, and we will be starting with the 2012 report volume 2, chapter 13, and the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 4. So with that, I will pass it off to the Acting Provincial Auditor.

Central Services

Ms. Ferguson: — Thank you, Madam Chair, Deputy Chair, officials and government . . . and members. This afternoon I'm joined by Victor Schwab who's a principal in our office who's been responsible for a lot of the IT work that's before you this afternoon. And behind him is Tara Clemett. Tara is also a principal with our office and has led some of the work that we're discussing this afternoon. And Kim Lowe is the committee's liaison.

So, as was mentioned by the Chair, before us we've got a number of chapters. We actually have 11 chapters, so that we'll work our way through this afternoon, those 11 chapters. Before I launch into the chapters, I just want to pause and thank the deputy minister and his staff for the co-operation that we received on the work that's before this committee.

Not unlike this morning, the chapters are before you. They have been subject to that government reorganization that occurred last May so we'll hopefully . . . I think it's a little bit cleaner than this morning in terms of the stickhandling. But I do want to remind the committee members of the reorganization, and so that did affect the ministry and the information technology office. Effective May of 2012, the government brought the Ministry of Government Services, Public Service Commission, and the information technology office into the Ministry of Central Services. And then ITO — which we have, you'll see that's the reference, the acronym that we use in our report — it's now a division of Central Services' information technology division. So you know, we apologize if we use the terms a little bit intermingling, but you get so used to that ITO jargon, you know, it just sticks with you after a while. We do also want to pause and indicate to the committee or remind the committee that in August of 2013, public service was in in May and then it went out again in August of 2013, so we're not talking about Public Service Commission in this afternoon's presentation.

So how are we going to tackle the 11 chapters? We're going to break it into three parts. The first two chapters, we're going to focus on the integrated audits; those are the chapters referred to by Madam Chair. The second part will focus on the three chapters that contain the results of actually three separate follow-ups of performance audits. And the third is going to cover five chapters, and that contains the results of our 2012, 2013, 2014 annual audits of ITD's controls to secure the data centre and two follow-up audits that were related to the ITD.

The first two parts, both of those parts do not contain any new recommendations for the committee's consideration. The third part contains three new recommendations for the committee's consideration. So at this point in time, I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Schwab to present the first part.

Mr. Schwab: — Thanks, Ms. Ferguson. As just noted, part 1 covers two of the chapters on your agenda that report the results of our annual integrated audits. Chapter 13 of our 2012 report volume 2 reports the results of our integrated audit of the

former information technology office, ITO. For the year ended March 31st, 2012, chapter 4 of our 2013 report volume 2 reports the results of our integrated audit of the Ministry of Central Services. Because of the reorganization in May 2012, this chapter 4 in the 2013 report volume 2 includes five recommendations from our previous integrated audits of the Ministry of Government Services, ITO, and the Public Service Commission.

By March 31st, 2013, the ministry did not yet adequately monitor the security of its IT systems and data, did not follow its established procedures for prompt removal of user access to these systems and data or prepare accurate and complete year-end financial reports. While the ministry had signed service agreements with all of its clients for IT services it provides, some of those agreements did not adequately address disaster recovery and reporting requirements. I will discuss the status of most of the recommendations contained in the tables in these chapters in the next parts of my presentation.

That concludes my presentation on this part.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Schwab. Mr. Murray, if you have some comments.

Mr. Murray: — Thank you, Madam Chair, and committee members, Madam Provincial Auditor, and staff. We're pleased to be here today to discuss the Ministry of Central Services operations and our work to address the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor.

I'd like to introduce my officials here today. On my immediate right is Crystal Zorn, our director of IT security. My immediate left is Derek Collins, our director of our central vehicle agency. And then behind me from your right to left is Andre Laberge, executive director of property management; Troy Smith, director of — got to make sure I got that right — financial services; and Rebecca Sengmany, director of financial services.

The Ministry of Central Services provides the services and supports that all government employees need to do their work and to offer their programming and services to the people of Saskatchewan. Services offered by our ministry include property management, large-scale construction projects, mail and record services, transportation services, procurement, IT service delivery, and other numerous smaller functions.

Today we've been asked to appear before the committee on 13 chapters relating to various business functions within the ministry. And I'd just note upfront, we take the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor and the office very seriously. We've worked hard to make progress in the areas outlined by the auditor. In many cases, the recommendations have been entirely implemented, and in other areas we are working towards implementation.

Thank you, and we would be pleased to answer any questions you may have as we stroll through this heavy agenda today.

The Chair: — Okay. I'd like to open up the floor to questions. Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you. And thank you to officials

that are here today and for the work you do every day. Maybe just to focus our energies, if you could give us an update specifically around the outstanding recommendations that haven't been implemented, and I guess the ones as well that have been partially implemented. Speak specifically to the recommendation, what actions are required towards compliance and what timeline's in place to ensure compliance.

The Chair: — Mr. Murray, just in terms of instead of having to do all the one area that we're focused on right now, I think if . . . The 2013 report volume 2, chapter 4, if you could speak to those outstanding that have been implemented there, I think that that might be useful.

Mr. Murray: — Thanks. Okay, so maybe I'll start with timely removal of user accesses. The recommendation was that the ministry follow its established procedures for removing user accesses to its computer systems and data. So this relates to when a user leaves the ministry, what is the amount of time required to remove their access from computer systems. And so we had worked towards a 48-hour turnaround on removal of accesses. The auditor has recommended 24-hour turnaround. I'm going to suggest, in our minds, this is now implemented. We have a revised employee checklist that's been implemented now by the Public Service Commission for employee termination, separations, and retirements, and removals are more clearly highlighted on that checklist.

We've enhanced communications efforts. We've sent out a reminder memo from myself to all staff asking them to please ensure that user accesses are removed in a timely fashion, and we've also asked our internal audit group to undertake an audit of this within our ministry. They'll follow up with individual managers who need additional coaching in order to ensure compliance in this issue. So we believe we are implemented in this area.

Second would be signed agreements with clients on security and disaster recovery processes. I would consider this to be partially implemented. As the auditor noted, we do have signed service agreements with all of our clients, and we include a section related to applications and each ministry's requirements regarding disaster recovery. However, this reporting has not met fully with the auditor's approval. So I'll note that this is one that's likely to continue to appear for many years down the road. We have thousands of applications under our purview and so disaster recovery plans which are clearly defined for every one of those applications will take some amount of work.

However, we have worked sort of a top to bottom, largest applications to smallest applications. So we have ensured that critical business applications are supported, in the case of disaster, on applications like Markview; MIDAS [multi-informational database application system], the government financial system; the social work information system, the Linkin; JD Edwards application with social services; the oil and gas mainframe; and the IRIS [integrated resource information system] systems under the Ministry of Economy; and work is under way with the Ministry of Justice on CJIMS [criminal justice information management system].

So certainly those major very, very mission-critical applications are now covered. There are many more remaining, and we will continue to chip away at those and work with our clients.

But I will note that all Government of Saskatchewan data is backed up every night on tape. It is catalogued. It is moved to a secure off-site storage facility each day to ensure its safety in the event of a disaster. But we will continue to work with our clients to enhance the agreements here that do need strengthening. So I would characterize it as pretty good progress made. We'll chip away at it now and in the future to get there for disaster recovery on all applications. It's quite a job though.

And the third would be accurate and complete fiscal year-end financial reports as required by the financial administration manual. So since this recommendation was first made in 2010 by the auditor, the ministry has made a number of changes including reporting improvements to the contract management system, more clearly defined roles and accountability for all year-end schedules and reports.

Improved staff training on year-end reporting processes and requirements has been completed, and we've increased the review time spent reconciling year-end schedules to source data. We look forward to the auditor's 2013-14 annual audit because we believe that the auditor will now find that our financial reports are indeed accurate and complete.

The Chair: — Thank you for that. Again, are there any further questions on these recommendations?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I just want to make sure . . . Thanks for those answers. And looks like there'll be implementation or compliance in place on many fronts, so that's important.

Just to make sure that before we close the consideration on these chapters, have you reviewed exhibit, the exhibit on page 44 and 45 with some of the outstanding recommendations? And if you could just review that graph and just address any outstanding work, maybe address the recommendations that compliance isn't yet in place, where implementation hasn't occurred, and speak specifically to the actions and timelines to do just that.

Mr. Murray: — Yes. So I'll note on the chart on 44 that the top five items there, we will speak to later, I believe, under part 3 of the agenda. Building maintenance is specifically covered there. And I think that's also true with the security pieces on the bottom three, those are covered under part 2 of the . . .

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And the public service isn't included.

Mr. Murray: — And the public service not.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Perfect. That's good.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any further questions? Seeing none, is the committee willing to make a motion to conclude consideration? Mr. Merriman.

[13:15]

Mr. Merriman: — Yes, Madam Chair. I would put the motion forward we conclude consideration.

The Chair: — Mr. Merriman has moved that for the 2012 report volume 2, chapter 13 and the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 4 that we conclude consideration of these chapters. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Moving on, I will pass it off to the Acting Provincial Auditor to make her presentation on the next three chapters.

Ms. Ferguson: — Thank you. Thank you very much. We're doing part 2 and, as indicated earlier, this is the segment that we're going to talk about three different follow-ups. So actually three different subject areas is what will be covered in this chapter here, this part. So I'll turn it over to Mr. Schwab this time.

Mr. Schwab: — Thank you, Ms. Ferguson. In part 2, I'll provide an overview of the results of chapter 36 of our 2013 report volume 2 and chapters 17 and 18 of our 2014 report volume 1. These chapters contain the results of follow-up work on previously reported performance audits. As previously noted, there are no new recommendations for your consideration.

The ministry maintains a fleet of about 4,500 vehicles for use by other government agencies. Chapter 36 of our 2013 report volume 2 reports that by August 31st, 2013 the ministry had made progress on recommendations related to maintaining its vehicle fleet. In April 2012 it implemented a new computer system called FleetWave to help ensure its fleet meets safety standards. This system helped it track repairs and maintenance records. It had drafted procedures to track vehicle inspections and to ensure all of its repairs are entered into its new computer system. It expected to have these policies and procedures approved and in place by December 2013.

At August 2013, while management received monthly reports on the ministry's vehicle fleet, we continued to find that reports did not contain sufficient information to enable management to know that vehicles are maintained in a safe condition and in an economical manner. At that time, the ministry was developing new reports.

Moving on to chapter 17 of our 2014 report volume 1, the ministry owns or leases about 700 buildings in about 150 different communities. These buildings include office buildings, health care facilities, technical schools, correctional facilities and courthouses. It maintains either directly or indirectly these. In our 2009 audit of the ministry's processes to maintain these buildings, we made five recommendations. This chapter reports that by January 2014, the ministry has implemented all five recommendations.

Now moving on to chapter 18 of our 2014 report volume 1. The ministry as a central agency is responsible for coordinating and planning for accommodation of other ministries in various government agencies. Our 2011 audit found that the ministry needed to prepare an overall accommodation plan and monitor implementation of that plan. It included six recommendations. By January 2014 the ministry has made progress.

Since February 2012 it requires the preparation of an overall accommodation plan and receives annual updates from its clients on their current and future accommodation requirements. It was working with its clients to identify gaps between existing accommodation and future needs. Without a complete gap analysis, it did not have the necessary information to complete its development of an overall accommodation plan. It expected to complete its gap analysis and the development of an overall accommodation plan by the end of 2014. This concludes my presentation for this part.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Schwab. Mr. Murray, if you would like to . . . On those three particular chapters obviously we've heard some of those or many of those recommendations have been implemented, but if you wouldn't mind walking us through where you are at with the other ones, that would be great.

Mr. Murray: — Absolutely. And I'll just note that we are extremely pleased with the progress made on all of these areas. So first up is a recommendation related to fleet maintenance, that the Central Services establish processes to ensure its vehicle fleet meets the safety standards of *The Traffic Safety Act.* And at the time that these recommendations were made, we did not yet have our new FleetWave management system.

CVA [central vehicle agency] requires all vehicles to have a safety inspection done every six months. But it was challenging under our previous non-automated system to track whether or not individuals were getting the proper oil changes done, whether they were getting proper maintenance done, and whether proper safety inspections were being done. So we've now developed a set of processes. Those processes were published and released in October of 2013 ensuring vehicles meet safety standards. We have implemented automatic email notifications for overdue vehicle inspections, so if you have a CVA vehicle, you will receive an email and another and another and another until the proper safety inspections are done.

We've also added a hosted contact centre. So we've always had mechanics located at CVA. Now those mechanics are available to take operator calls and vendor calls as well and sort of give advice — hey, you should run this in; you should get the work done. And we've got standing offers for glass and tire services that meet national and provincial safety standards.

In discussions with Derek here in the past week, we have roughly 4,300 vehicles in our fleet, and we have three vehicles today that are overdue for an inspection — only three out of those many thousands of vehicles. And that's sort of the benefit of the new FleetWave program, that we now know that. And those three people, we can get on the phone and encourage them to get the necessary safety inspections done. So very pleased in that area.

We've also had a second recommendation: Central Services keep reliable maintenance and repair records for its vehicles. And we now have an aggressive program of vehicle safety inspections, as I say, but as well our new FleetWave system and our overhauled fleet management practices. We've done some really critical lean work in this area as well to streamline the operations there on the maintenance and repair front — excellent stuff — and we now have records and reports done

weekly, daily, however often they're necessary in terms of the maintenance work. And then senior management within Central Services receives reports to verify that the vehicles are indeed being maintained in a safe condition and in an economical manner.

Management is now able to produce on-demand reports to verify that the vehicles are being inspected, as I've noted, and CVA sends vehicle coordinators within the ministry's automated alerts when vehicles are coming due for inspection. For vehicles where inspections continue to be overdue, we have the escalation protocol in place. These actions ensure that CVA clients are held accountable in their vehicle use and maintenance practices. And we trust that these improvements in our CVA area will meet with the Provincial Auditor's recommendations regarding our CVA program.

The Chair: — With respect to this particular chapter, does anyone have any questions? Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Good information, good progress, and it looks like a good system. As it relates to the current provincial cabinet ministers, has anyone been a specific challenge for you with delaying their maintenance or oil changes?

Mr. Murray: — I've got three names right here.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you for the work your ministry is doing on this front.

Mr. Murray: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Are there any other questions on this chapter?

A Member: — I have more to say.

The Chair: — Mr. Murray, if you'd want to carry on with the 2014 report volume 1, chapter 17. I know that all those recommendations I believe have been implemented, but do you have any comments that you'd like to make?

Mr. Murray: — Actually I do because the building maintenance recommendations have been around for a bit and have been carried forward and carried forward. And so I would just like to make a couple of notes there. Establishing and implementing processes to ensure the information on our buildings is accurate. We've made significant changes to long- and short-form consultant contracts. We now have the requirement that all of our consultants and contractors shall apply and adhere to our design standards and submit updated computer-aided design information on a fixed basis, and we've made I think, just excellent progress there.

We have maintenance plans for all the buildings that we own in terms of approving adequate maintenance plans for the buildings. We've got 4,600 owned buildings all over the province and then another 3,000 roughly leased buildings. And then also included under this are buildings that are not owned by us but are perhaps maintained by us, and so client-owned buildings that are being maintained by CS [Central Services] are now covered by signed agreements describing each of the parties' responsibilities. And I thank the Provincial Auditor for that recommendation because it allowed us to get through and

establish these agreements, which are very important. We've only got two buildings outstanding. I believe there were 103 outstanding when this audit was first done. We now have only two, and we continue to negotiate on the signed agreements for those buildings.

There were processes so that maintenance is carried out on all of our buildings. We've also automated this part. We've also conducted some lean exercises on our maintenance and construction services areas. So we now have quarterly work orders that get generated and sent out to our maintenance people. They now know the work that they've got for the quarter, and they go out and do that work. I get a report every month that shows me what maintenance work is not being done or has not been done, and then I follow up with just a friendly chat with the maintenance folks to ensure that they're on track. And so that area is . . . We've addressed any deficiencies there, and we're pleased. We're pleased about that. And then, ". . . senior management adequate reports to monitor the processes . . ." So those reports as I say are distributed to all of our senior management team, and we now know maintenance is being done, where it's being done, why it's being done, and how it's being done. So perhaps that's all I need to say on this.

The Chair: — Thank you. Does anyone have any other questions or comments before we move on to the next chapter? No. Seeing none, with respect to chapter 18 of the 2014 report volume 1, if you wouldn't mind making some comments on those outstanding recommendations.

Mr. Murray: — Absolutely. The auditor's made six recommendations related to accommodation planning. So this is the long-term planning going forward in terms of the needs of the various ministries and our clients, customers, what their accommodations requirements are going to be down the road. The first was that the ministry specify in its policy documents the requirement to prepare an overall accommodation plan, including a risk assessment. We consider this to be implemented. In 2012 a policy and plan was developed to prepare an accommodation plan and a corresponding risk assessment. The accommodation plan, a form has been designed and locked down, and these documents are now used by my ministry to plan to not only meet our clients' needs now but to look forward in the future. And so we will work directly with our clients to outline their specific needs going forward.

Also had, Central Services regularly request information from clients on their future accommodation needs. This is now being done. So we are doing an annual request to clients on their future needs, and that will assist them in developing their own accommodation plans. And we jointly monitor progress on the implementation of those plans, managing accommodations and reducing office space footprint in government. It also helps us to keep track of trends or changing needs within ministries and their program areas.

Third was that the ministry identify the gap between its existing accommodation portfolio and future accommodation needs. We agree it is important to identify and analyze that gap. And I would suggest that we've made progress here, but we're not entirely there yet, and I will get to that in the next recommendation. So the gaps between existing and future needs are identified and analyzed at a client/ministry level where

possible and then consolidated into an overall accommodation plan. However, we do not yet have an overall accommodation plan, which takes us to I think the fifth or sixth . . . fifth recommendation here. But we are working with our clients and our planning group on the importance of having such a plan. So I think partial progress made here.

No. 4 was that the ministry verify staffing information provided by its clients for the ministry's buildings. And I presume the thought here was that if a ministry says, hey we need some new space for 40 people, the response from the auditor was, well how do you know it's really 40 people and that they're not perhaps trying to acquire space for only 20 people. And so we request FTE [full-time equivalent] information annually from our clients. That allows us to do the calculations on their FTE per square metre ratio. We have a standard that we are working towards, which is 200 square feet per FTE, and we apply that standard wherever possible on all new builds or renovations within space. And so we have confirmed with our client/tenant representations, and they work with financial representatives to verify the information that is provided with the partner ministries. So I believe that that is implemented.

No. 5 is Central Services develop an overall accommodation plan. So progress has been made here. We have not yet completed this overall accommodation plan. But again we thank the auditor for the recommendation, and it is something that I think is an excellent, excellent goal to strive for. And so we have the format of the plan designed. We know what goes into the plan, and we will have our overall plan in place by March 31st, 2015, based on the design that has been done to date.

And then of course no. 6 not implemented because that recommendation is to then monitor and report on implementation of that plan. So we do not yet have a plan, but I can assure you that once that plan is put into place by the end of March, there will be a monitoring and reporting on implementation process under way.

[13:30]

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Murray. I'd like to open up the floor for questions. Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well maybe just to comment that there's some good work going on in these areas. Obviously it's really valuable to have a plan in place to know where your best allocation of resources are and the best approach to securing space on a go-forward basis. So thanks for laying out some of your work and the timelines ahead of us, and we'll continue to track progress on this front.

The Chair: — Any further questions? Seeing none, could I have a motion to conclude consideration on 2013 report volume 2, chapter 36; the 2014 report volume 1, chapter 17; 2014 report volume 1, chapter 18? Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we conclude consideration on all three of those chapters.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Merriman. Mr. Merriman has moved that we conclude consideration on the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 36; the 2014 report volume 1, chapter 17; the

2014 report volume 1, chapter 18. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. And we will move . . . I will pass it on to our Acting Provincial Auditor to deal with the next several reports.

Ms. Ferguson: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So before you, we actually have the final part of our presentation this afternoon, and it's going to focus on the IT role of the Ministry of Central Services. And without further ado, I'm going to turn it to Mr. Schwab to present that portion.

Mr. Schwab: — Thank you, Ms. Ferguson. The five chapters in this part all relate to activities of the ministry's information technology division, formerly called the ITO. Chapter 29 of our 2012 report volume 2, chapter 11 of our 2013 report volume 1, and chapter 7 of our 2014 volume 1 contain the results of our 2012, 2013, and 2014 audits of ITD's controls to secure the data centre. My comments will focus on the most recent chapter, chapter 7 of our 2014 report volume 1. This chapter contains one new recommendation.

ITD is responsible for providing key IT services to government ministries and 10 other agencies and the security of the related IT systems and data. As listed on page 38, it provides some of these services directly. For others, such as the data centre, it engages another IT service provider. We found that other than the matters reflected in the seven recommendations, ITD had effective controls to secure the data centre.

On page 41 we recommend that ITD follow its established processes to identify and manage risks related to its data centre. We made this recommendation because we found that at December 31, 2013, while ITO had adequate policies, it did not follow them. Its policies require its risk register to be periodically maintained and updated. We found that quarterly reviews of the risk register did not occur as required, and risk owners were not updated when changes in senior management occurred. Not following its established risk management policies and procedures increases the likelihood of unauthorized access and loss.

On the previous recommendations, ITD has made some progress from prior years on the five recommendations, including the two new recommendations from chapter 29 of the 2012 report volume 2. The update of these are reflected on pages 42 and 43. In our 2012 report volume 2, page 223, we had recommended that ITD adequately restrict access to clients' systems and data. We made this recommendation in 2012 because ITD did not always enforce adequate password controls or consistently follow its processes for removing access to terminated users promptly.

Since then ITD has improved some, but more work is necessary. As reported in chapter 7 of our 2014 report volume 1, staff do not always follow its policy requirements for user identification and setting passwords. Its processes for remotely accessing some network equipment systems and data continue to need better security. Not following security requirements and not having appropriate access for remote access increases the risk of unauthorized access.

In our 2012 report volume 2, page 224, we had recommended that ITD adequately configure and update its server and network equipment to protect them from security threats. We made this recommendation in 2012 because ITD's firewall policies for its data centre were not current. And we found that the service provider for the data centre was not using the agreed upon service configurations.

Since 2012 a few improvements are noted, but more work remains. As reported in chapter 7 of our 2014 report volume 1, ITD continues to need to adequately configure its servers and update its servers against known security threats on a timely basis. These weaknesses increase the risk of unauthorized access to clients' computer systems. Inadequate firewall policies and weak server configurations increase the risk of unauthorized access.

As reflected in chapter 7 of our 2014 report volume 1, at December 31st, 2013, ITD had made a bit of progress on these, on three of the recommendations, and no progress on having a disaster recovery plan for the data centre and client systems. Until ITD fully implements these recommendations, government data stored on these systems are at an increased risk of loss, disclosure, or unauthorized modification, and the systems may not be available when needed.

Moving on to chapter 37 of our 2013 report volume 2. This chapter reports our follow-up of two recommendations from our 2011 study on processes of the ITD to protect Saskatchewan data managed by third party contractors. One recommendation was directed at ITD and the other at the Ministry of Justice. By September of 2013, ITD implemented its recommendation in that it had documented its analysis of risks related to the *USA PATRIOT* [Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism] *Act* along with related mitigation strategies. However, by that time the Ministry of Justice had not considered changes to the general access and privacy legislation to mitigate risks related to the *USA PATRIOT Act*. It advised us that it expects to include this in its upcoming general review of the legislation.

Moving on to chapter 38 of our 2013 report volume 2. In 2009 the office found that it could not determine whether ITO had improved IT services through consolidation and provided those services at a lower cost as anticipated because of the absence of reliable performance measures and tracking of costs. We made five recommendations, which ITD had implemented three by 2011.

This chapter reports that by August 31st, 2013, ITD had implemented the remaining two recommendations. ITD now summarizes and presents to management feedback received from its clients through surveys along with planned actions to address these issues identified. Also it now includes specific measures for each of its clients based on their needs in each of its agreements with clients. It provides clients with monthly reports on how it is achieving the targets set out in these agreements.

Madam Chair, that concludes my overview on these chapters in this part. As I noted, this part has three new recommendations for the committee's consideration.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Schwab. Mr. Murray, if perhaps would you prefer to go chapter by chapter or whatever is most comfortable for you, but we should deal with the three outstanding or the three new recommendations for sure and then the outstanding ones, finding out where you're at.

Mr. Murray: — Thank you. Yes. Maybe I'll wade into it recommendation by recommendation as I . . .

The Chair: — So starting with the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 37? Is that . . .

Mr. Murray: — Effectively follow threat and risk assessment processes?

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. Murray: — Yes?

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. Murray: — Okay. We'll try as always not to get too technical on this IT stuff.

The Chair: — Sorry, Mr. Murray. We're just getting . . . Chapter 37 — I've got too many chapters in front of me here — is the "Justice and Information Technology Office — Protecting Saskatchewan Data." Consultation . . .

Mr. Murray: — Is that where you would like to start, Madam Chair?

The Chair: — Sure. Sure.

Mr. Murray: — Okay. As auditor's staff have noted . . . No. Bear with me now one second. Protection of Saskatchewan data. So as auditor's staff, Victor, has noted, implemented. So this is a long-standing one related to the *USA PATRIOT Act*, and we are now completed there, and we are pleased that this work has satisfied the Provincial Auditor's office.

The Chair: — Thank you. Oh, Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks for the work on this front. I recall the initial discussions at this table. Going back quite a few years ago, a colleague of mine, Pat Atkinson, I remember raising some questions that sort of I think led to some initial focus into these areas.

So the risks are now being documented by Ministry of Central Services. Was there much to document, or can you speak to the nature and type of the risks that have been documented?

Mr. Murray: — Absolutely. No, there was not a lot of risks to document. To my knowledge, the number of applications that are stored out of country are very small. And we have revised our contracts with third party vendors to ensure that there is a clause in each of those contracts that limits the disclosure of information by third parties. And so no, not a large risk but a risk that was duly noted and is now recorded in our new risk register which we will get to, which we will get to.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And are you able to table that report,

that work that documents the risks — I mean you may not have it with you here today — or provide that back to members of this committee in due course?

Mr. Murray: — Yes, we've got that. Yes.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And so you've identified that you had to strengthen agreements with some of these third party providers to ensure protection. Now do you have obviously Justice or legal opinions that those agreements with those American third party providers would hold up against the US [United States] government or the US *PATRIOT Act* if challenged?

Mr. Murray: — Yes. So the clauses were developed — and this goes back some number of years — but those clauses were developed at the time. It was felt at that time that they were suitable to address the risk. And those clauses have now been added to all contracts, all IT related contracts and have met with the auditor's satisfaction as well. So yes, I think they effectively do address the issue.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — You know, and this is an area I don't know real well as far as who's providing services from an IT perspective to government. And you know, there's subsidiaries of American companies and then many Saskatchewan, many Canadian companies. I guess would you be able to provide to this committee . . . Maybe you wouldn't have the information likely here at your fingertips, but could you endeavour to provide back to the committee I guess where those contracts — I mean I know there's many contracts — a scan of where those contracts and with which companies you're contracted with? I guess this would be right back into the public accounts. It's probably noted. I don't know if it would be noted whether or not they're an American company or not, which may then impact them by way of the US *PATRIOT Act*. Is there a summary of some information you could provide of this nature?

Mr. Murray: — I'll note that the *USA PATRIOT Act* always has . . . And you know, I want to say that goes back probably 10-plus years. There's always been that challenge around US-based versus US subsidiary versus Canadian subsidiary of a US firm versus, you know, the use of the cloud, whatever that means. And wherever that cloud is located is a more updated issue, I'll say, or area of concern.

So you know, one of the major ones would be ISM [Information Systems Management Corporation] which is an IBM [International Business Machines Corporation] subsidiary, and we do have a legal opinion on protection of data related to that, and it's absolutely not permitted. You are correct in terms of a lot of that information being available through estimates. We will strive to provide the committee with whatever information we do have in that regard.

[13:45]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And then just a specific question. I hear lots of frustration from people, hunters and fishers, about the new arrangement with the American contractor with the licensing system. Has there been any security or privacy concerns raised with Information Services or what's been in place to protect Saskatchewan people's information?

Mr. Murray: — I'm going to suggest that no, there have been no concerns raised in a data classification.

Ms. Zorn: — Good afternoon. My name is Crystal Zorn. I'm the director of information security. Just a follow-up on the question. We have an information classification model that was implemented in 2006 in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice. And we endeavour to define risks associated with applications and information based on the sensitivity of that information. In this case, we haven't received any privacy or security concerns as it relates the hunting and the fishers application. However, we are aware of its location and continue to monitor it for any potential issues.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Yes. I might not be remembering this file entirely. I thought that the Privacy Commissioner had weighed in with some concerns around that information, whether it be the driver's licence that's required or sometimes a health card that's required to secure your habitat stamp or some of your hunting permits.

Mr. Murray: — I don't think we have any recollection of that conversation. I'm sorry.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Sure. If in review if there was any noted concern, if you are able to just provide sort of the response to it. And I'm just sort of pulling out of some . . . out of my memory here too and maybe there weren't concerns raised publicly, but . . .

Mr. Murray: — Yes.

The Chair: — Thank you. Are there any further questions on chapter 37 at this point? Well, Mr. Murray, if you wouldn't mind making some comments. I know chapter 38, there were two outstanding recommendations that have both been implemented, and that was the measuring benefits of IT consolidation, but if you have any comments or would like to speak to that at all.

Mr. Murray: — No, there were two recommendations related to the benefits of IT consolidation that took place back a number of years ago. One was work with ministries to prepare joint action plans. We're pleased that our progress here has met with the auditor's satisfaction. And the other was mutual agreement with ministries on relevant service delivery measures and targets. And we are also pleased to have satisfied the auditor on this front.

The Chair: — Does anyone have any questions about that particular chapter? Well seeing none, Mr. Murray, how about chapter 29 where we do have two new recommendations. If you wouldn't mind discussing the two new recommendations and where you are at with respect to those, page 223 and 224, and there are some outstanding recommendations there as well.

Mr. Murray: — Thanks. Some of these, I apologize, some of these recommendations have appeared in multiple reports. I think one of them has been split into two recommendations, and so we'll try and keep things moving here.

So on the IT security front, we thank again the Provincial Auditor and her staff. The annual IT security audit is an

opportunity to allow our IT division and formerly IT office to do things better on the IT security front. I will note that since consolidation, we have never lost one piece of government data through any sort of security breach. So our defences hold, and it's partly to the credit of the auditor's office that we continue to improve our security stance against many, many, many threats from out in the world.

The first would be, the first one I'll address — I hope it's the first one that others are expecting me to address here — is to effectively follow threat and risk assessment processes. And so we agree with the auditor's recommendation and understand that risk register was not fully updated and that a risk officer was not clearly identified. The IT division now has . . . Am I not addressing the correct recommendation?

The Chair: — Sorry. How about page 223 of chapter 29? Sorry. They're also mentioned in 2014 report, chapter 7.

Mr. Murray: — Chapter 7.

The Chair: — Yes, so the original ones were in chapter 29, 223 and 224, page.

Mr. Murray: — Restricting user accesses? All right. All right. Would that be then, the ministry adequately restrict access to systems and data? I see the Provincial Auditor nodding. So we're on the right tack here.

All right. The auditor has noted that most systems and data require user identification and passwords to gain access. That is a good thing. The need was noted to address older remote access methods that require better security, and Central Services has begun a project to reduce the number of accounts with non-expiring passwords and passwords that deviate from the security standards.

Security reports for stale accounts, password deviations, and access controls are provided to our customers as well so that they can identify issues to be resolved. And related to these older remote access systems, one legacy remote access system, we've entirely retired it. So it's gone. The security of that system was not in keeping with the methods of security in use today, so it is gone. And we have future plans to include retiring some of the other legacy systems and streamlining on to a more modern platform.

I would suggest that we have made progress here but are not yet where we need to be in terms of the restricted access.

The Chair: — Thank you. And recommendation no. 2 on page 224?

Mr. Murray: — Would this be adequately configuring an updating service on network equipment?

The Chair: — You bet.

Mr. Murray: — Excellent. Our security practices include ensuring firewalls are regularly patched. We have had some challenges related to ongoing patching. Patching when there are hundreds of servers in place can be a challenge, so I have established new reporting under development that is going to

confirm that all patches are implemented, and we're refining our service expectations with our service provider to ensure patching takes place as needed.

This one, fairly straightforward — just new processes, streamlined processes, and I think an additional number of employees in place to address this patching work. So I'm going to suggest here as well that progress has been made. I expect though it will take us the remainder of this fiscal year to get to where we need to be on this one.

The Chair: — I've got you all over the place here. Maybe you'd like to make some comments on the . . . We do have one more in the 2014 report, a new one. But obviously the 2014 report volume 1, chapter 7 contains some of the outstanding recommendations as well. So why don't we talk about the 2014 report and the outstanding recommendations, which is what I should have done at the beginning.

Mr. Murray: — The effectively follow threat and risk assessment processes?

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. Murray: — Excellent. That is a new recommendation. We agree with the auditor's recommendation. And we understand that, with changes to the organization of senior executive team, the risk register was not fully updated and that the risk officer was not clearly identified. We have now assigned a risk officer. That individual is in place and is in the process of updating our risk register. We have identified 43 items on our risk register, and that risk register will be reviewed quarterly with our executive committee beginning, I believe, January 2015. Although I did say, how come not until January; why not October, say?

And so shortly we will review that risk register with the executive committee sometime in the next couple of months. We hope that, by assigning a risk officer and by regularly reviewing and updating the register, we will meet with the auditor's satisfaction here in future audits.

The Chair: — Thank you for that. And there are a number of outstanding recommendations in that chapter. Anything that we haven't covered that you'd like to speak about?

Mr. Murray: — No, I think this is an IT security difficult area. We've chipped away at it and we've, in the last six months let's say, really raised the profile of this within the organization. Crystal's done a great job here, in terms of my instructions to her, to clear these recommendations from the books for once and for all within the next six months to a year. And so I trust next year at this committee, we will be talking about new topics.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you very much for your patience with me on that here. I'd like to open up the floor for questions. Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well certainly thanks to speaking to the progress and the focus that the ministry has taken and those involved in addressing some of these concerns. Some of this gets really technical and beyond my capacity to understand.

And I suspect many that are sort of tuning in, some would have the technical capacity to understand all of this; others just simply want to know that their information is safe and secure. And they would probably also have questions about what sort of risks exist and if there's been . . . You mentioned that there hasn't been breaches, I believe, of information since everything's been consolidated, but could you speak a little bit to attempted breaches or what those specific risks are? Who potentially would want to breach or access that information and why?

Mr. Murray: — Well I've been in IT arena 30-plus years, and since the days of interconnecting systems to the outside world and to the Internet, we've kind of seen it all. Since this meeting started, we've probably seen 10,000 attempts at our firewalls.

In this day and age, a lot of the attempted breaches are automated. So many, many thousands of computers are connected together by folks with malicious intent out in the world, and those systems just go out and look for addresses, look for entities and then start hammering on the firewalls. Our firewalls have held up so far. It's an ongoing challenge.

But they come from everywhere. They come from everyone. You know, perhaps this week there are increased threats that we didn't see last week or threats from areas or places in the world that we didn't see last week. But I don't think it would be fair to characterize it as from any given place or type. A lot of it is automated and who knows where they come from. But our security has held up so far. And we find it's a challenge, so we constantly need to be diligent and constantly need to work on upgrading our security as we interface with the outside world.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So you're building systems to protect yourself from all types of potential breaches. Have you been able to ascertain where some of these are coming from? Are you aware if there's any specific other countries that seem to be ever-engaged in a coordinated attempt to breach information?

Mr. Murray: — I would suggest nothing specific. They come from everywhere and anywhere. And one of the challenges is even if breaches were to come from Idaho, they look like they're coming from somewhere else because they link up to computers and chain these computers together. So that even if they were coming from a particular area of the world, a particular country, they may not actually be coming from that country or that place.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Just to clarify, has Idaho been a specific security threat?

Mr. Murray: — I used Idaho specifically because it has not been a particular security threat.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Right. Okay. Yes. I mean it's an interesting world. And of course there's incredibly sensitive data, both from a personal nature, also from the public's interest around our resources, and commercial information. Like I'm not . . . From this I'm not necessarily getting a full sense of where, why people might be focusing in on our . . . I can understand that there'd be many reasons. Are you able to interpret, or is it too difficult, the number of attempts and breaches? And you speak to some of those challenges. Or is there an ability to understand, you know, if there's a purpose and coordination of which might be more sophisticated or more challenging or where it's coming from?

[14:00]

Mr. Murray: — We work with partners across the country, so we're part of a Canadian network that links together all of the provinces as well as the federal government to share information and prevent attacks. And no, I wouldn't characterize any particular . . . Some are more elaborate. Some are more sophisticated, some less so. But you know, I think the important thing is that we've held up and secured our sensitive data and our non-sensitive data from attacks wherever they may be, wherever they may be from.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks for the important work. Certainly it is critically important, and it's work that I don't totally understand, but there's some important objectives to be maintained. So as far as my technology interests, I'll continue to try to better learn my Facebook and Twitter management, and I'll leave the big data stuff to you.

Mr. Murray: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Mr. Norris.

Mr. Norris: — Great. Thanks very much for this work. I just want to . . . Without getting into too many details, would your work on security and the privacy provisions for citizens of Saskatchewan, would that include working with other governments, most especially provinces, our federal government, to name just two examples?

Mr. Murray: — Absolutely. So we do work very closely with . . . Is it CSIRT [computer security incident response team]? CSIRT is a federal group, and/or SIRT [serious incident reporting and tracking], and then the other provinces as well. And one of the benefits there is that if there is a particular type of attack that maybe rolls based on time zones and it gets spotted early in the morning in New Brunswick, they can notify the Canadian authorities, and then we can receive notifications at very, very early in the morning, at 3 in the morning, and be able to implement special measures if such measures are needed.

They also provide sort of hot attacks of the day kind of thing or unique attacks or unique attack parameters and then can share information with all of the provinces. So that collaboration with the federal government and the other provinces has been particularly helpful to us. We've been particularly helpful to them as well, and it helps us all ensure better security stance.

Mr. Norris: — Great. Thanks very much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you. Are there any further questions on any of these chapters? No. Seeing none, I think we'll deal with them chapter by chapter. For the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 37, if there are no further questions, can we conclude? Could I have a motion to conclude our considerations?

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I put a motion

forward that we conclude considerations for 2013 report volume 2, chapter 37.

The Chair: — Mr. Merriman has moved that we conclude consideration of the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 37. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. The 2013 report volume 2, chapter 38, there are no new recommendations there either. Could I have a motion to conclude consideration if there are no further questions? Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I put a motion forward that we conclude the considerations for that chapter.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Merriman. For the 2013 report volume 2, chapter 38, Mr. Merriman has moved that we conclude consideration of that chapter. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. The 2012 report volume 2, chapter 29, we have two new recommendations. What is the will of the committee with respect to those two recommendations? Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I would concur with the recommendation and note progress towards compliance.

The Chair: — For both recommendations?

Mr. Merriman: — For both recommendations. The first and the second recommendations, Madam Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you. For the 2012 report volume 2, chapter 29, for recommendation 1 and 2, Mr. Merriman has moved that we concur with the recommendations and note progress. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. For the 2013 report volume 1, chapter 11, there are no new recommendations. Could I have a motion, if there are no further questions, to conclude consideration on that chapter? Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Merriman: — I so move that we conclude consideration on that chapter.

The Chair: — Mr. Merriman has moved for the 2013 report volume 1, chapter 11 that we conclude consideration of that chapter. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. 2014 report volume 1, we have one new recommendation. Sorry, chapter 7, one new recommendation. What is the will of the committee with respect to that recommendation? Mr. Merriman.

Mr. Merriman: — Madam Chair, I concur with the recommendation and note compliance.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Merriman. Just a clarification here. Mr. Murray, you might be able to . . . We have a motion before us, but if you could just clarify, Mr. Murray, I had understood that there was progress and not complete compliance.

Mr. Murray: — Is this on effectively follow risk threat and risk assessment processes?

Mr. Merriman: — Yes.

Mr. Murray: — I feel that we are in compliance. We have addressed the recommendation. We have assigned a risk officer, and quarterly reviews will begin shortly. I leave that to the committee.

The Chair: — Okay. Okay. No. Fair enough.

Mr. Merriman: — Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. That's kind of what I heard, that there has been a risk officer appointed to this. I would say it's in compliance, and if it's not, I would suggest that the auditor maybe follow up next year in the report just to make sure that this is in compliance because it seems like we're 99 per cent of the way there.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you. So for the 2014 report volume 1, chapter 7, Mr. Merriman has moved that we concur with the recommendation and note compliance. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. So that concludes our work with Central Services here today. Thank you so much to the officials for your time. Do you have any closing remarks that you'd like to make?

Mr. Murray: — I thank you, Madam Chair, the committee for their good work, and the Provincial Auditor for their continued diligence on our operations. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you again, and thank you to you and your officials. Any other comments? No? Mr. Michelson.

Mr. Michelson: — Well I would just say that it gets very frustrating when you go through some of these, that these things are carried on and on and on. So I want to comment on your catching up and acting on a lot of these that have been outdated and not handled well. So you've done a lot of work in that respect to catch up and to implement the recommendations, so appreciate that and commend you on the work you've done.

Mr. Murray: — Thank you very much. I appreciate those comments.

The Chair: — Any further comments? Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Yes, just a thank you for the work on an ongoing basis, and thank you to you and your officials for joining us here today.

The Chair: — So again thank you to the ministry officials and to the auditor's office as always and to the comptroller's office for being here today. So thank you. And with that could I have a motion to adjourn? Several hands. Mr. Norris. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Okay. Adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 14:08.]