



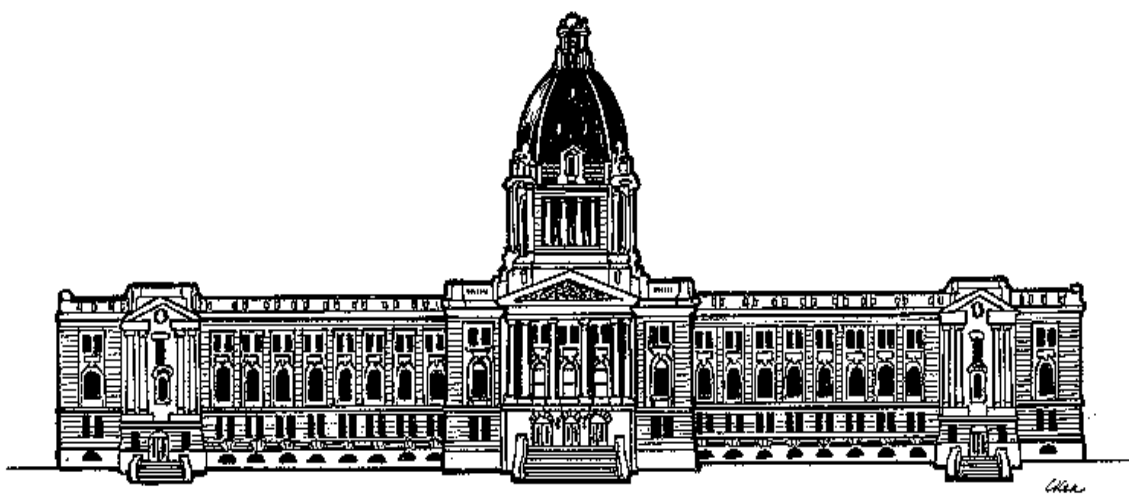
# **Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

## **BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

### **HANSARD VERBATIM REPORT**

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Published under the authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



No. 1 — February 22 & 23, 2011

## **BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

Hon. Don Toth, Chair  
Moosomin

Mr. Dan D'Autremont  
Cannington

Ms. Doreen Eagles  
Estevan

Hon. Jeremy Harrison  
Meadow Lake

Hon. Don Morgan  
Saskatoon Southeast

Mr. Len Taylor  
The Battlefords

Mr. Kevin Yates  
Regina Dewdney

[The board met at 13:00.]

**The Chair:** — Well good afternoon, everyone, and welcome. We're to that time of the year again when we sit down and see what kind of work our independent officers have been doing, more so in line with how they're proposing budgets to be presented to the province. And first of all, let me say thank you to each and every one of you. We want to thank you for the time and work you put into serving the people of the province in your individual roles and individual offices. And to the members, thank you for making yourself available for this opportunity to do our due diligence and duties as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly].

We're going to begin today by first of all a couple of motions: number one, to adopt the agenda. And I might add in regards to the agenda, earlier on I had indicated to Mr. Pringle, our new child advocate, that we would have his report last today. So I'm asking that we move item 3 to become item 6, and we'll just move everything forward if the committee's in agreement in having Mr. Pringle's last.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Can I have a motion then that the proposed agenda as amended be adopted? Moved by Mr. D'Autremont; seconder, Mr. Yates. We're all in agreement with it?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. The second item on the agenda today is the minutes from our last meeting of December the 9th, 2010.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I'll move approval.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Morgan moves approval of the minutes. Mr. Yates seconds. Any questions? Seeing none, are we in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Inaudible] . . . item on the agenda today is the tabled item, the Legislative Assembly second and third quarter expenditure reports. Do I have a motion to approve? Moved by Minister Morgan. A seconder? Mr. Yates. Do I have any questions? Seeing none, are we all in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Agreed. Carried. Thank you.

#### Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

**The Chair:** — Moving on then to item no. 2, the report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. And I believe Marilyn Borowski will be making that presentation for us, so I'd welcome Marilyn to come forward to . . . please.

**Ms. Borowski:** — [Inaudible] . . . answer any questions about

the budget.

**The Chair:** — So did I understand correctly, Marilyn, you're prepared to answer some questions?

**Ms. Borowski:** — Yes.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Thank you very much. Mr. Morgan.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — There was motions passed earlier to allow additional funding for the review regarding MLA LeClerc. I want to just know whether all of those expenses have been completed and whether that matter is resolved from an expense point of view.

**Ms. Borowski:** — Yes, they have been completed and certainly won't be carrying into the 2011-12 budget.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Okay. That's all that I had on that.

**The Chair:** — Any further questions regarding the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner? Yes, Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Do you know if there's going to be much changes to rents for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner? In the past the Conflict of Interest Commissioner operated out of a legal office, but that's not the case any more, so there'll be some changes happening there, will there?

**Ms. Borowski:** — I'll maybe have Mr. Fenwick answer that one.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — If I understand the question correctly, you're wondering whether there would be an adjustment in rent for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. The current situation, as the member is probably aware, is that the Conflict of Interest Commissioner is utilizing space in the Office of the Ombudsman in Regina, and we have created an office for him within our office, and it's a partnership that's working very well.

As you will hear from me in a few moments, there has been a fairly significant adjustment in our rent, what we're being charged by Government Services, that's been passed through from the landlord. And so there's a small portion of that which will be reflected as an increase in the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's rent. We're essentially dividing that rent based on the square footage of the space that's utilized by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. My guess would be it's not a large number given that he has a fairly small proportion of the space, but there would be an impact, yes.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well in his presentation there, the estimate for last year was 35,000 for rent of ground, building, and other spaces. This year the request is for 11,200. He's now operating in the Ombudsman's office. So I'm wondering what this is paying for and what the Ombudsman's office is paying for.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — I believe the 11,200 would be the estimate of the proportional, based on square footage rent that the Conflict

of Interest Commissioner will be paying for the rent that our office pays in Regina. Now I'll look to Lynne Fraser behind me who is our manager of administration and see if Lynne happens to know whether the 11,200 includes the adjustment or not. I suspect not because the Conflict of Interest Commissioner may not have been aware of those numbers.

**Ms. Borowski:** — This number is based on about 560 or 570 a month and that would have been the original agreement . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, the cost per month.

We weren't aware of the increase at that time that Mr. Barclay and I did up the budget. However there is, within some of these line items, there is a provision for other things that he's probably not going to need. And our thought would be the increase, and again Mr. Fenwick is saying, the increase for Mr. Barclay himself isn't going to be significant. And I suspect within the budget that we have here we would be able to absorb an additional increase.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I guess we'll just have to watch and see how much Mr. Fenwick is asking for an increase based on the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — I promise we won't try to slide through anything more than the proportional share. I can tell you that the rent for Ombudsman Saskatchewan has increased by 26.7 per cent. So the total of our Saskatoon and Regina office rent has increased by 26.7. That's what we're having to pay. Now that includes leases on both spaces — Regina or Saskatoon. And I'm sorry. We could certainly get this information for you. I can't tell you whether it's exactly 26.7 in both locations, but that might be a rough guideline for you in terms of what impact it would have on the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well I'm interested to see whether your budget is going up by the 25,000, 24,000 roughly difference that's being reduced here, or if it's going up some other amount and this is still on top of that.

**Ms. Borowski:** — This one too is, the comparison from last year would be Mr. Gerrand's office, where he offered a different sort of arrangement. Yes. So the code for rental here is only rent, and it is based on what the original cost was. But I do feel we have, within the budget, enough to . . . I mean if this even goes up 25 per cent, it would be . . .

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I guess we need to know where you're going to find this \$2,500. Maybe we need to cut it as well.

**Ms. Borowski:** — Okay. I would find it . . . The legal services provision, it's a provision that's always been there in the event, you know, there is something like an inquiry or something that he needs to do. It's probably a small amount. I mean if you did have a major inquiry, he'd be coming back to the board anyway. So there's that.

We do also have a provision for office furniture and equipment. Mr. Barclay did, for the most part, furnish his office when he started last year. The provision is there in case there's something he needs. But that's probably, you know, there's probably some extra funds there.

The administrative assistant's under code 52900. Right now the Ombudsman's office is not charging for the support, administrative support, that they're giving to Mr. Barclay. But in the event they should have to hire someone else, that provision is there because at that point then there probably would be a charge. But I'm understanding, Mr. Fenwick, if I'm right, that the administrative assistant, at this point you wouldn't be expecting that you would be looking to hire any more staff or that Mr. Barclay would need to hire any.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — The comment when . . . Again I'll speak to that when we're making our presentation. We would not be looking to replace that time solely for that reason.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, thank you.

**The Chair:** — Do we have any further questions from others members on the committee? Seeing none, thank you so much, Marilyn. And thank you, Mr. Fenwick, for your help in answering some of the questions.

[13:15]

### Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

**The Chair:** — We'll now move forward and we'll move Mr. Wilkie's presentation, the Chief Electoral Office, up into item no. 3 and I'll invite . . . Mr. Wilkie could come forward with his staff. And before I ask Mr. Wilkie to introduce the staff who have joined him, just for everyone to be aware, there is coffee, water, juice on the side. Please feel free to help yourself at any time.

Well thank you very much, Mr. Wilkie, for coming and bringing staff with you to discuss your office, how it's functioning, your budget proposals. I take it you're going to have a very relaxing year. Anyway welcome, and if you wouldn't mind introducing your officials and then just please feel free to go ahead with your presentation.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Okay. Mr. Chair, and members of the Board of Internal Economy, I'm very pleased to be here once again with you this afternoon. And with me is Brent Nadon, the manager of election finances, and Jeff Livingstone, the manager of information technology. And then we've got Daniel Bogdon, the communications consultant, and Teale Orban, the operations consultant.

And firstly I'll just remind everyone what our office does, and then talk a bit about the challenges and accomplishments of this past year, and then talking about the priorities of the upcoming year as we move towards the fixed-date election. And then I'll briefly touch on human resources, and then go on to the 2011-2012 financial estimates which are a little bit different this time because we do have a set date.

And then I'll talk a bit about the implementation of the register of electors and how a pre-writ enumeration would move us towards that, and then finishing off with the non-base-year estimates. And then we'd be prepared to answer any questions that anyone may have.

So firstly, the mission of the Office of the Chief Electoral

Officer or Elections Saskatchewan is to ensure the right of the people of Saskatchewan to participate freely in honest, open, and fair electoral events and to encourage the involvement of political parties, candidates, and electors by raising their awareness and understanding of electoral processes that are transparent, efficient, and accessible.

And the mandate of our office is we are a non-partisan body whose primary mandate is to direct and supervise the administrative and financial conduct of provincial electoral events. And so with that, we are responsible for the administration of provincial elections, by-elections, enumerations other than during a writ of election, and provincial election finances and also referendums if there should be one or should be any.

Then if we go on to what has happened in the past year since the last time we met, there have been a number of challenges in the absence of the hiring of a permanent Chief Electoral Officer. We initially were not provided with a copy of the *Report of the Review of the Operational Environment and Accountabilities of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer* or the Hamilton report which included recommendations on staffing levels. But we are happy and thank the Minister of Justice and the rest of the Board of Internal Economy for providing it to us before it was put up on the Legislative Assembly website. And as a result of the lack of a permanent CEO, there has been a moratorium on the hiring of permanent staff that results in our office relying on a number of six-month and one-year term positions for staffing.

And also there were a number of recommendations that were made that have been . . . which were to be considered by an all-party committee that were put on hold, and the most important of those being the enumeration outside of the writ as part of moving towards a permanent register of electors; and also the use of voters' lists being restricted to electoral purposes; also changes to ensure that the need for privacy as per *The Health Information Protection Act* does not result in any eligible elector losing his or her Charter right to vote, which has been an issue in the Douglas Park by-election and the 2007 general election; also legislative changes to assist voters with a disability, making it easier for voters who are disabled to be able to vote; and reducing the age of some election officials, such as poll clerks and constables, which would allow younger people to take some of the jobs that are needing.

Also it would allow, the changed legislation would allow the use of election officials from other nearby constituencies. And an example of that was in the recent Saskatoon Northwest by-election in which they were short four deputy returning officers, and we were able to get four deputy returning officers from the nearby Saskatoon Meewasin. So I did have to use my emergency powers, as I did with the previous two by-elections, to write a letter to each candidate and political party, and then subsequently write a report to the Speaker to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. And I'm willing to keep doing that, but it is not necessarily an efficient way of having to find enough qualified poll officials.

Other challenges: general election preparations were delayed by the unexpected by-election. I'm sure all of you perhaps were like us. We weren't expecting the Saskatoon Northwest

by-election. It came at the same time as we were hiring for 24 vacant returning officer positions, as well as we were beginning the review of all the polling division boundaries and an accessibility audit of polling places and the updating and enhancing of maps.

And finally the challenge of the past year has been the uncertainty on whether or not there will be a referendum with respect to daylight savings time, which has made election planning challenging.

But in the past year, despite these challenges, we have been moving full steam ahead toward the 27th general election with the following preparations. Once we did receive a copy of the Hamilton report, then we, along with meeting with the Speaker and the rest of the Board of Internal Economy, we have filled in the staffing gaps. And so an operations consultant, Teale Orban, was hired in June 2010, and a senior technical analyst was hired I guess a little over a week ago on February 14th. And we've also progressed a long ways on the review of polling division boundaries and the accessibility audit of polling places. And they are in progress for 57 of 58 constituencies.

We have hired 23 returning officers, and at the moment we're just finishing up the Last Mountain-Touchwood competition. And for whatever reason — must be all the money in Estevan — but it's really hard to find a returning officer. We have advertised twice and we've been hitting the bushes looking for people, but we still haven't been able to find anyone in Estevan. So we'll continue to keep looking. And, as I mentioned, 57 of 58 returning officers have been working on their maps. Only 15 are still out, the other 42 have done the initial first part of the work, and it's now in our office for the in-depth checking.

We have added an election counter module to our ESPREE [Elections Saskatchewan permanent register of eligible electors] election management software and that will assist returning officers, especially new returning officers, with keeping on track. And in the recent Saskatoon Northwest by-election, an experienced RO [returning officer] tested it out and thought it was very good. So we think that new ROs will be particularly happy with this new addition to our software.

Also in co-operation with technology services area of the Legislative Assembly Service, with Darcy and his office, we're nearing completion of the server migration to the Legislative Building as was requested by the Board of Internal Economy at a previous BOIE budget meeting. And we've progressed well along with changes to forms, policies, procedures, and software that was based on our comprehensive post-election review that took place following the 2007 general election and the past four by-elections.

And along with that, we've done work on our manuals and training. And we're just waiting for the deadline coming up for the request for proposal, the RFP, for a payroll solution to accommodate existing federal legislation which we have talked about in previous meetings. And we did that after it became apparent that the licensing fees and other costs for the Ministry of Finance to provide a MIDAS [multi-informational database application system] solution were not affordable, and we'll talk a bit more about that in a few minutes. But February 24th is the date that the RFPs are due.

And we've also chosen the agency of record to provide communication, planning, and placement for election advertising which also includes the revamping of our website to make it more accessible, effective, and user-friendly. So Daniel and I just recently met with our new advertising agency and they are very excited to get going.

And we're also in the process of writing an RFP for the call centre for basic election information which was done in the past election as well. And as well at this time, we're working on initial plans to implement a strategy for an election finance reporting system similar to a Cantax form.

The only major challenge that really remains is the uncertainty of whether or not there will be a province-wide time vote or referendum. And at a certain point in time we will have to proceed with regulations, forms, policies, procedures, training materials, and computer-based software changes, including things like ballot paper which has a long lead time of at least two months. So we wait. If any of you have any information on that, we certainly would like to know sooner rather than later.

And particularly talking about the DST [daylight saving time], possible DST referendum, in our look at *The Time Act* and the referendum Act, *The Time Act* is designed for a time vote to be held in one or two school divisions or time options, whereas not for the whole province, and the referendum Act has regulations that were put in place in 1991 that do not correspond with *The Election Act, 1996*. So there's things that don't jive between the two. So that's something that, if there is to be a referendum, that would have to be looked at because parts of *The Election Act* that are referred to in the regulations no longer exist. But we listen to the media, as I'm sure all of you do all the time, and all references in the media have been to a possible referendum on the DST, so that is a remaining challenge.

And I should mention that our office is assuming that a senate nominating election will not occur at the same time as the November 7th, 2011 general election because *The Senate Nominee Election Act* has not been proclaimed. If that should change, we would immediately proceed with that, but the gist that I get is that's not going to happen.

So as we look ahead to the upcoming year leading to the call of the November 7th, 2011 general election, we will complete the rest of the polling division boundaries review, the accessibility audit which relates to the complaints to the Human Rights Commission after the last general election. We will fill in the last, recruitment and hiring of the last few returning officer vacancies and any subsequent vacancies that may occur and complete the changes to the forms, policies, procedures manuals, etc., and the training of all 58 returning officers, election clerks, administrative assistants, and automation coordinators; provide the payroll solution which we've spoken of; and complete the communications plan and the revamping of the website.

Also we will be expanding the business manager and candidate training program that has been used in the last three by-elections, which has got very good, positive reviews from candidates and political parties. So that'll be moved to have it all across the province for all, make it available to all candidates and their business managers and will continue to build on

outreach strategies and move on the call centre and training the call centre staff and the election finance reporting system.

[13:30]

And also we have done some work and continue to do work on modernizing the returning office with the use of more electronic forms and record keeping.

And in addition there will be some initial start-up work for the 2012 Boundaries Commission which will take place after the general election in early 2012. But the majority of the cost for the 2012 Boundaries Commission will be in next fiscal year, so we won't be talking about them in this fiscal year.

I have no doubt that the Elections Saskatchewan team that is now in place remains committed to achieve and maintain a state of readiness to deliver electoral events such as by-elections or referendum votes whenever they may be called, plus the November 7th, 2011 general election. And this goal is achievable with the budget outlined in this report.

Our aim continues to be to institute a culture of change and modernization in the conduct of electoral events in Saskatchewan through a made-in-Saskatchewan electoral process that responds to the needs of all our stakeholders. And in the document, the mission and organization and accountability is already touched on. We won't go into detail on that.

We'll comment on human resources just as an update from the last time we met. In 2009 as we mentioned, there was a review of our staffing amongst other things in the operational environment and accountabilities. And so we'll skip over from 2009 and picking up last February. In last February's meeting, the Board of Internal Economy agreed that three positions previously listed should be extended for additional one-year terms and that both a GIS [geographical information system] mapping technician and a mapping consultant be hired on one-year term positions for the polling division review and mapping project.

And in June 2010, an operations consultant was hired to fill a vacancy that had been temporarily filled on short-term contracts over a number of years. And the operations consultant was initially hired on a six-month contract and subsequently extended to March 31, 2011.

In late November 2010, I met with the Speaker and we concurred that the hiring of a senior technical analyst in February 2011 was advisable. This term for that position is to March 31st, 2012, in order to adequately prepare for and implement the information technology requirements for the general election.

And in December 2010, the Speaker agreed with my intention to add the following seven positions into the OCEO [Office of the Chief Electoral Officer] budget on a long-term basis in order not to place the conduct of the 26th . . . the 27th, sorry, general election at risk, in order . . . and also in the spirit of the Hamilton report. So that is the administrative consultant, the communications consultant, the financial compliance consultant, the mapping consultant, GIS mapping technician,

operations consultant, and senior technical analyst. That brings the current staffing of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to 11 — four permanent and seven one-year term staff — and one vacant for a total of 12.

And since this has been written, as the Speaker knows, I have been in negotiations to . . . After 28 months of being the Acting Chief Electoral Officer and having had no deputy or no assistant for 28 months, I now have finalized negotiations to hire a chief operating officer on a two-year term basis, effective April 11th. So she will be starting April 11th. And it is essential to retain employees in the above positions, especially with the Acting Chief Electoral Officer — myself — and the manager of election finances being the only persons on staff with the experience of being through a full general election.

One-year terms contracts do increase the danger of staff turnover and loss of institutional memory. The cost of recruitment and training to replace staff are high and so therefore a major risk to the successful administrative conduct of the next general election, should any of our term staff leave.

However, I do happily congratulate the Speaker and other members of the Board of Internal Economy for the co-operation that they have given in the past year. And that co-operation, along with prayer and crossed fingers, have gotten the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer through the past year. And it is worth noting that in the past year a team atmosphere has gelled with the current staff into a true team. And the team, the five of us, as well as the people back at the office, are ready to continue taking on challenges for administering the November 7th, 2011 general election.

On page 7 is our current organizational chart which will change as of April 11th.

And along with some other thank yous that I should give before we get into the 2011-2012 financial estimates, I do want to note that the Office of the CEO is very appreciative of HR, human resources and payroll services that the HR office of the Legislative Assembly has provided in the past year. This included HR services for the hiring of several positions and the recruitment and hiring of 25 returning officer positions. One person from HR was on all of those interviews. And also the payroll services for all employees are now handled by HR and payroll services for the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service]. And also to the payroll services staff for attending several meetings with our office in regards to the payroll services issue for paying our field staff. And I'd also like to thank the staff of the technology branch of the Legislative Assembly Service for their assistance throughout the past year as we move towards the server being moved. I guess it's this weekend, isn't it, that that happens?

And then for the 2011-12 financial estimates, I want to note that in the past we have included our base year, and then a general election has always been included in the non-base-year format because we would never be totally sure which year it would fall in. But now that we have a set date, it can be in fact put in this budget year. And so we have the annual operations, a fixed-date election, and several options that we'll outline shortly. And then we go on to the non-base year.

So for the base-year estimates, if we go to page 14, if you want to follow along in your document, it shows the base-year expenditure estimates for the preceding years and our request this year. And this is the final year of a four-year election cycle as we head to November 7th. And then also if we look on the pie chart there, it breaks down our base-year operational expenditure estimates into the various categories of expensed assets, supplies and services, travel and business, communications and advertising, contractual services, and personal services. And then we go on to talk about specifically the 27th general election.

And for the 27th general election, we have broken it into four parts. There is the general election; then there is a general election with an enumeration outside the writ in the preceding month, so that's immediately before the general election but outside the writ; then there's a general election with a referendum on the matter of daylight savings time; and finally there's a general election with both an enumeration outside the writ in the preceding month and a referendum on the matter of daylight savings time.

And then as far as the permanent register of electors, comment on that for a few minutes. The Board of Internal Economy, members from both the government and the official opposition, have consistently spoken in favour of a permanent register of electors. And as we know from the last by-elections and the general election, it's becoming increasingly difficult to recruit enumerators, and the public is increasingly reluctant to open their doors to be enumerated.

And so all other jurisdictions that have moved toward the permanent register of electors have begun the process with the best possible final full enumeration. And after a permanent register of electors goes in place, then only areas of high population turnover such as the inner city or university residences or a large number of apartment dwellers or personal care facilities, personal care homes, they would all receive, or new subdivisions would receive, a full targeted enumeration at the beginning of an election. In the future, basic address information and names of individuals who move and update their driver's licences and/or health cards and the names of the deceased persons could be forwarded on by the Saskatchewan Government Insurance, SGI, the Ministry of Health, and the ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] for vital statistics respectively.

But there are some additional costs that are involved with doing an excellent and professional final full enumeration. So if the Board of Internal Economy agrees that the next step towards a permanent register of electors should take place now rather than waiting for another four years, then it should approve the costs of an enumeration outside the writ in the months preceding the issuing of the writ. Then if the Board of Internal Economy does approve the costs, then it would be up to the Legislative Assembly or the government to implement measures regarding the legal framework to introduce legislative or regulatory changes to make enumeration outside the writ possible.

There is some background on this. I'll give a little bit; some of it I'll let you read on your own. But this goes back to November 2004 when an all-party committee unanimously recommended the creation of a permanent register of electors. And at that

time, when the changes were made to the legislation at second reading of Bill 119 in May 2005, the then minister of Justice announced that one of most significant recommendations of the committee was the development of a permanent electronic voters list. Under the Bill, regulations will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to establish a process to ensure that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate voters list, and no such regulations came into being since that time.

In most Canadian jurisdictions, including Alberta, BC [British Columbia], Canada, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec, you have a permanent register. Elections Manitoba does not have a permanent register but now they have an address database which they are going to be building outside of the writ period. Their enumeration starts in the summer of 2011 prior to their October 4th general election.

And we have done the first step, which is the establishment of an electronic voters list. But under the current legislation, a full enumeration would have to take place during the 28- to 34-day writ period. And when no regulations were forthcoming, then they were included in the report I put forward on recommendation for changes to *The Election Act* which was tabled April 30th, 2009.

And specifically, whether or not it's decided to go immediately towards a permanent register, having a fixed-date election does in any event give some advantages for an enumeration. Firstly, an enumeration starting soon after Labour Day in September for two to three weeks would result in a much longer enumeration, which would be a more accurate enumeration. It would mean more enumerated voters. There would be less delays and confusion for the voters at the poll. And for all of you, there would be a higher communications allowance for yourselves as members of the Legislative Assembly with more people on the list. And voters lists would be available to candidates and registered political parties. Instead of 13 to 19 days after the issue of the writ, they would be available upon the issue of the writ. So you'd get your voters list much earlier.

We would, if the recommendations are followed that I've made, the voters list . . . Use of the voters list would be restricted to electoral purposes in order to strengthen the privacy of the information on the voters list, which I'm sure many people would be pleased with, including the Privacy Commissioner. And revision of the voters list would take place over two weeks instead of one day. And that would mean that the revised voters list would be available approximately a week before election day in an electronic format instead of a day or two before election day in the current handwritten format, which is the current way that things are done. And as a bonus, this would be a further step toward the permanent register.

[13:45]

If there's no enumeration outside the writ period, it means that the enumeration would occur the first 10 days after the issue of the writ. Although we have a permanent set date, the writ still is a floating writ. So the writ can be issued as early as Tuesday, October 4th — the Tuesday before Thanksgiving — and as late as Thanksgiving Day, Monday, October 10.

And I would be remiss if I did not mention the possibility of what people in our office call the doomsday scenario, which I think you should all be aware of. If the writ was issued on Friday, October 7th, assuming then that there's no enumeration outside of the writ, then with a long weekend affecting both the availability of enumerators and persons being at home, effectively Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday are lost, which means instead of a 10-day enumeration you now have a 6-day enumeration which would be accompanied, I'm sure, by the loss of quantity and quality of names that a shortened enumeration would bring.

So if you thought that last election's enumeration was poor, then if it's called on the Friday before Thanksgiving, I would predict that this election's enumeration would be much poorer, given the difficulties we find getting enumerators, etc. So that's why I did mention this to the recent meeting of the political party advisory meeting, and that had a few jaws drop amongst those people. So I'm sure that it's interesting for you to know that as well.

But we also note for your benefit that if there is a permanent register of electors, and instead of just getting the voters list perhaps two weeks after the issue of a writ, you would in fact, as in other jurisdictions that have a permanent register, you'd be able to get that on an annual basis. So one date, a specific date on non-election years, we would give the voters list with all of the updates from SGI, Ministry of Health, and vital statistics in order to update the list.

Currently there are no processes in place to . . . no processes, procedures or guidelines or technological tools in order to accept data from other sources. So once there is something done on the regulatory or legislative side, then negotiations with SGI, the Ministry of Health, and ISC would have to take place, but such details would not have to be done before the general election. They could be done in the months after the November 7th, 2011 general election in the next fiscal year so that we wouldn't actually be asking for money for that in this fiscal year.

At this point in time, it's not known exactly how long it would take to develop the database and the cost of the tools to reach the point where we would be able to declare a register of electors, but some things need to be done before we can get those estimates. But the finish of it is also directly linked to the automation of the electoral geography products, and so the key to a successful permanent register of electors is to know where the eligible electors live, i.e., physical address, so that they can be directed to vote in the proper constituency and the correct polling division within that constituency. Another way of putting it is, since people move and addresses do not, it is critical to have an automated geography system with all the addresses pinpointed within the electoral boundaries, and this is more complex in rural settings because the physical addresses are more difficult to determine and to automate.

The first step of this has occurred with the introduction of GIS technology to improve our maps. And I'm sure you'll all be interested that the maps will be distributed to candidates, political parties, and enumerators for the upcoming election. At the end of March, the first 16 maps will be ready. A second shipment will be ready at the end of April, and the final

shipment is expected the end of May. And then further enhancements can be done in conjunction with the work done for the Electoral Boundaries Commission when it begins its work in January 2012.

And as mentioned, other Canadian electoral jurisdictions have, as they've been moving from a final full enumeration, they have done that just prior to an electoral event. So if we look to Elections Canada, they had their final full enumeration in April 1997, just prior to the June 1997, federal general election. So that's a bit of information on the enumeration outside of the writ and movement towards a permanent register.

So then if we go into the non-base year, again we talk about the by-election. We'll talk about by-elections. We'll talk about enumeration, non-writ and not held immediately before a general election, and a referendum or plebiscite not held in conjunction with a general election. And I'll let you look at the planning overview and the election business cycle on your own in the document.

So if we look on page 13, we touch on the actual expenditures of the 2009-2010 summary table and the summary budget approval figures just below.

Then we go on, on page 14 on the estimates summary for 2011-12 financial estimates and the base-year estimates for capital asset acquisitions, and the pie chart on page 15. Then if we move to page 16, and I'll go in more detail on these. If we go to page 16, personal services is 71 per cent of our base budget. And here we are asking for a \$56,955 or 5 per cent increase over last year. And the explanation there is that staffing costs remain the same as last year except for the 2 per cent economic adjustment for all budgeted positions which would be 19,728, a 3 per cent merit increase for the applicable positions at 13,725.

Because we are not hiring people on a permanent basis, instead we have to pay, instead of holidays, we give a 6.36 per cent increase on every . . . We give 6.3 per cent on every cheque for holiday pay. So that is an increased amount that we have to pay out that we were not aware that we were going to have to be doing for 22,155.

With more positions, there's an increase in flexible benefit costs of 2,420. And then we do have one position, a one-year term position for senior technical analyst at 87,129. But we have reduced our returning officer costs for this year because the majority of the accessibility audit and updating of polling division maps have been completed. So we subtract 89,900 in order to get to the total increase of 56,955.

If we go on to page 17, the contractual services is 19 per cent of our budget. And here there's an increase of 13,708 or 4.5 per cent over last year. Because for some maps it has taken longer with new returning officers, there are . . . First I should say, the accessibility audit has been completed for a lot of the constituencies. So that's minus 16,419. There is an increase in the SaskTel monthly circuit costs due to moving the service to the Legislative Assembly, so that is an additional 15,000. There is an increase in accommodation costs from accommodation services, \$863, and also there are now added annual fees for the FlySask data mapping access which is now needed as we do our

mapping process. We were able to absorb it in the past, but now we have that listed at \$5,000. And if you need a reminder about FlySask, then Jeff can give you more information.

Also we need the annual maintenance and support fees for ArcView and ArcInfo, the mapping software, in order to complete our maps, and that is \$7,000. And the inflationary adjustment of 1.4 per cent is an additional 2,264 to give the increase of 13,708.

Then if we go on to the advertising budget on page 17 also, this is 2 per cent of the budget and there is a decrease of 20,446 or minus 33.7 per cent from last year. The cost of a Chief Electoral Officer search as 21,000 has been removed, and we have added back an inflationary adjustment of 554 for the total amount there.

Then if we go to travel and business, page 18, it's 6 per cent of the budget. This is a decrease of \$9,971 from last year's budget or minus 9 per cent. We've removed the CEO search cost for travel of minus 6,300. We've also reduced returning officer election clerk travel, minus 4,118, and added back an inflationary adjustment of 447.

Then if we go to E, supplies and services, page 18, it is 1 per cent of the budget and it's strictly a 1.4 per cent inflationary adjustment of \$275. Then if we go to F, equipment and expensed assets on page 19, this is 1 per cent of the budget. This is a decrease of 8,700 or minus 28.6 per cent from last year. We removed one-time funding for an Internet circuit upgrade of \$9,000, added back an inflationary adjustment of 300.

Then capital acquisitions, also page 19, for \$25,000 for information technology. We've in the past spoken about our software that was initially developed by Elections Alberta in order to create our ESPREE software, and so this new enhancement would be the ESPREE payroll data entry. And this module would allow our office to aggregate timesheets for elections officials during election events that we are now required by law to make payroll deductions from people who work more than 34 hours. And this would allow centralized data entry at our office and permit us to identify which workers require payroll deductions. It would also provide our office with summary tracking and reporting capability to improve the overall management of electoral events.

So that's it for the 2011 and '12 estimates for the normal budget year.

Then if we go on to the 27th general election estimates, you can see there our total estimate of the next general election at being 12,573,019, and you can see the various broken into personal services, contractual services, advertising, travel and business, supplies and services, and debt, loans, and fund-specific codes. I won't go into detail about all of those. You can see the pie chart broken down for those various categories.

And then we go into the options for a general election with enumeration outside the writ or, in other words, immediately preceding, the month immediately preceding the general election. The costs then would be 14,018,649. And if we were to have a referendum vote along with a general election, the

estimated costs there would be 16,344,925. And then if we have a general election with an enumeration outside the writ in the month preceding the general election and a referendum vote, the estimated cost being 17,790,555.

And then finally we go into the details of non-base-year estimates, the by-election being estimated at 274,444 and enumeration being non-writ but not held immediately for a general election. That would be estimated at 3,189,850. Or if a referendum or plebiscite was not held in conjunction with a general election, the estimate would be 7,257,500.

Before I finish my comments, I would also like to add thanks to whoever is responsible for the introduction of the new driver's licence because the new driver's licence which is now being phased in allows for both the post office box number and the physical land location to be included on the driver's licence, and the driver's licence is the preferred ID [identification] for use at the polls. This recommendation was included on page 39 of the CEO's report of recommendations for changes to *The Election Act*, which was tabled on April 30th, 2009. And this will be phased in, but two of the staff here happen to have birthdays in January so we saw the new driver's licence and have confirmed that that information will now be possible on it. So that's it for my comments. We're now prepared to answer any questions that you may have regarding the submission or today's presentation.

[14:00]

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Wilkie, for your presentation, in-depth presentation, your report. We really appreciate it. And the floor is now open for questions. Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Thank you very much. Well I think you've given us lots of information here and there's lots of questions to ask.

On the time referendum, one as far as I know that there is no decisions made yet, so I would think in all likelihood since no decisions have been made, that budget-wise we're better off budgeting as if it's not happening. And if it needs to happen, then obviously you'll be called upon to do the work and the bills will be paid since it's all statutory anyways.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Yes, we anticipated that you might say that. The only thing that we, given that ballot paper takes a long time to get — the latest we're told that it takes two months to get it — we would be a bit . . . If we didn't hear two months before November, or say before the beginning of October, we would be a bit reluctant not to order it in case that we were caught short. Because we know that if we were caught short, it would be seen as our fault, not anyone else's. But it's statutory so we could ultimately get it anyways.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Basically you're saying you need to know by the end of August.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — That would, yes, I mean sooner would be . . . [inaudible] . . . but certainly we would be getting very nervous if we don't hear by the end of that time, because two things. One, it would be actually much better to have it by the end of July because our training is scheduled for the middle to end of

August, so we would be training ROs [returning officer] without being able to tell them what to do. Because there will be various changes based on what we've been told by Alberta. For example, it's much better to have two separate ballot boxes so that you can at least get the MLA vote done quicker and not have to separate them out at the same time because that delays both the MLA count as well as the referendum count.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Having gone through one of those a number of years ago, not as an MLA but as a voter, I don't remember whether there was two boxes, but I know that it took a long time to do the count that night.

**An Hon. Member:** — That was before I was born.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well this was for whether or not we were going to be a province.

I'm glad to hear that the server migration is taking place, and hopefully it's all working well. I know when you flip the switch it's always a nervous time — did it actually make the connection and is my information really there? But I'm glad to see that you're moving ahead with that, and hopefully other independent officers are looking at this process as well. I think in the long run it's going to be beneficial for the independent officers and certainly for the budgetary process for all of us in the Legislative Assembly.

Since Don ran off, I have to deal with some more of these. The discussion on the reducing the age of the election officials and allowing the use of officials from outside of the constituency, this is something that you have extraordinary powers to do at the present time, I believe, but that there is nothing in the legislation specifically allowing that.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Getting poll officials from outside is in the emergency powers of which was used in the past three by-elections. Underage would probably require more of a legal opinion perhaps, but some other jurisdictions, in order to deal with the difficulties of finding poll officials, have done that and so that the constables — which are really information officers directing people to the polls — as well as the poll clerks could be somebody younger. The candidates' reps back in 2005, when the legislation was last changed, have been now reduced to 14.

We would probably move it more to 16, is what we would probably think for people that were being the poll clerks or the constables. But some provinces have been able to have it so that the poll clerk might be a younger person paired with an older person, and it seemed to work quite well. So that's sort of the background to that.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I think the legislation now is 16 with a parent's exemption from 15 up, a written note from their parents allowing them to work. But personally I think the people working there need to be of voting age as well. But that's my personal opinion.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — I should mention that we're also looking at other ways of doing more outreach to get people aware that they don't have to have experience to be a poll official. We train them. And sort of making sure that people that might be interested are contacted because the average age is getting

higher. So there's several different ways that we're looking at dealing with that problem.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — In your details on page 20 for the general election, you listed under personal services, air service of \$45,000. What's the purpose of that?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Sometimes with weather issues, the poll officials will have to have someone . . . I'll back up. The returning officer or the election clerk has to fly into the constituency, into the remote areas, to give the training. So sometimes, it's not possible to drive so they have to use air service. Or in some cases, the training, it's not possible to get them there using air service, then the ballots would have to be flown in. Occasionally they can do the training over the phone if it happens to be impossible to fly that day, but eventually the ballots have to get there.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So this is mainly service to northern Saskatchewan?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Yes. For northern Saskatchewan, yes.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. On your budgets here, the difference between the general election based on current practices is twelve million almost six hundred thousand, and based on if the enumeration was done outside of the writ is just over 14 million — roughly a \$1.5 million difference. How do you account for that difference because you're obviously doing an enumeration during the writ period in the first case?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Okay. I can give the general, and maybe Brent can give some more specifics on it. The returning officer would be in effect working for another month. So the cost of the returning officer, we can't expect them to work an extra month for nothing. Also, the rent for the returning office would be another month. There would have to be some more advertising just explaining the difference as to what happens with revision which would change.

Can you remember other costs there, Brent?

**Mr. Nadon:** — That accounts for most of the cost increase. There's the increased rent for the offices, all the equipment that they have in their office of course: the photocopiers, the computers, and all that stuff. Some additional costs for the RO and EC [election clerk], some additional costs for the actual enumerators. For the most part they're paid based on the number of names they get. Taking a longer time to do an enumeration, we would expect they would actually get more names with a little bit more compensation overall for that. And as Dave mentioned, a little more advertising as well as we try and get out the vote.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Has there been any comparison made between say the health card numbers, the number of people registered under Saskatchewan Health, and the number of voters? Now obviously you would have people who are not citizens that could have health card numbers, so that would be an area where there could be a decrease. But has there ever been a comparison made to sort of give a rough idea of how many people were missing in the enumeration?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — No, there has not.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. You mention that an agreement would have to be made with SGI based on their driver's licence information, Saskatchewan Health based on the health card numbers, and Vital Statistics. I know with the health numbers in particular that the Privacy and Information Commissioner is deathly opposed to using health numbers for anything other than health, so there would need to be legislative changes there to utilize that. And I mean we go back into the House here in about two weeks. I know how long it takes to prepare legislation, and this would not seem possible.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — I mean if we all had our druthers that it would've been done some time ago, but I realize that that's not possible. But I think one could perhaps look on this as more of a two-stage process, in that I suppose we've done the first stage towards a permanent register. And now that we have an electronic voter's list — before we were using a word program in 2003 which was rather archaic, let's say — but now that we have a database, we've got the electronic part.

If we can then this time move to have the enumeration outside of the writ, that's more or less moving to the second part where we would have a very good base to start with. Also my predecessor didn't want to ask for birthdates and gender, but in the legislation it gives us that power to do so. And in order to move forward with matching with driver's licence, for example, we would need that. So in any event, whether enumeration is inside or outside the writ, we would be asking for birthdates and gender this time in order to move things along as is allowed in the legislation.

But if there is no enumeration outside of the writ, it seems a shame because there will be the inevitable complaints about the poor enumeration. And when there is now a set date, it is possible to do enumeration outside of the writ and to keep moving towards a permanent register. And if we don't have enumeration now, then the next movement towards the permanent register will not take place for another four years, which would be 2015 because there would have to be a full enumeration in 2015.

So unless it's the decision of the legislature to have an enumeration outside, like in the middle of the four years which, given the cost, I wouldn't anticipate that would be too popular either. So I think we're asking for us to move to the next step, being an enumeration outside of the writ.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well you have listed here the price for enumeration held more than a month prior to a general election, and listed it currently as \$3.2 million basically, as compared to an additional 1.5 million if done in the month prior to. So double the price basically.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Yes.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — You also have some information here about referendum or plebiscites that are not held in conjunction with a general election. So this would include any kind of referendum or plebiscite, or that you had mentioned senate votes earlier. That would basically be the cost of any of those kind of general elections outside, any election across the

province outside of a general election?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Right. Outside of a general election, it's just like almost the same as having a general election with the exception being that the costs would be slightly less because there's no reimbursement of candidates and political parties.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Would that include enumeration costs in there as well? I don't see that listed.

**Mr. Nadon:** — Yes, the estimate there does include the enumeration for that event . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . For a stand-alone referendum, you're referring to then?

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Yes.

**Mr. Nadon:** — I would have to check to make sure. I believe that that does include the cost of enumeration.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. And you say the maps or the electoral boundaries which will be . . . redistribution will be done 2012. Do you have the census information yet, or is that still to come?

[14:15]

**Mr. Wilkie:** — That's to come. That's starting now. I believe the census has started in Nunavut. It started and will be getting to Saskatchewan and the southern provinces in May. So that's to come.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So how long does it normally take for them to process and provide that information?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — That I'm not totally sure, and unfortunately some of the previous CEOs, record keeping has not been their forte. So we are still searching for some things.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well the good thing we know is that it won't be needed until 2015.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — It won't be needed. And generally from my understanding, in January 2012 it's more or less just getting together and deciding when things might be planned out for when the travelling road show might be going across the province. And that kind of thing, that the heavy-duty number crunching doesn't happen until after April 1st, I believe.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Eagles.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Wilkie, for your presentation. I have a couple of different areas that I want to go. The first one is staffing. And when you said you bring in election officials from other constituencies to help at election, does that give them voting privileges in that constituency?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — None whatsoever. That's nothing to do with that. Sometimes we've heard in the past that some constituencies may have 10 extra DROs [deputy returning officer] that could work, another one is short 10. But under the

current way of doing things, 10 inexperienced or poorly trained people would be brought in at the last minute rather than taking 10 people out of the next constituency. The people that were brought in would have to vote in advance polls in their own constituency.

**Ms. Eagles:** — I was hoping you'd say that. And the other area I wanted to go is the permanent register of electors. You had mentioned in your initial briefing here that you would give us annual updates on the list. If the lists are restricted to election purposes only, what would be the purpose of issuing those annual updates?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Okay. I could clarify that. In other jurisdictions that have a permanent register, they specifically have added in words to the effect, would be available for the members of the Legislative Assembly to be in contact with their electorate. So that would give you an updated list in order to keep . . . with your constituents.

**Ms. Eagles:** — And also you had mentioned about asking for birthdates for the voters list and that would be for your information only. It wouldn't be published on the voters list, I would hope.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Right. That would be for the electronic version that would be separate from the printed version, and separate . . . we wouldn't be giving the parties or the candidates the birthdates. That would be for matching purposes.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Okay. Thank you, sir.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Yates.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions had to do with the permanent voters list as well. We have about a \$1.5 million cost initially to do the enumeration outside the writ period, but that's a one-time cost. Is there any annual cost to keep that up after that period of time?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Right. I'll turn that over to Jeff. You're talking about the permanent register. We've got some idea, not the actual numbers, but some idea of what the costs, what type of things. If you want to speak to that, Jeff.

**Mr. Livingstone:** — Yes. Just in other jurisdictions' experiences and what we've learned from them, there's a need for good back end systems to keep everything running and have redundancies. So we're thinking two to four more servers to get us going, a couple more resources — a database analyst, an application analyst that would then be needed full-time to keep the application running.

Then a lot of it is still unknown. And depending on what the regulations say on where we get our data feeds from, the frequency of updates, would we allow people to self-register and update online. So still a lot of unknowns in the ongoing costs.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Would it be an overall cost saving over a four-year period though? I assume you'd have to do a full enumeration if you didn't do the . . . [inaudible].

**Mr. Livingstone:** — Well we get out of doing enumerations every electoral event, so there'd be savings there.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Other jurisdictions have said that it is a net savings. Until we know the cost we wouldn't know exactly, but certainly there wouldn't be the full enumeration. I'm guessing, but maybe it would be 20 per cent of the electorate might be enumerated. So it's only those certain areas instead of everybody.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you. Those are my questions.

**The Speaker:** — Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Sure. Thanks very much for the presentation, Mr. Wilkie. We appreciate it. I just have a couple of short questions. The first one has to do with the increase in the estimated election cost from 2007, where it was just over \$10 million, to the estimated cost this year of 12.6, about 25 per cent. So just wondering if you could kind of break that down for me.

**Mr. Nadon:** — Yes. We're expecting an increase for I guess you could say personnel costs in the 10 to 15 per cent range to account for the fact that the rates in our schedule of fees haven't been adjusted in over four years. We also have increases based on we expect to do a little more advertising this time, and in particular reaching out to the youth and Aboriginal markets. We also expect some increases for rent. We found of course in the last election that rent costs varied anywhere from \$500 a month to \$4,000 a month. And obviously in the cities is where we're having high rates appear, so we expect a higher cost for that as well.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — And there would also be the inflationary costs for the increase to reimbursement for candidates and political parties as well would be included in that.

**Mr. Nadon:** — There'd be a small increase in reimbursement over 2007. We do expect probably a 15 or 20 per cent increase in the number of people running this next election, based on what the political parties have told us.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — In terms of the advertising component of the answer, what would be the increase in advertising in this election over the election in 2007, and what would be the nature of that advertising?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — We're just at the current time working things out with our advertising agency, but some of it is the social media aspect which everyone is encouraged to do in every walk of life at the moment; also our website, the costs of our website. Our website, in 2003 it was put together in two weeks by the . . . two CEOs ago. And it's very wordy, and we've had lots of complaints about our website, being hard to find things. So that'll be part of it. Daniel, can you comment on any other changes?

**Mr. Nadon:** — Sure. I just wanted to add that the actual cost increase is about 165,000 over the previous estimate.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Also the ad rates, we've been told, of newspapers have gone up in the last four years.

**Mr. Bogdon:** — Well one of the benefits of having a set election date that we've never had before is that we can be a lot more proactive in reaching various markets with public awareness for advertising the general election. We have some initiatives that we're working on as far as targeting the youth market which is, as you know, all across Canada the youth are decreasing in numbers as far as their participation in the electoral process, as well as Aboriginal communities.

So we are going to be making a stronger push to reaching these markets, and that's going to be through working with our agency which we've just now started. And we're actually pretty excited about some of the things that we'll be able to do that have never been done before as far as using social marketing: social media; targeting mobile applications, mobile devices, mobile apps; a big area that the youth are using are their BlackBerrys, their iPhones. We want to look at new and innovative ways to reach people that haven't been done before, and the benefit of having a set election date is going to allow us to really achieve new ground in this area.

So we see that we want to put forth resources in that regard. Our website really needs to be redeveloped and to make it more user-friendly and make it more up to date. So that along with the increased costs of using, you know, traditional media with print along with non-traditional, and that includes such things as not only online, but also targeting such things as advertising on the front of shopping carts, transit system. The people that don't normally read the newspaper, maybe not even listen to the radio. We're looking at ways to expand on the public awareness of the election, along with recruiting more people with our outreach programs. So all of this we integrated into our advertising costs.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — And that's been recruiting for poll officials.

**Mr. Bogdon:** — Recruiting for poll officials, yes.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — So how do you determine which communities or groups are worthy of your efforts to increase voter turnout? You mentioned youth and Aboriginal communities. Why not new Canadians or other groups?

**Mr. Bogdon:** — Yes, these are also being looked at. And we've just begun initial meetings with our advertising agency, and we've discussed these issues. So that's definitely going to be a part of our outreach program as well.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — New Canadians, specifically that; we forgot to add that in. But our advertising agency said that there's a significant number of new Canadians in the last four years. So that is something we have to look at as well.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Right. One I would just offer some degree of caution in terms of picking specific communities in terms of attempting to increase turn out or things of that nature. The other observation I would make is that generally, I mean this is the job of political parties to increase turn out amongst their supporters. And whether there's, how big a role there is to play for elections agencies, I think is an open question. So I would just offer that.

In terms of one more question I have, it has to do with the

reasons for increases such as the 3 per cent merit increase, the 6.4 per cent increase for holiday pay for contract positions, and the 1.4 per cent increase for inflation for supplies. So if I could get some additional detail on those items.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — In regards to the vacation pay, we've been told by HR that we have to do that by law because if we were hiring on a permanent basis we would be giving people vacation. But instead of that, by law we have to give them the 6.36 per cent vacation pay on every cheque. So we're following the law on that one.

The merit increase, we are at this point assuming that people would be getting the maximum, but some people such as Brent and Jeff are nearing or are at the top of the ceiling. Anything else on that one? Oh, and the supplies.

**Mr. Nadon:** — Actually you just referred to the inflationary adjustment. That was a standard increase we were told to build into our budget for this year — 1.4 per cent.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Eagles.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Just one final thing. Mr. Wilkie, you had stated the request for a returning officer in Estevan that hasn't really generated much excitement, I guess. Where could interested people contact you? Just at Election Saskatchewan then?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — We do have the information on our website or people could phone our office. We've had a few people that have been interested and then, for whatever reason, they've decided that remaining retired is a better option or whatever. And we only actually interviewed one person, and that one didn't work out. Or no, we've interviewed two now, but one didn't work out and one is too inexperienced. So we'll continue to keep looking.

[14:30]

**Ms. Eagles:** — Well I'll do some scouting for you as well.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Oh, thank you.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. A couple of questions, one from a comment that was just made that you expected more people to be running in the next general election, therefore costs would be up. Normally the three main parties have fielded full slates. The Green Party has fielded candidates, the PC [Progressive Conservative] Party, there may be others, and a few independents. But to get a reimbursement of your expenses, you have to collect 15 per cent of the vote. Based on that, how many last time did not receive any reimbursement?

**Mr. Nadon:** — I think we had around 240 candidates of all parties last time. In the neighbourhood of 120 received reimbursement of some type. This time, we expect more candidates to run based on what we've been told. The Green Party, for example, intends to run a full slate whereas last time they didn't. The Liberals didn't run a full slate. We're not really sure what's going to happen with them this year. The other parties, we don't really have a lot of indication.

The total number of reimbursements depends on the breakdown. A long time ago, it used to be a three-way race where we'd often see three candidates being reimbursed. The last election, it was essentially a two-way race so the reimbursements dropped. How things will turn out this time is hard to say of course, but we expect a slight increase in reimbursements but not a huge number in reimbursements.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So how much are you budgeting then for reimbursements, based on 120 received reimbursements last time? How big of an increase are you estimating this time?

**Mr. Nadon:** — Reimbursements for this time we would expect to be, for candidates to only be about 32,000 higher than the previous time.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So it's not a huge number higher.

**Mr. Nadon:** — No.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay.

**Mr. Nadon:** — We expect a higher number, about 50,000 more in audit fees because that doesn't depend on whether you win or not. Simply as long as you run, you have to have an audit, and we reimburse for that. That's worth about 50,000 more.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. You're looking at a separate payroll data entry system, the ESPREE, because MIDAS was too expensive. What was the problem with MIDAS? One would have thought that since it's the government program that's been in place for a long time . . .

**Mr. Nadon:** — The biggest issue with MIDAS for us is licensing. When we talked to the PSC [Public Service Commission] about the cost of putting approximately 10,000 people through the MIDAS system, the Oracle licensing fees are somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$600 per record which works out to about \$6 million. Obviously that's not a cost that we would try to incur. We believe we can do it much cheaper and just as efficiently outside.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Where would you get 10,000 people going through there though?

**Mr. Nadon:** — That's the estimate of the total number of election workers during an election.

**Mr. Wilkie:** — If you have approximately 3,000 polls and then 3,000 DROs, 3,000 poll clerks, supervisory DROs, constables, all the different . . .

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Democracy is not cheap, it turns out. Yes, I think that's all the questions I had.

**The Chair:** — Any further questions from committee members? Any closing comments from Mr. Wilkie?

**Mr. Wilkie:** — Just to say thank you for the co-operation that the Board of Internal Economy has given me in the last year. And it will be a busy year in our office, so if you call and you can't get one of us right away, it's probably that we're tied up for a few minutes.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Morgan.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you very much for the work that your office is doing. And we know there has certainly been challenges and look forward to working with you during the elections. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — And thank you, Mr. Wilkie, your staff, for coming and sharing with us your vision, the challenges, presenting us your budget.

We'll be proceeding to the other officers. And then following all the presentations, the board will sit down and discuss where we go in regards to the budget. So thank you so much.

I'll now invite Mr. Fenwick, the Provincial Ombudsman, to come forward with his staff and we'll discuss the budget of the Provincial Ombudsman.

#### Office of the Ombudsman

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Fenwick, for coming to spend some time with us today and to share your views and your budget. Maybe I should have asked the committee for a break, but after your presentation we will take a break. So if the committee's in agreement with that? So, Mr. Fenwick, if you would introduce the staff who have joined you today, and then please proceed.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And yes, I'm very pleased to introduce to you a colleague who has been with me for the several years that I've presented budgets and that's Lynne Fraser, our manager of administration, who works primarily out of our Saskatoon office. And I just wanted to mention that Lynne is one of the civil servants who was honoured last year and recognized for 35 years of service to the provincial government as a civil servant.

**Ms. Fraser:** — I started when I was 10 years old.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — And she's starting to suggest that this might be the last budget that she accompanies me to, and I'm hoping that's not the case. I'm hoping that she's here for several more. She's an invaluable member of our team.

I'm tempted to suggest that, given how busy the schedules of the members of the committees are, that it might save time if you just granted all of the other independent officers the same percentage increase that the Chief Electoral Officer is likely to get for this year over last — but I'm suspecting that might not fly — given that it's an election year.

I don't propose to do anything more than hit the highlights of the written submission that we have made. We've given board members a written submission that has more detail than I propose to cover today. But I would certainly entertain any questions or comments that board members might have with respect to anything that's in that background information.

In particular, the beginning sections of our written submission have a fair bit of detail about our office and I'm not intending to go into detail on those, but again would be pleased to answer any questions and would certainly be open to questions

throughout the presentation from board members. I don't mind being interrupted at all so if you prefer to do that rather than wait till the end, I'm certainly comfortable with that.

I would comment briefly, if I might, at the start, on the three areas of responsibility that our office has, and they all do impact what our budget request is.

The number one area, and the core of our business, is receiving complaints from the public about the fairness of government services. That is our core business, always has been and always will be. Although we are expanding some of the other areas of service, certainly the receipt of complaints from the public generates the vast majority of the work that we do. Very quickly I can advise that for the last four years, the numbers of complaints received from the public about matters that are within our jurisdiction has been fairly constant. Although we are expanding our services, we have been working very hard to be proactive in the work that we do, and so our numbers are fairly consistent for the last number of years. In 2010 — and I mentioned that we report on a calendar year basis — our office received 2,130 complaints about matters that were within our jurisdiction and that just over 1,000 . . . 1,013 other issues that are without our jurisdiction. With respect to that core part of our mandate, responding to complaints from the public, we're asking simply for status quo programming with respect to those areas.

I will comment on two new initiatives that we've been asked to undertake and, although they are part of our core mandate, with those exceptions we're asking for status quo funding. And I recognize that's always a bit of a loaded term. We're asking for funding to allow us to maintain status quo programming, so it does result in an increase but it's increases that we think are necessary based on the information we have to allow us to deliver status quo programming.

And what that means in terms of actual dollars is, for us to keep on doing what we do now with exactly the same staff and level of service that we have now, we would require an additional \$1,000, for example, because we know that our two in-scope staff will be receiving an economic adjustment of 2 per cent on October the 1st. Those two staff members are also in scope and are required to the regular increments that accompany their positions under the collective agreement, and that results in a cost to us this year of another \$2,950.

All but two of our staff are in scope and so the rest of them, the majority certainly, are out of scope. That's 18 people. And those people are scheduled to receive an economic adjustment of 2 per cent on April 1st, and the cost to our office of that is a little over \$34,000. For those that are not at the top of their salary scale, Public Service Commission guidelines provide that they are entitled to performance pay is what it's often called, as well. And we're expecting that will cost us around \$9,600. There's also a small increase for us because of the 2 per cent scheduled increase in the flexible benefit, and that's a cost of about \$300 to us.

The combination though of those all relatively small numbers will affect our personnel costs by a total of just under \$50,000 over the last year — 48,200 or 2.9 per cent of our total budget. So when we talk about status quo with respect to programming,

status quo for us actually means that we're here requesting a 2.9 per cent increase in order to keep those staff on at the levels we have now.

Although salaries represent the vast majority of our budget, we are seeing some more significant increases in some of the non-personnel costs for 2011-12 compared to the previous fiscal year. I mentioned briefly the significant costs that we have assumed as a result of increases in our rental accommodation when I was up previously with respect to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. The cost of our accommodations, we have been told already by Government Services, will increase by \$44,440 for the next fiscal year as compared to the last. And this information might be of some assistance to you with respect to the question, Mr. D'Autremont, with respect to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

Since I was here a few minutes ago, I've discovered that the increase in rental for our Regina office is approximately 17.5 per cent, so that might be helpful for you with respect to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. The rental increase for our Saskatoon office is just under 50 per cent, and that's what's been negotiated by Government Services on our behalf. And those are costs certainly that we have to absorb.

We have used the guideline provided to us by the Legislative Assembly of 1.4 per cent for other non-personnel services and, Mr. Harrison, I think that's the same question that you had for the Chief Electoral Officer. That's a number that we haven't dreamed up. It's a number that we've been provided that we should assume would be the cost of inflation essentially for non-personnel services. So we built that 1.4 per cent in as well. The total increase therefore for our non-personnel cost is \$47,600 or about 9.8 per cent overall for non-personnel costs compared to last year.

And I should point out as well that we have deducted from that the one-time funding we received last year for hosting the national conference of the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman. So I want to assure members that we've taken that number out because it was one-time funding.

So factoring all of that in, for us to maintain status quo programming, we're looking at a request of an increase of 4 per cent to do the same things next year as we did in the past year. That's with respect with to our core programs.

The second significant area of work for us is what we call our own-motion investigations or our systemic investigations. *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act* provides that the Ombudsman may undertake own-motion investigations. And for the most part, for us those are the larger scale, broader systemic reviews that we do usually because we have seen a pattern of complaints. It's my belief that if my office receives 10 complaints this year about the same issue that we had 10 complaints for last year, then we haven't done our job. We need to look beneath the tip of that proverbial iceberg at what the underlying issues are that result in the same kinds of complaints year after year. And if there's a role for us to play, we'll go in and look at those underlying issues and often that leads to a systemic review.

[14:45]

Those systemic reviews are certainly larger. They're certainly much more labour intensive. They're much more complex. They require significant time and resources, so much so that realistically we can only do two or three of those a year. What we end up doing is devoting one of our staff to do that one project for sometimes six months, sometimes longer, and we have another staff person typically assigned probably on a half-time basis for six months to a year as well. So they are very labour intensive. But it is certainly my belief that they give the people of Saskatchewan very good bang for the buck because those reviews and the recommendations that come out of them result in significant changes. They don't just impact one or two people who have come to us with a complaint, but rather impact the services that are delivered by government to a wide range of people, to a great number of people, for every one of those reviews. So although they're expensive individually, we think on a per capita basis or a per benefit basis they're very, very worthwhile.

With respect to that particular kind of our work, I'm putting before the board the same request that we made last year. One of the issues we find when we're doing systemic reviews is that we're often in need of specific subject matter expertise. So if we're doing a review as we currently are in our office with respect to delays in treatment for breast cancer, for example, we need sometimes someone who has a particular health expertise or potentially even a particular expertise with respect to cancer. If we're doing a review with respect to an issue in the agriculture field, we may need someone who has a higher level of expertise in agriculture than we have in our office. So what we would like to be able to do when we do these systemic reviews is go out and hire on a contract basis, for a limited period of time, people who have that subject matter expertise. And we don't have the resources internally to do that right now, so that request for \$70,000 is in our budget request this year. That would allow us, we hope, to do three or four of those kinds of reviews every year.

Now I make that request, but I will put a caveat on it for the board. And that is that I will very shortly be talking about special requests with respect to the creation of a Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner and with respect to the health ombudsman initiative. I am conscious that if we take on both of those roles in our office, as I anticipate that we will, we may not have the resources to be able to further expand our systemic reviews. So I will say to board members quite candidly, if the board gives us some significant funds for those other two initiatives, we would not be looking for this particular initiative of \$70,000 because, quite frankly, we don't want to bite off more than we can chew in one year. It doesn't mean I won't be back next year for that, but for this year I think we could be realistic.

The third core area for our work — and in this case, again we're not asking for any increase in funding — is with respect to our public education mandate. The legislation that creates our office provides that we do public education. We do that in a number of ways. Part of it is, for members of the public, informing them about who we are. But part of that is working with the public so that they can better represent themselves with government agencies. We do work with complainants to say, how do you

handle your own complaints? And our goal would be to educate people so that they don't necessarily need the services of the Ombudsman in every case.

The other area where we do considerable work in what we call public education is actually working with government agencies. We've shifted some of our resources away from simple, if I can call it that, public education for government workers about what to do when the Ombudsman calls and instead we do workshops now called the Fine Art of Fairness, working with government workers on what to do so the Ombudsman doesn't call. And we have a greater demand for those workshops right now than we can meet, and we get reviews back from government workers who have taken those courses over and over again saying that allows them to do their jobs better and essentially results, we hope, in fewer complaints that come to our office.

Unless there are questions, that's all I'm going to say about sort of our core work and what we've always done in the past. And I'll shift gears now, if I can, to talk about the two more significant initiatives: health ombudsman work and public interest disclosure.

Certainly the biggest ticket item in our budget request this year with respect to an increase is to allow us to expand our health ombudsman services. And the number is large so I'll put it right out front and that is, we're requesting an increase in our budget of \$493,100 with respect to health ombudsman services. And that's a large number. And a friend of mine used to say, it doesn't sound so big if you say it fast. Well it still sounds big even if you do say it fast, and I recognize that.

By way of background though, if I can share a brief bit of history for the board members, some of whom may not be aware of this, there was in the last election campaign a plank in the current government's election platform that provided for the creation of a health ombudsman. And there was actually a dollar figure attached to that, I think, of about \$1 million. When the election was over, because in our minds we already had a health ombudsman in Saskatchewan — in fact the Ombudsman has had jurisdiction over health issues since the office was created in 1973 — I asked our staff to do a background paper, and I said specifically this should not be a position paper. This should not be turf protection. This should not be trying to explain why we should continue to do this work. I said that if there's a better way to do Ombudsman work in the health field, then we should be looking at those alternatives.

And so we did that background paper. We provided it to both the ministries of Health and Justice and, after a relatively short period of time, the ministries came back to us and said, we like the work that you've done; we appreciate that you've given us a range of options. We had looked at other models throughout Commonwealth countries: Britain, United States . . . sorry, not a Commonwealth country. United States, though, we looked at as well; Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and other jurisdictions in Canada.

And when the ministries looked at that information, they came back and said to us that, we think that this work is best done within the current Ombudsman's office. And so we're certainly happy to continue to do that work. We understand, however, and certainly agree that there is more that we can do and that

government has indicated it would be supportive of us taking an expanded role within the health field.

So the proposal that we place before the board is to allow us to take an expanded role in the health field, to do so at about half of the cost, I think, of what was in the election platform last time around, but which would allow us, I think, to deliver reasonable but necessary health ombudsman services within the health field.

What we're proposing is that we would create a team within our office of four people. And I say four with perhaps some quotation marks around it because what we're actually proposing is that we create a team within our office of three people who will work primarily or specifically on health issues — some systemic, some responding to individual complaints — but that the work of those three people be supplemented by the hiring, on a contract basis from time to time, of outside subject matter expertise. This is the link back to what I talked about a few minutes ago. When we work in the health field, as board members will understand, it is a very specific field, and that even within health there are areas of specific expertise. And so we think it will be necessary for us to go out and contract with people for specific subject matter expertise.

We would like this team to be able to respond both to individual complaints and to deal with systemic issues. We have on the own-motion side of our work right now a list of about six to eight systemic reviews that we would like to start tomorrow, and five or so of that number are health related. And so we think that's an important part of an enhanced service that we could do.

We see this team as very much complementing the work of the quality of care coordinators who are doing excellent work already within the health regions. We do not see ourselves in any way as taking over that work. We think those people do very good work. And when we see the increase in numbers of health complaints or health-related complaints that are coming to our office, we believe that a significant portion of that increase is because of referrals from the quality of care coordinators. So again we're looking at a complementary service.

We also think that, at least in the initial stages, this team would have a very important public education role to work with quality of care coordinators, to work with stakeholders within the health system, to work with health user groups to increase the level of knowledge about what our office is available to do.

And that team of four people that I'm talking about also requires some administrative support as well. We're not asking for a full position with respect to administrative support, but you can't add more bodies to your office without some increase in the administrative support that's necessary.

We have a plan in place to move forward quickly to get those bodies that we would need to fill those positions, and we have a plan in place in terms of what they would be doing for the first number of months of work. And the first number of months I see those folks as being on the road a significant amount, out working with the regions, talking with people in the ministry to build relationships and build partnerships and raise the level of

awareness.

We know from past experience that all it takes is a question from the opposition and a response from the minister in the House that involves the mention of the Ombudsman and the number of matters that come to our office goes up significantly. There was a fair bit of mention of the Ombudsman in the media last year because of questions that were raised in the House, and I think that's part of the reason that we saw a 76 per cent increase in our office last year about the number of health complaints. We had 141 complaints about health issues last year as compared to a little over 80 from the year before. So between the media being aware of our office to a greater extent and that work we're doing with the quality of care coordinators, we know that we can anticipate at least that much increase again, we think, with the expanded resources that we hope to have.

My last comment before I move on to the next topic would be that again I recognize this is a very significant expenditure, but I point out that this is not something that we are bringing forward of our own volition. This is something that we are responding to as a result of an election promise that was made, and we're more than happy to do it and we absolutely recognize that the need is there. But it's not just us coming to the board cap in hand with respect to our own interests and needs.

The next area I would comment on briefly is with respect to public interest disclosure or what it's often known as is whistle-blower legislation. There is legislation before the Assembly right now that, I think, is at the committee stage. I understand that deals with the creation of another independent office of the Assembly and that is the office of a Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner.

The legislation that's before the House provides that that responsibility may be given to the Ombudsman. My understanding is that it is certainly under active consideration that that responsibility in fact be given to my office. And so we have built into this budget request a number that would allow us to proceed. And essentially the number, which is \$150,000, is the hiring of one person, one full-time position at the assistant ombudsman level, and the necessary services . . . [inaudible] . . . that person with an office and some administrative support and all of the things that go with the creation of a position.

I don't know when that legislation would be proclaimed. But I think it's important that we be able to move ahead very quickly to hire that person because . . . And again, we have an action plan in place with respect to those responsibilities if indeed they come our way. A number of the Crown corporations already have some public interest disclosure or whistle-blower provisions in place. The legislation that's before the House would provide that the Crowns are caught by the new legislation, as are all ministries. We don't think we want to reinvent the wheel and we think that it would be advantageous that there be some degree of consistency between ministries and Crown corporations in terms of what they put in place to handle whistle-blower or public interest disclosure complaints. So my hope would be is that we have the ability to hire a person well in advance of when the legislation might be proclaimed, and that person's responsibility would be to work in partnership with ministries and Crowns to develop a model that will fit for

most of them so that we could gain the efficiencies of consistency between those various bodies.

Just a comment if I might with respect to administrative support. Although it's not a specific request, it's built into some of the other initiatives and it partly gets back to my comments earlier about the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's office as well. We are hosting, or sharing space with the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. And I am more than happy to say that it's been a very useful partnership and I think a mutually beneficial one.

[15:00]

We are providing to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner at no cost the services of our admin support. In particular, the executive assistant who reports to the Ombudsman, my confidential secretary, also does the work of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. We're not charging the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's office anything for those services, but it is understandably a cost to us in the terms of that it takes away her time.

We know that we will need some admin support to assist with the public interest disclosure work if it comes to our office, and some admin support certainly if we get funding to proceed with the health initiative. And so my comment here is simply that we're not looking at a full-time position to do any one of those jobs. But embedded in this whole request is about point seven five of an admin position which we think would be able to allow us to move some work around in order to address all three of those needs.

I believe our office is very fiscally responsible. I suppose most offices believe that, but I sincerely believe that. We've worked very hard over the last number of years to find ways to save resources within our office and I have many examples I could give you about that. I won't do so unless you ask, but I have a list here of things where we have worked very hard to find those efficiencies.

Almost all of our budget involves salary or things like rent increases over which we have very little control. What we're asking for here today, with the exception of the two initiatives that have been given to us, if you like, are to allow us to maintain status quo programming. I think it's a reasonable request and would certainly be happy to respond to any questions that board members might have.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Fenwick. Do we have any questions? Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Just wondering if we could take a recess now for a few minutes and then we'll come back to the grilling.

**The Chair:** — If the committee's in agreement, we'll recess for 15 minutes and call the committee back at 3:15. Thank you.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

[15:15]

**The Chair:** — It's now 3:15 and I'll call the meeting back to

order and we'll open the floor for any questions that members may have. Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Yes, looking over your report here, you've certainly been doing a lot of work over the last year. And I appreciate the fact that you come and talk to us as well during, or prior to these budget discussions throughout the year to let us know what's going on within your office and what trends you see that are impacting on your office.

Looking at both the health ombudsman services, that is something that we promised in the election campaign and I think you've come in with a very reasonable request on funding for that particular issue.

I did go and take a quick look at *The Public Interest Disclosure Act* legislation that's before the House and it does come into force on proclamation. I was wondering about that, whether it was on proclamation or on assent, but it does come in. And again that's another issue that I think that we feel is important. That's why we've brought forward legislation on this and are prepared to move forward with it. And understanding that when you bring forward legislation, it serves no purpose unless you are prepared to fund it as well. So I think, not being in cabinet, I'm prepared to say that I think it's a good idea.

But I was also pleased to hear that you were prepared to forgo the \$70,000 that you were requesting for expanded systemic research capabilities, because of the added duties you'll be taking on with the health ombudsman and the public interest disclosure.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — Can I make just a comment . . . [inaudible] . . . public interest disclosure?

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Go ahead.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — I was pleased to have an opportunity to have some input with respect to that legislation by way of some consultations with the Public Service Commission. And I can advise board members that part of my work in working with the Public Service Commission was to talk to my counterparts in both Nova Scotia and Manitoba where the public interest disclosure responsibility is with the Ombudsmans' offices, and so was able to provide input. And our request here in the planning that we have done isn't coming out of the blue; it's based largely on the discussions that I've had with my colleagues in Manitoba and Nova Scotia.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I was also very amused with your explanation of status quo because when I'm thinking budgets and status quo, that's zero increases. But I'm learning over the years that government operates on status quo of programming, and budgets then pay for it.

So you're looking for, on your base, an increase of 4 per cent. So I'm assuming that is made up of the 2.9 per cent increases for personnel services and the rent increases of 26.7. That's the main increases, is it, in those areas?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — Yes. Absolutely. Yes.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. Okay, that's the information

I needed. Anybody else?

**The Chair:** — Any other questions for Mr. Fenwick? Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Fenwick and staff, for coming and presenting to the committee your budget.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — [Inaudible] . . . from all the MLAs, we give you and your staff thanks as well. Keep up the good work. It's valued and appreciated.

**The Chair:** — And having said that, Mr. Fenwick, the committee will listen to the . . . take the presentations from the other officers and then we'll sit down, deliberate, and get back to you with the results. Thank you.

### Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

**The Chair:** — We'll now move on to the Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Dickson, and the staff he's brought with him. Welcome, Mr. Dickson, and I'll invite you to introduce the staff you have with you today and then invite you to share with us your budgetary proposals for the upcoming year. Thank you.

**Mr. Dickson:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Chairman and members of the board. With me — no stranger — Pam Scott, to my left, who is the director of our operations. And she and I were talking. I think this may be close to the eighth one of these presentations I've done to the board, and Pam has been there for almost every one. And on my right is Kara Philip who is our intake officer/database manager.

It seems to me that a year ago, because we had two new members — I'm thinking of Minister Harrison and Minister Morgan — I had spent some extra time talking about details of the kind of work we do and our mandate. But I think this afternoon I'm going to assume all board members are already quite familiar with our statutory mandate. I might just remind everyone there are sort of the two key elements to it. And the first one is that we're there to ensure that Saskatchewan public bodies operate in a way that is as transparent and as accountable as possible to the people of Saskatchewan, and then secondly to ensure that all of our public bodies and all of our health information trustees are respectful of the privacy of Saskatchewan residents and protective of their personal information or personal health information.

And just to remind members, we oversee approximately 3,000 organizations under three different laws: *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or FOIP for short, the local authority FOIP Act, and *The Health Information Protection Act*. And as I've told you before, we get to that large number of 3,000 bodies to oversee largely through HIPA [*The Health Information Protection Act*] because that gives us responsibility to oversee what's being done by every chiropractor, psychologist, dentist, physician, in each of their clinics and in offices across the province as well as the regional health authorities and ministries and colleges and so on.

My plan here in the next few minutes, Mr. Chair, is to highlight some of the key developments in access and privacy in Saskatchewan, then to give you a sample of the issues that Saskatchewan citizens have been bringing to my office in the course of seeking help, and then to focus on our estimates for

2011-2012.

And I have real pleasure in highlighting first some key developments in 2010 and the first one was — and this was particularly exciting to me and my office — was the open letter from the Premier on September 1st, 2010 to everyone who works for the Saskatchewan provincial government. And that open letter was an encouragement, an admonition, and instruction, if you will, that government workers need to pay particular attention to *The Health Information Protection Act* and the FOIP Act. I think it's hard to overstate the importance of that kind of leadership to everybody working in our large provincial government.

And the second highlight . . . Oh I should just say I think in the front page of my estimates booklet you'll find an excerpt from the Premier's open letter, and then September 2010 was designated by our provincial government as privacy and security month and there were, as I expect all members are aware, a whole range of activities going on in Crown corporations, ministries, provincial organizations, designed to heighten awareness around access and privacy. And that also was a terrific development.

And then that more or less culminated in a major access and privacy conference sponsored by Saskatchewan Justice that brought in some excellent speakers from across the country, really well-attended conference. And so each of those things were major steps forward in 2010. However those kinds of events serve to heighten public awareness and heighten awareness within government, and that actually results in more demands, more expectations for information and advice and activity from our office.

Over the last seven years, our office opened 1,123 formal investigations and reviews. So that's into significant breaches of privacy and reviews of cases where access has been denied. We've never, however, in the history of the office, had more than three portfolio officers or three investigators.

You will recall, members, that it was about this time a year ago when I had requested one additional portfolio officer investigator to add to the three so we'd be closer to achieving a critical mass and improve our performance outcomes. And the board refused that request in its wisdom a year ago, and that would make then three consecutive years where we have asked for an additional investigator and been denied that request. And this of course has happened against a background, if you will, of remarkable growth year over year in terms of demand for services. So I'm back again, Mr. Chair and members, requesting a fourth portfolio officer, a fourth investigator.

Now in the past, board members have been interested in examples of the kinds of matters that the Information and Privacy Commissioner office have addressed in the preceding year, and I thought I'd just take a moment and run down some examples of the kinds of things that have come to our attention.

We had a pharmacy that breached an individual's privacy by looking up personal health information on the PEPP [public employees pension plan] database without any proper authority and for personal purposes.

We have the city of Saskatoon, without lawful authority, that had disclosed personal information of personnel, of employees, to the Canada Revenue Agency. Actually it was more information than had been even requested by the Canada Revenue Agency.

We had an employee of the Justice ministry had entered an SGI database improperly and without authority and handed over the names and addresses of employees of a courier company to a union trying to organize.

We had a shredding company based here in Regina that mishandled patient personal health information that had come in from three different health regions and had ended up blowing around along a couple of streets in a Regina industrial park.

We had four inappropriate breaches of the SGI database in 2010, nine breaches in 2009.

[15:30]

We had an employee of a health region that accessed the personal health information on a database of an unknown number of individuals for what were determined to be malicious purposes and personal gain.

We had an employee of a health region who left their vehicle unlocked while shopping. The employee had a binder in their unlocked car that had personal health information and, of particular seriousness, security information for seniors. In this binder it told you where the key was hidden, which door you could enter. This would be a remote care worker assisting mainly seniors or people with a physical disability, so obviously this was a concern.

We had an intern of a health region that used his personal USB [universal serial bus] key to take a copy of — by downloading — all of the personal health information on 33 mental health patients.

In an institution we had a doctor with an unencrypted laptop and, as happens so often now, the laptop was stolen. And of course all of the information that would be in the hard drive, that contained the information of 200 different health patients.

We had a paramedic who lost a patient care report. And that had gone missing, replete with all kinds of personal health information. We had a local authority that released in error a list of employees' personal information to the media.

We had 31 health trustees send personal health information, detailed personal health information of patients to the wrong fax number, and 30 trustees that failed to have appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard personal health information when faxing it. And I've said before, I'm old enough to know faxing is not what I'd describe as a very complex or modern technology. You think it's a pretty simple thing to be able to transmit something from A to B. And it suggests to me that if we have trustees, 31 trustees in one case, that didn't know how to handle faxing of sensitive information properly, it may not augur well for a very sophisticated electronic health record we're building which is going to have far more serious potential risk.

We had a regional health authority that had to send out 62 notification letters to patients for a PIP [pharmaceutical information program] breach.

Anyway these are just some examples. This isn't exhaustive, but I wanted to give the committee, the board, a bit of a flavour of the kind of thing that we do in the course of our work.

And then other things come along, like we now have been asked to sort out with Saskatchewan Health and Alberta's Health and Wellness ministry how physicians in Lloydminster are going to be able to access the electronic health record system — Netcare, in Alberta and also the e-health Saskatchewan, I think we're calling it now, the electronic health record in Saskatchewan — and how we have clear kinds of accountability, and where the heck does the patient go if your physician is sort of in two different databases and patient information is being exported between two provinces.

Anyway that's the sort of thing we provide input to PSC and *The Public Interest Disclosure Act* because we found that what hadn't been considered in that was the fact that we have a lot of people come to us with complaints in the health sector or in local government areas, and they have no whistle-blower protection in our legislation. And so we've had some interesting discussions with PSC, Public Service Commission, about how that's going to work so that we're going to be able to do our investigation and provide those complaints with the same kind of protection they'd have if they had a complaint that wasn't related to our jurisdiction.

We've been involved in providing advice to the Ministry of Health and their health information solutions centre on the new laboratory results repository on audit and accreditation practices. We've done a lot of work with the health colleges and regional health authorities around discipline for breaches. And then considerable time spent dealing with Ontario-based businesses that have come in and want to manage patient files when doctors are either deceased or leave the province. A lot of work with school divisions on issues relating to parents' access to their own children's information. So just a bit of an overview of the kinds of things we deal with.

Now in terms of page 6 where we actually get into the estimates, I would just say this. Two things — first in terms . . . And I say this, particularly to Mr. D'Autremont, we probably are using the status quo in the context that the Ombudsman is, and not the historic context that you, sir, have used it. We were talking about program status quo, not any additional FTEs [full-time equivalent] but maintaining basically the same level of service.

We had received a supplementary estimate of \$50,000, and so I've lumped that in. So when I am talking about the funding we had last year, I'm including the supplementary estimate of 50,000.

The other thing — and this comes a little bit out of some of the previous presentations and exchange — we are perhaps and have been for seven years the most integrated of the independent offices with the LAS, Legislative Assembly Services. You recall when we started it was, frankly it was Pam Scott and I in a tiny office. And we had the great good fortune

that the Legislative Assembly Service provided us with all of our IT [information technology] support, provided us with HR personnel support, played a huge role in terms of our financial management work and that sort of thing, and that's continued for the whole seven years. And I think that in fact you recall last year we moved our computer server to the LAS. So we've always been very I think mindful of the importance of independent offices not going and creating parallel infrastructure requirements to the extent that we can share them with LAS, which is to some extent independent of executive government.

Now in terms of and just one other thing I might just quickly mention — I don't think the board has heard of this — but I remember speaking with the board probably six years, five or six years ago, and talking about space and the prospect that different independent offices may not require separate housing, separate space, and there might well be some economies of being able to have a common boardroom, a common IT support, some common administrative support. And I think I'm sort of authorized by at least some of my colleagues who are independent officers, we've now actually started a discussion with Government Services to explore down the road the possibility of a number of independent offices, in Regina for sure, possibly coming together and looking at whether there are things we could share instead of all having separate offices scattered around the city.

So potentially you have the citizen with a grievance or a problem being able to come to one address, one place. So this is just a concept. Government Services, I think spurred on by the shortage of office rental space in downtown Regina, has been very interested, and they're working with a number of the independent offices. So this isn't going to happen in the new fiscal year, I expect, but it's something we're working towards. And I think it's a responsible thing to explore and see if we're able to achieve some economies as well as some value added in terms of service to the people of the province.

So in terms of our estimates, we've given you really two sets of numbers, two budgets: a status quo one where there'd be no additional staffing, but the B-budget is the one that I'm urging the board to give most careful consideration to. It would accommodate one additional portfolio officer. The difference would be an additional \$188,591 over the budget that had been approved a year ago with the \$50,000 supplementary estimate. That's a 19.3 per cent increase over last year, but I just hasten to caution members that when your numbers are relatively small to begin with, the percentage increase seems to be large.

We currently have eight staff in the office. And that's seven staff and the commissioner, so we have eight. We still are, well, under-resourced by any measurement you use. I think I mentioned before, Newfoundland and Labrador — with half the population, not the breadth of jurisdiction that we do — now has 14 officers. And they're expecting to get either four or five more for the 2011-2012 year because they have a health information law just like ours which has just come into force, and they're concerned about the amount of additional work that it's going to require.

So in that \$188,591, that would be one additional portfolio officer. That would be the tuition for the university course, the

University of Alberta information access and privacy course, which is a requirement for all of our portfolio officers to have completed that certification. It would cover some modest cost for some tenant improvements to be able to accommodate that new portfolio officer.

Now if one looks at the budget, you will find that once again on page 5 of our estimates booklet, the advertising, travel, and business, supply and services are virtually the same in either the A- or the B-budget, and simply only very modest increments. There is an increase in terms of equipment and fixed assets — number 6 in the B-budget — and that would be for the leasehold improvements I had mentioned. And then the other increase would be in terms of personal services.

If the board in its wisdom is not prepared to allow us the one additional portfolio officer to bring our investigators up to four, then our status quo budget would involve an increase of 6.5 per cent over what was approved last year. That would be \$63,469. And that's to account for increased rent.

I think as I said before, Government Services is our landlord. So they have told us that because of the very tight commercial real estate market in Regina, there will be an increase. And they're forecasting — I think it's 11 per cent? — 11 per cent over last year.

What we've had to do, and I know Minister Morgan has certainly encouraged me over the last couple of years to look for, to be creative and look for efficiencies within the OIPC [Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner]. And we've certainly done that. Part of the efficiency though is we're redistributing some of the work we do and the way we do it within our office. And that's translated into some reclassification of two of our workers, and there were two others that hadn't been classified before. And then of course we still have the increased rent even with the status quo budget.

So I could sort of go on. But I think I'd say in terms of the status quo budget, I've identified the codes that wouldn't change. So with that, I'd just look forward to whatever questions the members of the board have, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Dickson. We're now open for questions. I'll recognize Mr. Yates.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My concerns have to do with, there's indications with the current status of the office that you could wait four to five years to have an issue investigated. What potential liability does that leave upon either the government or your office, if any?

**Mr. Dickson:** — Well let me speak to the liability for my office. We have no order-making power. All we have in our office is credibility. We spend a lot of time talking to those 3,000 organizations we oversee, and we really don't have any sort of a hammer. So we use an ombudsman model and that means we rely on co-operation, collaboration, consultation.

The concern is that it's easy for public bodies to ignore us if they choose to do that. And I think what happens when we have cases that are so old . . . You recall I've told you in the past,

told the board in the past, no citizen should have to wait, in the vast majority of cases, longer than about five months from the time they come to our office with an appeal until the time it's resolved. I think that's reasonable. Some people might like it shorter. I don't think that would be reasonable.

[15:45]

But I think when people realize that it's going to take so long, you're going to have a number of people — applicants, citizens, constituents — who just say, well to heck with it. If I can't get it more immediately, it may be of no value to me. This system, it just isn't working for me. And as I say, public bodies, I think it's pretty hard for us to get after public bodies that are slow in doing what they're required to do in responding to citizen complaints and citizen requests when they know it may be a number of years before we get to the stage of issuing recommendations.

In terms of legal liability, I don't think I can offer legal advice, but it seems to me the biggest issue is less one of legal liability than inconvenience, disenchantment on the part of the public. We've run into a number of cases where people, if they get a report from our office with recommendations, and the public body then within the 30-day period says, we refuse to accept all or some of the recommendations from the commissioner, the citizen can then go to the Court of Queen's Bench and actually ask a justice of the court to give a binding order. But you can't get there without first going through the procedure in our office. And so as somebody who used to practise law for a long time, I'm mindful that our delay means it's that much longer before that aggrieved citizen can get this matter in front of a judge to ask for a binding order.

So I'm sorry this is a long response, and I'm not sure it's been very specific, but those would be really my thoughts. So it's, I think, the reputation of the office. Our access and privacy regime just becomes easier to ignore, and maybe I think can fall into disrepute if there aren't kind of reasonable turnarounds on those investigations.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. What is — if you would know this, and I don't know if you would — the average turnaround in other jurisdictions? Could you have any information and could you provide that, if you have it, to the board?

**Mr. Dickson:** — You bet. I can tell you now in some provinces, like Alberta for example, there's just actually quite a famous court case which is now being appealed. I think leave to appeal is being sought to the Supreme Court of Canada. And this was a case, the Alberta Teachers' Association case, where my colleague in Edmonton, in Alberta, had issued an order under their private sector privacy law, the *Personal Information Protection Act*. And what had happened is the legislation there requires that the order be issued by the commissioner within 90 days and has provision to extend the 90 days in appropriate circumstances, and the Alberta Court of Appeal held that the commissioner had kind of indiscriminately extended the time, and therefore struck down the decision of the commissioner in that case who issues binding orders, unlike an ombuds role like I have. So that's going to the Supreme Court.

In some of the Maritime provinces, in New Brunswick under their old legislation it was 30 days. But now under their new legislation — just went into force in 2011 — it's I think 90 days, maybe a little longer. A number of provinces, I think four of the 14 jurisdictions in Canada, would have no timelines like Saskatchewan, no prescribed timelines. I think certainly 90 days in a number of places with provision to extend, but much better resourced offices, a much larger capacity than what we have here.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you. That concludes my questions.

**The Chair:** — I recognize Minister Morgan.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you very much. You'd indicated that your office requires, the legislation requires people to go through your office before they can make an application to Court of Queen's Bench. Have there been a lot of or any applications to Queen's Bench?

**Mr. Dickson:** — In the seven years I've been here, there hasn't been a single one. There hasn't been a single one. There was one case where an individual had gone through our process and then launched a section 24 Charter challenge to Court of Queen's Bench, but it was sort of completely independent of anything we had done. So there actually, to my knowledge . . . And because we're not a party and we have no standing in that *de novo* appeal to QB [Court of Queen's Bench], I suppose something may have slipped through I've never heard of. But I think I would hear of it. In the first . . . From 1992 when the law came into force until I started in November 2003, I think there may have been as many as perhaps 10 *de novo* appeals to Queen's Bench.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I guess my question really is, is that a solution to some of your backlog? You know, once you get an initial denial from the agency is to say, your option now is to go to the Court of Queen's Bench. I know you've raised the issue of amendments to the legislation and it's difficult to contemplate amendments to the legislation until the legislation's been tested. And my understanding is the same as yours, that there has not been applications. And I'm wondering whether, you know, you're discouraging people from going. And I appreciate the work that you might do in trying to resolve them before they would get to that level but, you know, to consider amending legislation where, you know, there has not been any jurisprudence on it, is a challenge. So I'd welcome a comment from you on that.

**Mr. Dickson:** — Well you're right. There's been a real dearth of jurisprudence in terms of each of the three laws that our office oversees. And this may not be helpful to you, Minister, but what is interesting is that there has been actually a good deal of litigation in other jurisdictions. And what you've got is, although there are differences from one jurisdiction to another, there are only four of the 14 Canadian jurisdictions where the commission is of order-making power. So all of the rest of them are ombudsmen and they all have — I think in every one of those 10 cases — they have provision for appeal to the court. And so in a number of places, there's quite a body of court decisions. Our legislation was to some extent in 1992 modelled on the federal *Access to Information Act* and the federal *Privacy Act* and there's actually quite a body of Federal Court, Supreme

Court decisions interpreting the federal *Access to Information Act*.

So yes, not a lot of things with the Saskatchewan judicial seal on them, but there have certainly been a large number of decisions interpreting similar kinds of provisions across Canada. I'm not sure this is responsive at all to your query.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — No that's . . . I didn't know whether there was an explanation for it and, you know, if there is other jurisprudence, it may be instructive to look at it.

My next question deals with the staff reclassifications. We've seen a number of them that have come through. You have the same number of FTEs that you did a year ago. How much has the effect of the reclassification has been to the average wage?

**Mr. Dickson:** — I'm not sure. We had two reclassifications. In each case there was an increase, but I . . . Do you have information, Pam?

**Ms. Scott:** — Yes, I do. We had two positions within our office that were not classified at that present time, so we did need to go through the process of classifying those two positions. One position rose four levels partly because of the change in duties. What we did to find efficiencies was we took the intake process away from the portfolio officers' job description so that they could mainly work on investigative and review work in a full-time capacity. So we took the intake process away from the portfolio officers.

And this was part of our pitch to you a couple of years ago when we were able to successfully . . . That's right. We were successful in having one FTE come on board with us. So what we've done is that particular classification went from an MCP1 [management classification and compensation plan] to a MCP5. The other classification went from a 1 to a 3. And then the other two reclassifications rose one level, and the other one rose two levels.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Yes. I'm just curious as to, you know, the effect that it's been on the salary. We'll look at it.

The issue with the wrong fax number, sort of a query as to how you keep stats. There was a fax number that hadn't been changed from, I think it was an imaging institution. And records were continuing to be sent from a number of different places, and I understand that it affected 30 patients' records, or perhaps more. But I'm wondering, you know, it was one cause, but I'm wondering how many files you opened with regard to that.

**Mr. Dickson:** — Well what was interesting is we would have had 32 files open in respect to that. But here's what happened. It's true it was a single nephrology clinic actually in your city, Minister, that the partners had dissolved the partnership. And the fax number had been out of service then for almost two years and then was reassigned by SaskTel to a private business — I think it was a consulting business — that then started getting all of these faxes.

But what we found was we had less concern, to be honest, with the business that had gone out of business because they'd made at least some efforts to notify physicians and regional health

authorities and so on. Not complete, and we pointed out some things they could have done differently.

But then what happened is we found there were actually hundreds of pages involved, but they were coming from . . . There were some 60 different faxes from 31 different trustees. And so what we did is we went to each one of the trustee organizations. We found out who had sent this. And then we started to say, under section 16 of HIPA you have an obligation to have policies and procedures to provide administrative safeguards, physical safeguards, technical safeguards. Show us what you have. Show us what you have.

What we found, Minister, was that in the vast majority of cases they either had no policy or it was inadequate. And so what we then did was we worked with each one of those 31 trustees that had sent the misdirected fax to ensure that they understood what they needed to have so the mistake wouldn't happen again.

And in each case it would be somewhat different. In some cases it would be . . . A number of places didn't even have a fax cover sheet, didn't even use a fax cover sheet. Other people had no policy to check preprogrammed fax numbers. You know, they would preprogram, which is great, but then if you never check it . . . Businesses move and fax numbers change. You need to have a policy that somebody's responsible for updating and checking those numbers.

So in fact we had 31 parallel investigations. We had an investigator assigned to this who spent probably four months in working with each one of the 31 trustees. So there was a good deal of work involved with each one of those interactions. And some responded by telling us to go and jump in the lake. We had only three of the nine pharmacies provided written notice to the patients who were affected.

So you know, we had to deal with each one of those trustees separately. I think that's what I'm saying. So in fact I think it was legitimate and necessary to treat each trustee separately because although they'd all contributed to the problem . . .

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — [Inaudible] . . . opened one file for each trustee rather than each patient?

**Mr. Dickson:** — One file for each trustee. That's right. And you could have had multiple patients.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Even though each trustee may have had several patients.

**Mr. Dickson:** — That's right because the structure and the notion underlying HIPA is we're not so much interested in . . . It's not so much individuals. It's the trustee that has the legal responsibility. And so that's what we're focusing . . .

[16:00]

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I'm fine with that. I would've been concerned had you chosen to open an file for each affected patient that was affected by it, you know, because it was one, one machine that was wrong. And I appreciate that the trustees, you know, it was the ones that were sending to it from . . . [inaudible] . . . I'm fine with that.

**Mr. Dickson:** — Sir, I might just add that here's a better example. A number of years ago when we had over 100 angry women contact us about the prevention program for cervical cancer, when that was rolled out, that was one file. That was one report. There were 99 women that contacted us, and probably more affected, and that's the way we operate. If it's sort of a common issue, in that sense, in a common trustee, that's one file. And so we even talk about our files. That file could be 20, 50, 60, 200 patients involved with that one trustee.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I'm fine with that. I just wasn't sure how the record-keeping system worked and I was trying to ensure that the numbers weren't larger than they or weren't less than what they appeared.

You had raised the issue before on where there'd been trustees that had breached provisions of the legislation, concerned that there should be disciplinary action or prosecutions undertaken. And of course the advice we'd received from Justice was that, you know, these people were subject to a collective agreement and that, you know, we'd deal with them other than through prosecution or termination.

My question to you is, if we were to do a legislative change that would say that that was instant grounds for dismissal or something else, would that be something that your office would be . . . You know, you've taken a strong position. Would that make your budget any less onerous to deal with or would that be something you would support? I mean, you know, you were very aggressive in the position you were taking. And I appreciate the needs of the people who are affected and I share their concern, but I'm looking for a resolution either by way of changing the legislation. So my budget question to you is whether that would make a difference or not, should you recommend that to us.

**Mr. Dickson:** — Well and I should just back up and say the concern is . . . I think the short answer is no. I think the short answer is no. The hope would be, the hope would be it would reduce the number of breaches. We're just in the early, early stages of electronic health record. We actually have only sort of two and a half of the domain repositories up. We've got the pharmaceutical information program, the diagnostic imaging pictures, X-ray — that system is largely up — and we're now rolling out the laboratory results repository. There's about four or five more of these things to come. And we're dealing with so many trustees, Minister.

I mean I expect there's always going to be a certain number of people whose curiosity gets the better of them, notwithstanding their professional codes and obligations and that sort of thing. And my difficulty is that there need to be serious consequences. And we know that from whether it's Andalusia, Spain, or the United Kingdom or Australia where they've had electronic health records. It's just so easy to be able to go and access people's personal health information that there have to be, there has to be a strong deterrent. And the difficulty is if there are no prosecutions under section 64 of HIPA and if collective agreements where there is dismissal by a regional health authority is repeatedly overturned and a couple of weeks without pay substituted as a penalty and the colleges aren't more aggressive in terms of policing this and their members, then I don't know what safeguards we . . . All the other

safeguards are after the fact.

And my concern is, while we are in the early stages, making sure we send a clear and an unequivocal message to all trustees that have access to the electronic health record: if you snoop without a legitimate diagnostic reason, there will be serious consequences.

You know, everybody's had the training, people take oaths and so on, and they're still sort of ignoring those safeguards we have in place. So more has to happen. And I just think it's so important. We're building this incredibly expensive, very involved electronic health record. It only works if patients still have a strong sense of confidence that their privacy is going to be protected in that system.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I couldn't agree with you more. It's just a matter of, you know, how we get there or, you know, what we do to get there. But I think members of the public have a right to expect that. We don't give them the choice of whether their information is lodged with our trustees or not. So the onus is on us as a government and you as a commissioner to ensure that that information is strongly protected. So no, we're on the same page. That's all the questions that I have. I don't know whether my colleagues have . . .

**The Chair:** — I recognize Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. Yes, I'm very glad to hear that you're sharing space, and I know that you were one of the first ones to be doing that, and I certainly look forward to what may come out of the meetings of the independent officers to move forward and share more of their services and more of their space in the long term. And I think it would be of benefit not only budget-wise but also for citizens who are looking for services rather than being shuffled from pillar to post until they find somebody who they fall into their category. At least if they were in the same location they could simply walk down the hallway to the appropriate office, and I think that would be of benefit to everybody.

I'm not sure if you were in here — I think you were — when we were talking with the Chief Electoral Officer about the voters lists and the necessity for identification on there, and he mentioned the health cards. I thought, I wonder what Mr. Dickson thinks about this. I wonder if you would like to comment on that, and should we be utilizing the health cards, driver's licences, or should there be some other identifier that we put in place to provide that kind of identifications?

**Mr. Dickson:** — Well thanks for the question. I was there and I heard both the submission from my colleague, the Chief Electoral Officer, Acting Chief Electoral Officer, and I also heard your observation, Mr. D'Autremont. Well look, the thing is this, is we have no absolute right of privacy in Canada. It's always a question of, there's sometimes compelling social public policy reasons that override an individual's privacy, and it's certainly open to the legislature to determine by, you know, through legislation.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — We were hoping the two of you would sit down and resolve it for us here. That's why we raised it in the presence of both of you. We were looking for a joint

submission.

**Mr. Dickson:** — Well I'd welcome the opportunity. What we would normally do . . . And I should back up and say we have been, we have been I think pretty strong on *The Health Information Protection Act*. And because there's a specific provision, section 11 of the Act, it explicitly says you cannot require the production of the health services card or the health services number for any reason other than the provision of health care, unless it's provided by statute or regulation. And the reason for that is it's still the same business of electronic health record.

I mean that's the only reason we have HIPA, because in 1998 the decision was made in Saskatchewan by the government of the day to create SHIN [Saskatchewan Health Information Network], as it then was, and now it's called something different. But the concern was that the health services number is unique for each individual and it may be a way, it may serve to be a key into this electronic health record. And so it probably isn't appropriate that you have to produce your health services number to get a big game hunting licence, which is the case, that you shouldn't have to produce your health services number to get a gas rebate from the Finance ministry, and you probably shouldn't have to do it for a host of other reasons.

But I think I've already mentioned the Acting Chief Electoral Officer. This is what privacy impact assessments . . . That's why we have that tool on our website and we encourage our fellow independent officer to actually do a privacy impact assessment. And that takes you through the questions and the rigour of, is this an exceptional enough case and is there no less privacy-invasive way of making sure you have an accurate . . . The key is having an accurate, up-to-date voters list, right?

And you like to think everybody has got a current health services card so that makes it a bit unique. Everybody doesn't drive. Everybody doesn't have other kinds of media. So I'm happy to work with the Health ministry, the Chief Electoral Officer, anyone in talking about . . . If the decision is made to do it, we're less about saying red light, you can't do it. It's more an amber light. Can we work together to find a way to minimize the impact on people's privacy? Is there a practical way to mitigate some of the risks or some of the harm?

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, thank you. That's all I have.

**The Chair:** — Any further questions, committee members? Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Dickson, and your staff, for coming and presenting your budgetary estimates to the Assembly. And Mr. Morgan I think has a thank you as well.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — On behalf of all the members of the Assembly, I want to thank you for your continuing work and your guidance and direction. It's appreciated sometimes more than it's reflected in some of the statements that are made. So thank you.

**Mr. Dickson:** — Thanks very much, Minister.

**The Chair:** — I would just like to also mention that once we've finished hearing from all the reports, we will have discussion. We probably won't get back to you before the end of the day

but we will certainly converse the recommendations of the committee.

### Office of the Children's Advocate

**The Chair:** — Now I'm pleased to call forward our Children's Advocate, Mr. Pringle and staff, to come and share your budgetary report. So welcome, Bob. Your first time before us with your new role and responsibilities and, Mr. Pringle, pleased to have you here and the floor is yours to introduce your staff and your budget presentation.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, members. It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to come before you today along with my co-worker, Ms. Bernie Rodier, our director of administration. And I'm new but Bernie, Ms. Rodier's been here before and I know that members will be familiar with her high-quality work.

And in the early stages for me, Mr. Chairman, five weeks on the job, I want to thank you for your accessibility and support and also to thank Mr. Putz and the legislative staff for a good orientation and also for their support to our office throughout the year.

As the new Children's Advocate for the province of Saskatchewan, I wish to present this 2011-2012 budget proposal for your consideration.

On our first opportunity to meet, I want to express my appreciation for your confidence both in my commitment and in my ability to fulfill this important role. I will honour this public trust by working tirelessly to ensure that all Saskatchewan's children and young persons are safe, protected, and have the opportunity and support to reach their greatest potential as healthy and happy adults. In this regard, there are many, many partners in government and across the province in this mutual goal.

Of course no Children's Advocate works alone, and our office is effective because we have staff who are caring and dedicated and qualified, who share a vision that the best interests and the well-being of children and youth in Saskatchewan is their ultimate goal. And I would be remiss without conveying my heartfelt thanks to the dedicated employees who will be working with me, and you, over the next five years.

What I am presenting to you today is also a status quo budget, that is by way of program. And status quo includes all anticipated increases to personnel, personal and non-personal services in both the budgetary and statutory expenditure lines. Guidelines for projecting these increases were provided, as you know, by the Assembly, the Department of Finance, the Public Service Commission, and Government Services.

My plan is to engage in an independently facilitated strategic planning process early in the year, this year, to consider the program, services, and priorities over the next five years. And I'm not requesting additional resources for this process, and we were planning to manage this within the current 2011-2012 allocation.

[16:15]

I realize, Mr. Chairman, that yourself and other members have advance copies of our proposal, so I'll just make a few summary comments and then hit some of the highlights. I know it's later in the day as well so I appreciate your time and attention. And then, of course, welcome any questions you may have. And even though I'm new, well between my colleague and I, we'll attempt to answer questions as best we can.

While the 2011-2012 budget proposal is presented as a status quo budget and no new resources are being requested, the following are outstanding external and internal pressures that the office continues to manage.

First of all, meeting the ongoing demand from individual children and youth or groups of children and youth for front-line advocacy services. While these numbers are certainly increasing significantly, at this point I do not have confidence in the numbers year over year. But I know that the demand is increasing. We just need to do a little more work on the clarity in that regard to ensure we're giving you factual information.

Secondly, completing the backlog and staying current with referrals for child death and critical injury investigations.

The third pressure: increasing awareness of long-standing systemic issues with ministries and agencies and advocating for systemic change to provincial legislation, policy, and program practices.

And fourthly, focusing on our resources for organization development of the Children's Advocate office. Examples: the strategic planning process, as I've mentioned, and the new information management system, and so on.

My priorities over the next year are, first of all, firstly to assess the workload demands in the four core service areas. Secondly, to evaluate our approach — that is the approach of the office and also the effectiveness of these services. I feel we have some work to do there. Thirdly, put in place mechanisms to ensure that we are accountable for the quality of our advocacy and the quality of our investigations. Fourthly, position ourselves as an office to assist the province in the recommendations of the child welfare review and then monitor the progress. And I anticipate that there will be some implications for the evolution of this office with regard to that report.

Number five, become more well known. What I discovered in the child welfare review is that even though the demands seem to be going up, there are a number of places in the province who are not aware of the office or do not feel it's really within their reach. So that says to me there is more public awareness that's required.

The sixth priority at this point, as I see it, a greater research capacity so that our research and our reports are evidence based, and also greater program knowledge of best practices in child welfare, wherever that may be. And similar to what I heard the Ombudsman saying, we I think need better program expertise in some areas as well in relation to services for children and youth.

Seventh priority, a greater focus on systemic advocacy. But obviously we need to balance that with the individual advocacy which is one of our core services. But I believe we could be

more effective in helping more young people if we were looking at some bigger-picture issues.

Number eight, effective working relationships with government ministries and child- and youth-serving agencies.

Number nine, looking at establishing a youth advisory council to seek the advice of young people with regard to issues that affect them.

And number 10, the pro bono independent legal representation program is in trouble, in my view, and we need to work with the legal community to rebuild that service as currently we're only able to provide legal services for 28 per cent of those who request that service.

So those are some of the priorities as I see them. I'm prepared to take any of your questions on those if you like. In the report, I think on page 1 there, it just outlines our vision, our responsibilities. We have four core areas of service that you will be well aware of, related to systemic change, advocating for the well-being of children, promoting public accountability through comprehensive investigations, and the educational role in terms of the rights of children across the province.

Then our flow chart on page 5 just speaks to the question that everything we do relates to ensuring that the best interests of children are promoted, taken into account, and pervade all government policy, programs, and services.

And then on number 6, Mr. Chairman, and board members, is I guess the status quo request. Just looking at the 2011-12 expenditure estimates, personal services, we have two permanent staff members who are in scope. We have 14 altogether. Two are in scope and we're bound there, as you will know, by the collective agreement with SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union]. So there's a 2 per cent wage increase effective October the 9th of this year and accordingly that has an impact of \$1,000.

Twelve of our full-time equivalents are out of scope, and of course following the guidelines of the commission, 2 per cent there. And then we have factored in the performance pay regarding the annual appraisals, which again is really beyond our control, assuming that the employees are performing satisfactorily. Accordingly the total increase to out-of-scope salaries is anticipated to be \$31,000. So the total there is, with the in-scope and out-of-scope personal service, 32,000. Then the statutory personal services requirement related to the Children's Advocate, the allocation there, it would be effective the first of each year. The impact would be \$1,100.

On the non-personal services side, we looked at 1.4 per cent in all the non-personal service expenditure lines, which was part of the guideline we were given, which has an impact of \$1,600. The exception of course is, similar to the Ombudsman and similar to all the offices, is with the tight office space issue. This increase for us this year is really doubled for this year and next year as negotiated by Government Services, so it has an impact of 41,400 on our budget this year. So the overall increase is really 43,000 to our non-personal service expenditures, counting the 1.4 and then the increase in the rent. That is summarized on page 8, Mr. Chairman, board members.

Total request, \$76,100.

In conclusion, after careful analysis of our circumstances in the office, I would respectfully ask that the Board of Internal Economy recommend to the Legislative Assembly a total appropriation for the Children's Advocate office, vote 076, in the amount of \$1,773,100 for 2011-2012 which represents an overall increase, as I said, of 76,100 or 4.5 per cent over our 2010-2011 approved allocation.

I might say too just in closing that, interestingly, the child welfare review report, like the overcrowding foster home report of a couple of years ago, every time there is something major like that in the public mind, the number of calls increase. And that is certainly happening. And as I say, I don't have the confidence in the numbers, in the system we have, to quote that information because . . . Well neither one of us really have confidence in the numbers. We have to do some more work on that to make sure we're counting the same way from year to year.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I'll close and be happy to try and answer any questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Pringle. Do we have any questions? Mr. Morgan.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I don't really have a question so much as just congratulations on your appointment, and welcome to the committee and welcome to your job. We look forward to working with you. I think my colleagues have a few brief questions, but thank you for being here and we're looking forward to good things in our province.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much. I look forward to working with you and all members.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. I'd like to also congratulate you on your new position, Bob. I know that you have sat in committee before, just not in the witness chair.

I do have a couple of questions, and I'm glad to see that my concern about the term status quo is starting to have some recognition. Even though everybody still uses it, they're at least qualifying it. It's program status quo.

When I look at your employee increases, salary increases, you have two that are in scope and you're budgeting \$1,000 increase. Are both of these people at the top of their classification and therefore there's no incremental adjustments available to them?

**Mr. Pringle:** — Yes.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. On the out-of-scope people, what would the value of the 2 per cent general adjustment be?

**Mr. Pringle:** — It's 22,000, Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, thank you . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Is there . . . performance pay eligibility

increases, which I think works out to an increase per employee of \$2,550 approximately.

**Mr. Pringle:** — 9,000 in total, Mr. D’Autremont.

**Mr. D’Autremont:** — 9,000 total?

**Mr. Pringle:** — For the performance paid. Assuming they all make it.

**Mr. D’Autremont:** — That was my next question is, how is that distribution? Is it 3 per cent across the board? Is it somebody gets 1 per cent, somebody gets 5 per cent? How is that distribution determined and how is it made?

**Ms. Rodier:** — There are only three FTEs that are eligible. The rest are at the top of the range, so it’s a 3 per cent projection for those three FTEs.

**Mr. D’Autremont:** — So just in general though, would it be that everybody, if they were eligible, would get the 3 per cent? Or is it distributed in some other manner that you have some fixed amount of dollars available to for your discretion? Or is it everybody, it’s just across the board, if you’re not at the top of your classification, entitled to 3 per cent?

**Ms. Rodier:** — No. We go through a rigorous performance appraisal process, and the Public Service Commission gives us guidelines. You know, if people are falling within expectations or if they’re exceeding or whatever, there’s guidelines for each of those categories. And so we go through that review process.

**Mr. Pringle:** — We’re obligated to follow the categories, right?

**Ms. Rodier:** — Right. Yes.

**Mr. Pringle:** — We’re obligated to follow those categories, as you would know. Yes.

**Mr. D’Autremont:** — Okay, thank you. I had a question here, but you answered that already. So that was all I had.

**The Chair:** — Any further questions from committee members? Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Pringle, and staff. Thank you so much for your presentation. There was one other item that we want to take a moment to discuss with Mr. Pringle, so I’d ask for a motion to move in camera.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I’ll move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Morgan moves that we move in camera. Do I have a seconder?

[The board continued in camera.]

**The Chair:** — I’ll call the committee back to order and I’ll entertain a motion.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That for the 2010-2011 fiscal year, a request for special warrant funding in the amount of \$60,000 be approved for vote 076, Children’s Advocate.

**The Chair:** — Do I have a seconder? Mr. Yates. Any questions? Is the committee in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — It’s agreed. Carried. Thank you very much, Mr. Pringle.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

**The Chair:** — Seeing it’s near 10 to 5 and Mr. Putz has been quite gracious enough in making the legislative staff available, but I’ll entertain a motion from the committee if we want to extend and have the report by the Legislative Assembly or reconvene tomorrow at 5 o’clock with that report . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . 8 o’clock. 8 o’clock in the morning.

**Mr. D’Autremont:** — I’ll make a motion:

That we adjourn now and reconvene at 8 o’clock tomorrow morning.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Are we all in agreement with the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Agreed. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. D’Autremont.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

[08:00]

**Legislative Assembly**

**The Chair:** — Well good morning everyone. Being 8 a.m., I'll call this meeting to order. Welcome to our staff, Greg and the staff of the Legislative Assembly. Thank you members for your assistance yesterday afternoon. I look forward to the rest of the meeting today as we finalize the debate on the budgets for the independent officers in the Legislative Assembly.

This morning we'll be going over the budget for the Legislative Assembly. With us we have our Clerk, Greg Putz, and Melissa Bennett from the library is here, the chief librarian. Marilyn Borowski, our financial officer; Lorraine, I don't see Lorraine just yet; Lenni — I see in the back — Frohman; Darcy Hislop. Pat is here, Iris Lang. We have Linda Kaminski with us. Ginette, is Ginette here yet? And Mr. Ring, our Law Clerk; and Patrick Shaw, Sergeant-at-Arms. So welcome each and every one of you. Hope I didn't miss anyone and the floor is yours, Greg.

**Mr. Putz:** — Okay thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to members. I think what I'll do is to begin with is to take about 15 minutes to present to you the main features of the estimates that we've proposed to you. And then I and the management team would be pleased to take any questions that you might have for us on any aspect of the budget.

This year we are pleased to present a budget with a zero per cent increase for our core areas of responsibility. And I know that will make Mr. D'Autremont in particular happy because it's status quo in every sense of the word that he could probably think of. So on the statutory side though we present a very small increase, and I'll talk about that later.

We have a couple of additional points that I'll outline for you that are new in this year's budget — election readiness and the Legislative Assembly's centennial. But to start with, I want to give you just a brief outline of the structure of the estimates.

The budget book is again organized into sections that you'd be familiar with from the past number of years. And each of these sections explain the major components of the budget we propose to you here today. Those components are the Office of the Speaker and the Board of Internal Economy; the caucus office administration; then the Legislative Assembly Service and the associated Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund, otherwise known as RARF; and then the statutory estimates, which of course comprise of the indemnity allowances and expenses for members of the Assembly, and your allowances for extra duties in intersessional committee expenses, etc.

Then as I mentioned, we have two additional categories of expenses for the next fiscal year, and these are election readiness and the Assembly's centennial. And at the outset, I'd just like to mention that these last two new categories have some future implications not necessarily tied whether you'll approve the amounts this year. In one respect it is tied, and I'll get into that later, but there are some implications for 2012-13. And the reason for that is that this being an election year, the transition expenses for many of those MLAs who are retiring or

some of those who won't make it back will carry over into the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

And then of course the main area of activity for the centennial — the building — will be in the year 2012. So the proposal that we have for you today is in anticipation of the centennial year.

So before getting into the numbers and the details of the expenditures, I just want to give a few remarks about the action plan that we presented to you in section 4 of the budget book and to remind you that the action plan is presented to you in response to the Provincial Auditor's recommendation that the board should review and approve the operational goals and objectives of the Assembly service and then monitor the progress in achieving those goals. Now you do the monitoring every year by reviewing the mid- and year-end status reports we present to you on our action plan, but each of those action plans begins actually as part of the estimate process.

This year in putting together the action plan, managers were asked to plan on the basis of how they would continue providing the regular and ongoing services to the members and to the public, make improvements, find efficiencies, and propose enhancements to the services provided to the Assembly members and the public, and to respond to new demands and changing circumstances — one of those is of course election readiness — and express those actions in terms of our LAS strategic plan.

Now I don't propose to get into the details of the plan here, other than to say I'll have more to say on election readiness, which as I said is a priority for us in 2011. And I also want to point out to you that the action plan is not meant to give you a complete picture of the services provided by LAS on an everyday, ongoing basis — just so there's no confusion about that. We do provide to members every year — the members of the board and to the members — generally through electronic means, a guide to members' services which in essence is a catalogue of all of the services that we provide to the members and the caucuses.

I also want to point out that as part of our core services we provide service to approximately 400 people including MLAs, constituency assistants, caucus employees, our own LAS employees, and of course the independent officers. And you heard from the officers yesterday. In fact as an exercise here recently, in the last year we've provided about 5,500 hours of services to the independent officers in various capacities. So if you have any questions about any part of the action plan or guide, we'd be pleased to discuss any of the initiatives and services with you at the end of my presentation.

I now would like to turn to the estimates and the assumptions we used in developing our budget proposal. As in past years, we prepared the estimates using four basic economic adjustments and assumptions which I'll quickly mention. First is executive government's 2 per cent assumption for in-scope, aligned positions and you heard a lot about that yesterday. All the independent officers of course are using the same assumption. Second, executive government's 2 per cent assumption for out-of-scope, aligned positions and the \$770 flexible benefit for each of the out-of-scope, aligned positions. Third, a 65-day

session based on the parliamentary calendar. And fourth, a consumer price index assumption for 2011-2012. And we used the same number as the Ministry of Finance, and that factor is used to calculate members' expense provisions and caucus resources.

Now I just want to point out at the time of preparing our Estimates book, we'd been informed that the figure would be 1.2 per cent for the CPI [consumer price index] assumption for next year, and that was updated after we printed our book to 1.4 per cent. You heard that from some of the officers yesterday. But the point two per cent difference is not significant enough from our perspective to alter the amounts that we're asking you to approve here today.

So now I'd like to briefly summarize how we've represented last year's budget figures. You'll recall that when the board met last year to consider budgets, executive government was in negotiations with many of its employment unions. For that reason, the board deferred all of its decisions on the economic adjustments until government had settled, had a settlement in place. And that settlement, as I recall, came sometime in April when it was actually ratified. And as it turned out, the economic adjustment for the Assembly and the officers was considered by you, the board, and approved at the end of July. There was a board meeting at the end of July where that happened.

For the independent officers, the adjustment was made by the approval of special warrants and subsequently by supplementary estimates in the fall sitting of the session. And for us the adjustment was made by reallocating some of the funds from the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund after cancellation of the card access security project.

The adjustment that you made in July is reflected included in the figures on page 15. Also at the July meeting the board approved funding for competitions to fill a number of vacant independent officer positions. And we typically treat funding for purposes like these competitions along with situations such as national conferences as one-time expenditures, and those amounts are not brought forward as part of the budget request for the next fiscal year.

Normally we would adjust the previous year's estimate by backing out the one-time funding so not to skew the percentage increase or decrease the request for the next year. We missed that this year. So I just want to let you know that the percentage change after taking the one-time costs out of the adjusted figure is different than what you have in the book. The total of the one-time costs added to our budget in '10-11 is \$75,000. If you remove that from the adjusted 2010-11 estimates reported on page 15, then our budgetary percentage decrease is point two two per cent — basically a zero budget. And the total percentage increase, including all of the programs proposed, would then be 11.45 per cent. So essentially what we have is, I mentioned at the outset, is a zero budgetary request, or a negative 1 per cent budgetary request if you don't factor in those one-time expenses from last year.

I'd also want you to note that 71 per cent of the budgetary costs go to our personnel services, so the economic adjustments and benefits that I mention, based on those assumptions, have a significant impact on our overall budget numbers. And

normally the economic adjustments would result in a more significant percentage increase in our legislative service and we'd be coming and talking about a status quo budget. And Dan would have that same argument with us that he had with the officers yesterday.

Happily though, this is somewhat of an extraordinary year for us because we're able to absorb the regular incremental staff cost inflationary pressures to provide you with a zero budget. And we do this, managers worked hard to reduce their budgets, but we benefit this year from one larger decrease on the budgetary side, and that's with our television broadcast distribution costs. We can save here about \$140,000 this year.

As I mentioned, also LAS managers worked hard to hold the line in their budgets. In ten branches there have been estimate decreases, and six branches have estimates increased with a range from point one seven to no more than 1.54 per cent increases.

So now I want to move on to the additional programs because that's where our more significant costs will be for this next fiscal year. 2011 is an election year and because of the set election date enacted four years ago, we know precisely that the election will be on November 7th. In the past the Assembly did not, could not presume the timing of an election. So consequently we did not budget for elections even though, you know, we probably could have bet the farm there might have been one that year.

[08:15]

We know the election date, so we know expenses will be incurred and when to expect them. Because of this, we felt we must plan for the election, and that planning is included in the budget proposal.

So if you turn to the summary on page 15, you'll see that we estimate election cost to be approximately \$921,000, and information about that can be found on page 36. Just by way of some explanation how we arrived at that figure, we calculated not only the election-related costs but also the election-related savings we expect because of a decreased level of activity for such things as committees.

On the budgetary side, we must plan for everything such as moving and storage of MLA furniture, to ceremonies and official portraits. And all of these are costs to the LAS of course over and above our regular operating costs.

On the other hand, we know that committees are less likely to be active. So that means about \$60,000 less in costs for Hansard in committee support, and these are savings to the Assembly. So the savings actually more than offset the budgetary election costs, so we predict a net decrease on the budgetary side as well.

The same rationale was used to calculate the statutory expenses. The expected decrease in committee activity allows us to take about \$25,000 off what we estimate for election-related expenses. So as you can see in the summary on page 36, the main election expenses are statutory and based on entitlements through the board directives.

The expenses come from transition entitlements for outgoing MLAs, severance payments for their staff, and constituency office equipment and furniture for newly elected and returning MLAs. Obviously we can't predict the outcome of an election. Our statutory estimate is based on the average turnover of members in the last three elections, and that number is 22 members. We have not included in these numbers expenses for pay in lieu of notice for constituency assistants.

Our budgetary estimate is based on the last election adjusted by the operational changes since 2007, so our total maximum estimate for election expenses is \$921,000, all of it derived from the statutory side of things. And of course being statutory and estimates, the money will be spent only if it is needed and will be left in the treasury if it's not required.

Now as I alluded at the beginning of my remarks, election-related costs will occur in 2012-13 fiscal year as well. Members who retire or are defeated are entitled to a transition, and some of those payments to the longer serving members will carry over past April 1st, 2012. These costs have to be accounted in the year that they occur. So just to make members aware that next year we'll know those amounts because we'll know the results of the elections and there'll be an amount that you'll be asked to approve in that category as well.

I also just want to point out at this point that I think you're all aware, because some of you have been on the board for a long time, there are a number of administrative and management issues associated with general elections, and we are in the process of preparing a dissolution guideline for the 2011 general election. We hope that the board will meet probably at the end of April or more likely first half of May to review and approve those guidelines.

So I'd now like to turn to the centennial project proposal. And before getting into that proposal, I want to give you a bit of context why our long-standing committee room project has been repackaged as a centennial proposal. And I see Dan smiling because I think he was here at the beginning in 2002 when this was first proposed.

I think yesterday Dan commented he was in the referendum on whether we should be a province or not. Anyway so Dan might remember that on October 12th, 1912, this building was officially opened, and so October 12th, 2012 will be the 100th anniversary of the official opening of our Legislative Building. To celebrate the centennial, executive government asked its new Provincial Capital Commission to form an interministry committee to plan projects and events to mark the anniversary.

Now obviously the Assembly itself should be part of the central part of the celebrations so the Chair — and the Chair is Harley Olsen — invited me to join the committee as the representative of the legislative branch of government. Besides the Capital Commission, the committee is comprised of ministry officials from provincial heritage, the provincial archives, the Ministry of Education, Tourism, protocol office, and Ministry of Government Services and the Wascana Centre Authority. And the purpose of the committee is to develop events and coordinate initiatives to mark that anniversary in 2012. And so you can see from the variety and the representation on the committee that the celebration will be multi-faceted.

Now at the inception of the committee, it was decided there would also be a legacy component to the anniversary. In that category I put forward two projects that all of you will be familiar with: the committee room project and the new carpet for the Chamber. The committee approved both the idea of the committee room and the carpet as laudable ways to build on the committee's heritage. Now completion of the committee room and the replacement of the worn carpet, I also believe — that's why I put them forward — would be credible and meaningful ways to mark the beginning of the next century of the building.

Now for the ministries, the funding decisions will be made through executive government process and I understand through a cabinet decision item at some point. For our centennial projects, it's you the board who will decide the level of funding and that will of course determine the extent of our participation in the celebration.

Now next year I'll bring forward a package of ideas to actually mark the celebration and that'll be a part of the 2012-13 consideration. If you approve the funding for the committee room, the plan will be to timetable its completion so that it'll be opened exactly 100 years to the day this building was opened by the Governor General in 1912.

So the funding request you have before you is for a two-year project. If the room is to be finished by October 12th, 2012, then we must begin work in 2011. To finish the work, the balance of the costs will have to be approved next year in the 2012-13 budget. So work in 2011, if it's approved, will focus on the elevator, stairs, and roof, as I understand it. And Darcy Hislop is here prepared to speak to the plan in more detail if you have questions about that.

And I'm not sure whether Paul Nepper is here or not. Paul's here too. Paul is with Government Services and he's here actually to speak to the library project at Walter Scott but he's one of the principals involved in the planning and costing out for the committee room proposal that we put before you. So there you have it.

It was agreed nearly 10 years ago that a committee room would be desirable if it's affordable, and the board has put nearly \$300,000 into the project so far to bring it to a tender-ready state, at least a tender-ready state last year. This is a working building and I think the completion of the committee room to mark the centennial of the building would be a fitting way to look to the future and mark the modern evolution of our parliamentary institution. Now I do understand that the project comes with a large price tag and that's something that you'll have to decide whether it's affordable for the province or not. We understand that.

Now I'd like to now turn to the balance of our . . . or to our refurbishment asset replacement fund. I just about trapped myself there because this committee project used to be part of that proposal. The RARF [Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund] is found beginning at page 22 of your budget book. To remind members, RARF was established in February 2007 to provide a source of funding from outside the core LAS and Assembly budget for improvement to facilities, replacement of furnishings, non-capital equipment, and major capital asset acquisitions. For this reason . . . Did I give you the

wrong page number? Oh sorry; 28, sorry.

So RARF has been always presented to you, the board, separately from the regular part of our budget. This is the last year of the fund under the original board order that established RARF. Besides the projects we present for your consideration, we also have a request that the board make a decision on the future of RARF.

Before getting to that, just a few words about the two projects that we have put forward to you for this year's budget. Last year the board endorsed and approved funding for a project put forward by our Sergeant-at-Arms to begin the process of improving the security within the Legislative Building by replacing lock and keys with a proximity card access system that parallels the system that's already in place in many executive government buildings. That project, as I mentioned, was eventually deferred by subsequent board decision. Because the board did initially approve the project as a good idea, we've again proposed it for your consideration. You're familiar with the project, of course, and there is probably no need for me to discuss the details unless you have questions. And if you do, Pat is here and would be happy to answer those questions.

What I want to get to now is our major proposal for this year. And it's a multi-year project, and it takes the majority of the RARF funds for the next fiscal year.

Government Services is in the process of refurbishing Walter Scott Building. That's been a multi-year project, and it'll be refurbishing the basement as the last of the multi-year rehabilitation project. And as you're probably aware, the main part of our Legislative Library's book collection is in the basement of Walter Scott Building. Consequently this project is of significant importance to the library and the oldest library collection that it's responsible for. So from a management point of view, we believe it's imperative that the space be properly equipped to meet the library's specific needs for fire suppression, environmental controls such as temperature and humidity, and ultraviolet light. So at the end of my remarks — and I am coming close to the end of my remarks here — I'd like to invite Melissa to outline the project and explain the importance of this project to the library. As I mentioned, Paul Nepper's also here to help answer any questions you might have about this project.

This project is potentially a two-year project, and as you understand from the presentation Pat gave to you last year, the card access project can also be staged over a number of years.

As I mentioned, RARF fund as originally conceived will be finished at the end of 2011-12 fiscal year unless you, the board, decide to renew it. In the budget document, I've outlined the rationale and the history of the fund over the last four years, and you can see from the summary table the important improvements the fund has been able to provide for the Assembly. It was meant to give the Assembly a regular means outside its core budget to make improvements and replace outdated equipment. We think the fund has benefited the institution, has been immensely important for us in planning and setting our annual priorities, and we have really appreciated the board's support and participation in this process over the last four years. So it would be extremely helpful if the board

made a decision to continue the fund.

This is an election year, and when we start planning for our 2012-13 fiscal year next October, I suspect that all of you will be focused on getting re-elected and not likely around to approve renewing this fund at that time. So it would be useful to know when we start planning that budget that the fund will be available. So that's why we're asking you to at least consider today making a decision on the future of RARF. It's our hope that you accept our recommendation that the fund be continued as a regular part of the budget approval process in the future.

I'd like to now turn very briefly to the statutory estimates which you'll find in the section 10 of the budget submission. Overall the statutory expenditures will require an estimate of \$201,000 increase in funding for the next fiscal year, and this is based on those assumptions I mentioned earlier.

[08:30]

The first assumption is the consumer price index for Saskatchewan. We know that the CPI is predicted to be 1.4 per cent. That rate affects members' indemnity, additional duties, constituency service expenses, capital city accommodation, and the caucus grants.

The second assumption is that the MLA travel expense rate, which is based on the Saskatchewan federal public service rate, has increased marginally, and this will result in a very small increase to MLA travel. Both these factors are automatically applied based on Board of Internal Economy directives.

And the third factor that applies is for your constituency offices. A 2 per cent economic adjustment will be applied to members' constituency assistant expense provisions.

So given these factors and the changes to the component parts, the statutory estimates, that's how we arrived at the figures that are in the budget book.

Now that concludes my introductory remarks of the budgetary and statutory increases in the submission before you. I think that LAS has prepared a solid action plan for the coming year that does not require an increase this year. The statutory estimate increase of 1.2 per cent is reflective basically of the CPI for the next year, and the province will have a general election in November of this year, so we presented you our estimate based on past experience over the past three elections as to what those costs might be.

We have proposed to you funding to work on a second committee room. There's an opportunity to complete this project in time to be part of the anniversary celebration for the centennial of the Legislative Building if you feel that the province can afford this project at this time.

We also presented to you with our priorities for the refurbishment fund which includes a project of significant importance to our library, the province's oldest, and the province's oldest library collection. So I'd like now to invite Melissa maybe to outline that project to just indicate the significance of that project to the next fiscal year and why we need your support in making these renovations.

**Ms. Bennett:** — Thank you, Greg, and thank you to the board for giving me an opportunity to share some remarks about this project. Thank you also to Paul Nepper for making himself available at this time of year which I know is a very busy time of year for him.

This RARF item, as Greg already indicated, focuses on the Legislative Library collection annex which is located in the lower level of the Walter Scott Building which is just down the street from us and it has been located there for many years now. The collection annex which I think only, amongst this group, perhaps Mr. Speaker has actually taken a walk-through — it might be nice to do that with the board someday — but the collection annex contains approximately 80 per cent of the library's collection, so a substantial portion of our Legislative Library.

The Government of Saskatchewan, through the Ministry of Government Services, has been rehabilitating the Walter Scott Building for several years now in order to bring it up to modern building standards. Work has proceeded on the building in phases and this year, from August to November, rehabilitation work will take place in the lower level where the library collection annex space is located. The rehabilitation will involve gutting the entire space of the collection annex back to the building slab and brick and essentially rebuilding the space. Everything will essentially be replaced, except for the floor is going to be staying as it is. The Ministry of Government Services absorbs the cost of this project. In the context of the renovation, tenants are invited to identify tenant-sought improvements that are needed. If there are upgrades required that are unique and needed for the tenant's business, the tenant can incorporate these changes and then absorb the added cost of making those changes.

Tenant specific customizations that have been identified for the library collection annex are threefold. Firstly, installation of a pre-action fire suppression system which is considered a standard for library collection environments. Secondly, upgrading the room envelope to a standard that is suitable for the preservation of library materials. And then thirdly, we've identified some relatively minor room layout changes.

The preferred fire suppression system is a pre-action sprinkler system which mitigates the risk of collection damage from accidental discharge, because water is not stored in the pipes as it is with a usual sprinkler system. It's the type of sprinkler system that was in fact installed in the library location here in the Legislative Building when sprinklers were installed.

Upgrading the room envelope involves using higher-grade insulation, higher-grade windows, and higher-grade ceiling tiles to create a tighter and sounder building structure within which we can install a temperature control system at a later date. So when Greg mentioned that this is potentially a multi-year project, that is what we were referring to — that ideally to make the space optimum for the preservation of these historic materials, we would have a temperature control system in place. But you cannot install a temperature control system if the room envelope is not tight and sound. It will actually cause damage to the rest of the building. So these infrastructure changes to the room envelope would need to be made. So we haven't included a temperature control system for this proposal, but we're

proposing that that room envelope is built in such a way that it could accommodate one in the future.

Changing the room envelope under regular circumstances is unlikely because of the cost involved. This particular project gives us the opportunity to do it at a fraction of the cost. We only pay to upgrade the materials to our desired level and the additional labour that would be involved. Government Services is essentially paying for the bulk of the project.

LAS chose this project as a priority for RARF funding for three reasons really. First, the library collection itself is the oldest library collection in Saskatchewan. It contains irreplaceable materials that are of importance to Saskatchewan's culture, its history, and its democratic development. We are stewards of the collection and we are responsible for protecting it. Risks to heritage library collections are chronic physical deterioration, catastrophic events, and theft. The proposed improvements will help mitigate these risks.

Secondly, the province is financing a complete overhaul of this space and these adjustments will ensure that the changes are made that are needed for the operational needs of the library.

And thirdly, the cost of making the changes during this particular time frame of this complete space overhaul financed by Government Services is really a fraction of what it would otherwise cost. To use a cliché, I think it would be crazy not to do it in some ways because of just how affordable it is to do it at this particular time while the room is completely taken apart.

So that is, in a nutshell, the reason why we have given this project priority for this year, and we're really excited about the capacity that this project gives us to take a huge step forward in protecting our historical collection. So I'd be happy to take any questions if you have them.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — So hopefully the . . .

**The Chair:** — One second. Thank you so much, Melissa and Greg. You have no further comments at this time, Greg? Now we will open the floor for questions and I will recognize Minister Morgan.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Sorry, Mr. Speaker. The room is, I gather, gutted right to bare cement right now, to a brick wall.

**Ms. Bennett:** — Not right now. It will be in August.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Okay.

**Ms. Bennett:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — But you wouldn't use the building or you wouldn't move things of the collection into it until you had the temperature and humidity controls installed.

**Ms. Bennett:** — You're asking if we would move our materials over there or . . .

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Yes. I'm just confirming that you're talking about doing the temperature controls in a subsequent year. Was that my understanding?

**Ms. Bennett:** — Yes. My understanding as well is that the changes to the room envelope will actually improve the temperature control situation over there because it'll have a sounder room environment, if you will — climate environment — in that room. We have a dehumidifier over there so we're able to dehumidify in the summertime. But yes. Go ahead.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Yes. My question is, if I understood you correctly, you were talking about doing it over two years and there would be, some of the expense would be in a subsequent year. And so I'm wondering how much of the expense would be in the subsequent year and whether there's any benefit to doing it in this year, and whether the room is unusable or how much you could use it until it was fully completed. My inclination would be to want to go ahead and complete it all while it's there now.

**Ms. Bennett:** — The estimated cost that we have been given for a temperature control system is \$130,000 so that would be added on if we were to do that piece this year as well. I would be thrilled to do that this year.

**Mr. Putz:** — And we didn't include it because I think — and Melissa can correct me if I'm wrong — until we complete the room with all of these upgrades, and then we'd be in a better position to know what kind of unit to get. But primarily we want it to live within, if we could, the 250,000 that we have available to you, and this unit would have put us over that. But if the board wants to provide more funds than the 250, we would be pleased to accept that.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Well, we'll have some discussion on it. We appreciate it's a centennial year. The collection of books and artifacts that are there are a significant part of the heritage of the province, and it may be a worthwhile time to consider doing it all at once. And I guess maybe we'll be coming back to you and wanting some other material. But I think the idea of doing that is something that should be of importance to the citizens of the province.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Yates and then Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. Yates:** — My question was answered. I was inquiring how much the additional cost would be in this fiscal year to add the climate control system in. I understand about \$130,000 approximately.

**Ms. Bennett:** — Yes.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Obviously water is not good for books, as we have found out in this building. Is the room protected in some manner from accidental water leakages from above since it is in the basement?

**Ms. Bennett:** — I might ask Paul if he could come up and respond to that.

**Mr. Nepper:** — To answer your question, we are putting a sprinkler system in the building and we're routing the sprinkler system in a way that the main runs are not going to pose any future problems if they leak. We're not sealing the floors, but part of the work we're going to be doing with the ceilings will definitely give some time to address a leak. The pre-action is

really the protection in this space.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So the main lines for the sprinkler system would be routed through the building above the basement, above the archives, so that if there was a leak there it wouldn't impact in the library?

**Mr. Nepper:** — Correct. There's always going to be some impact if there's a sprinkler release. But a single head is easily, usually turned off right away and the water damage would be minimal. We've made it part of our design to make sure the main runs are located in a position that's the least risk for the collection. We haven't sealed the floor or anything like that because there are just too many penetrations. Unfortunately the building . . . Where the collection is located is a very good location on the ground floor, but we still have to protect the building as well. So it's sort of a compromise.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Because it does cause difficulties when there are leaks.

**Mr. Nepper:** — It does. Unfortunately the fire is worse, and most of our risk management professionals have told us that it's better to have the sprinkler system. It's the lesser of two evils, really, and it's manageable.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, thank you.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Yates.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. My question is along the same lines. There's a number of various technologies to seal lines as well where you can't seal the floor. If there are going to be lines running in the area of the library collection, have we explored any ways to additional sealing and casing around the lines themselves to give additional time if there were a leak?

**Mr. Nepper:** — Are you referring to leaks in pipes or heads or something like that or just . . .

**Mr. Yates:** — Yes.

**Mr. Nepper:** — I think it's because you're experiencing some of that in this building right now. We're working on that as we speak. The piping shouldn't leak. We're putting in a good quality system. It's checked a couple times a year and it's tested yearly. The pre-action system again means it's a dry pipe system. There's no water in the lines above the collection. In the event of a fire alarm then it will release water. And then the second stage releases the sprinklers if there truly is a fire, indicated by heat.

[08:45]

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. That answers the question. And secondly, the one question we haven't asked: is there any savings in putting in the climate control system at the same time the refurbishment is being done? Generally when you're already doing the work there is, you know, a percentage of saving in doing it all at once, and the fact that accessibility to space and everything is different than when you're doing it around, you know, a collection or around other items, right?

**Mr. Nepper:** — I would say there is. I couldn't tell you the amount right now, but the fact of the matter is the space is disrupted. We're mobilized in for construction. I mean if we can put units in and run the ductwork at the same time, that'll save that disruption one more time. Plus we have to move some of the books and reallocate space within the B1 area, so there's quite a bit of logistics involved. So that would all be mobilization that would cost money if we came in at a later date to do it.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. It's just understanding that when we're making the decision whether or not to give additional money.

**The Chair:** — Are there any further questions of the staff in regards to the budget presented to us by the Legislative Assembly Library? Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, let me find my ... On the statutory necessity based on the election, the 925,000, if I can find this. Here. You were basing it on what, roughly 23 members changing? Is that the case?

**Mr. Putz:** — No, 22 members, and the reason we picked that number is that we looked at what the average number over the last three elections was for turnover of members and that was basically the reason we picked that number.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I don't want to disagree with you. Three of our members have already indicated that they are going to step down so 19 of the opposition, I think, would be appropriate, but they might disagree with that.

**Mr. Putz:** — There are also three members from the opposition who have announced they're not running again.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I think we're being presumptuous if we assume that 19 other members are going to no longer be MLAs. What kind of dollars would we be looking at if we were to assume six, the ones that we know of, that are not planning on seeking re-election?

**Mr. Putz:** — I'll let Linda speak to that because she has done a calculation for a number of different scenarios.

**Ms. Kaminski:** — In terms of the transitional allowance based upon six members, we looked at the current ones who've announced that they're not going to be running. So based upon their years of service, there would be \$215,000 of an expense that would be recognized in the '11-12 fiscal year. That's 215,000. And 230,000 would be recognized in the '12-13 fiscal year.

In terms of the impact to constituency assistant severance, again based upon six MLAs and the average cost that we were using, \$28,000 for six constituency assistants. And in terms of the constituency office equipment and furniture provision, the \$10,000 term provision, we are anticipating \$36,000 for '11-12. If I add those three expenses together, the 215, the 28.8, and the 36,000, you get a total of 279,800 in the '11-12 fiscal year.

And then what we also have to look at in addition to that is some of the other expenses that we have, related to the grants to

the caucus offices and a savings of the members' committee expenses. So if I look at the costs for the six MLAs as I have outlined to you, and I add on \$58,000 for the caucus grants and I subtract off \$25,000 for savings in members' committee expenses, I get a total of \$309,000. Subtract \$4,000 on the budgetary side. So a total of 309,000 for election readiness.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — On the directive 24, the \$10,000 that's available to all members, so it's 58. So it's irrelevant whether they're new or existing MLAs because they would all be entitled to it?

**Ms. Kaminski:** — Yes, indeed. And you would find really, by and large, the biggest uptake in that initial first year would be with your new members. Certainly yes, all the other re-elected members would also be accessing the funds as well, but primarily the biggest uptake would be with the new ones.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — And have you made the assumption that on the six new MLAs, based on those retiring, that they would not be taking the office equipment in total? Or are you making the assumption that they would take some of the current office equipment?

**Ms. Kaminski:** — Really all I've done here is just said, if there were six members that we know who are not going to be running — I've just assumed six, six MLAs — taking up at about \$6,000 is about the average in the first year. So for a total of \$36,000, however you want to dice it.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Yes. So basically what you're saying is that if we budgeted for only the six, that we would be looking at 309.

**Ms. Kaminski:** — Right. Right.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — As compared to 925?

**Ms. Kaminski:** — Yes. Yes.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Yes. Okay. You have included in your budget estimates an increase in staff of one full-time person and approximately point five for a part-time spread out. I wonder if you could run through that and explain exactly what those are for.

**Mr. Putz:** — The new position that we propose to fund out of our savings is in the CTS branch [communications technology services]. So if Darcy's here, I'll ask him to come forward and he can outline that for you.

**Mr. Hislop:** — The new CTS position is a programmer analyst position. We're looking at this position primarily to maintain and minor developmental work on our applications that we run in-house as well as analysis for future developments. We've identified the item in our strategic plan, point 15 on page 12, where we indicate we're adding a position, a unique position this year where we're looking to add a position, and there is no increase in cost. We're offsetting some of our broadcast savings to fund the position.

There's a couple of things we've done over the last couple of years that I think have set the stage for future enhancements in

things that will be of interest to members and to the public. We recently had put in a new digital transcription system. That product that we use there has an interesting module to incorporate and align the video with the text as an add-on module. We're hoping to utilize that functionality in a new website that we're hoping to begin development this upcoming year. These technologies are largely database driven. It's a matter of aligning the various elements of data across different portions of the organization, the different work modules. It requires a fair bit of work behind the scenes in standardizing our information management framework which we're just in the developmental stage.

In the past we have utilized contract resources for programming. We've been quite successful with that, and I anticipate we'll continue to look to the public sector to leverage their expertise. But a lot of the analysis in smaller developmental things that we'd like to be able to do are more effective and more efficient to have that expertise in-house. Legislative business is quite unique. To get a detailed, comprehensive understanding of that is difficult to find in the marketplace. They're great at the technology and the programming skills; the analysis of the business stuff is not immediately apparent. We spend a fair bit of time getting people up to speed on what legislative processes are.

Our projects tend to be very small in cost compared to other organizations that are leveraging external resources. We typically look at 20, \$30,000 development projects. That's very small scale when you go out to the marketplace and it's difficult to get good quality, consistent resources all the time. You go out with your little projects and you get what resources are available. So again having some of that expertise in-house would certainly help with requirement development — the analysis and the business processes.

Contract resources are also approximately twice the cost of staff salaries. You're paying for their expertise and that's great, but it's expensive over a long term which is . . . Some of the things we're looking to do are certainly longer term issues.

I think probably our last point is just efficiencies on less time spent managing contracts and issuing RFPs and, you know, managing the relationship where you have staff. Then it becomes a work function.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Thank you. How many of those small projects would you have in a year?

**Mr. Hislop:** — Historically over the last four or five years we've averaged probably 30,000 a year. Our most significant one has been the legislative tracking system. This is probably more a function of resources than work to be done, again managing to work within our existing budget. I believe there's lots of opportunities for improvements and efficiencies, and we just manage those based on the resources available.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — The broadcasting costs have normally been going up. This is the first time you've come forward or LAS has come forward with a reduction in that area. What is happening? And what's the likelihood that that'll turn around and we'll be again looking at higher costs?

**Mr. Hislop:** — I'm hopeful that our existing operating costs will remain relatively static over a period of time. Over the last four years we've enjoyed the board's support for RARF projects to do our digital migration of our broadcast facilities and are very appreciative of that.

The same factors that we brought forward with that, why we needed it changed to digital migration, are the same factors that brought about the changes in our broadcast distribution, primarily the satellite. The big two satellite companies, Shaw and Bell ExpressVu, had a desire to run full-time, revenue-positive channels over the satellite system. And our legislature, along with BC and Ontario's, were informed those carriers weren't interested in carrying our signal. So we had to look for alternatives.

We were fortunate with our initial distributor, which originally was SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network], now part of SaskTel, developed their own two-way system that not only did our legislative broadcasts but also the secondary regional college feeds out to all the various areas throughout the province. So we've piggybacked on a unique system that's developed by now SaskTel, owned and operated.

Our contract that brought about these savings was originally with SCN, and we're in the third year of that. SaskTel has assumed and is honouring that contract. That contract will end at the end of this upcoming fiscal year. This is the last year. I don't know what the potential cost implications are. I will assume that the cost model put forward by SCN would be sound and that it would be in the ballpark at SaskTel as well.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I'm disappointed to hear that the other broadcasters didn't feel we were a positive revenue generator for them.

**Mr. Hislop:** — I could see if we could attract some advertising dollars.

[09:00]

**Mr. Putz:** — If I could just comment. This is something that, as Darcy alluded to, all legislative assemblies outside the House of Commons in Ottawa faced over the last year, is that we've all been basically asked to leave, or our services have been discontinued on the direct-to-home services. And it's something that the Speaker and I and some of the other Speakers across the country have been pursuing.

We feel that there's a basic inequity in this country where we're supposed to be, as provinces, co-sovereign with the federal parliament. Their service is a must carry, and it has to be carried on the direct-to-home. Yet the provinces are not and we've continued over the years to be paying a very high cost to deliver our signal. We don't even have the option, if we had the money, any more to use these vehicles. And we've had to resort to basically back to the future. And the way our signal is transmitted is on a lesser band, and that's how we've derived the savings here.

And I don't foresee that changing any time in the near future unless the CRTC [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission], the regulatory body,

decides to change the basis on which provincial assemblies and territorial assemblies are treated by the broadcasters.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — [Inaudible] . . . wearing advertising on our T-shirts or something, you know, like Tim Hortons or CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] or, you know, whoever chose to advertise.

**Mr. Putz:** — Darcy has done an analysis. If we could sell advertising on the people who are on camera the most, maybe Tim Hortons or somebody would pay for the Premier's desk. That might be a possibility to generate revenue. But we don't get to keep the revenue anyways; it goes to the treasury.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — When we're broadcasting committee work, is there an additional charge for that such as if we were broadcasting today?

**Mr. Hislop:** — One of our advantages with the new system is that we now have access to the airtime 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year at no additional cost, unlike our previous contract which, outside the four core months, we paid an hourly rate of \$500.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — That was part of the additional costs we were facing in the past. So that's one FTE. What of the other point four nine that's spread out . . .

**Mr. Putz:** — I'll let Linda address it. But one of the areas there is that we are providing some minimal support to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner through our Law Clerk's office. Some of the reasons that his budget is lower is that the Ombudsman and the Assembly is assisting him.

By statute, if the Conflict of Interest Commissioner asks for support from the Assembly service, we provide it to him. He has asked that, and Ron in Ken's office provides about 30 or 35 hours a year of support when the Conflict of Interest Commissioner organizes the annual meetings with members to update their disclosure reports. So that's one part of it. I'll let Linda answer the other part of it.

**Ms. Kaminski:** — The other two minor parts are: in Assembly administration, there's a point one six increase and that's reflective of actual hours that are worked by our data payment entry clerk, Gail, in the financial services area. So we'd been doing . . . be refining some internal savings to actually pay the actual hours that she's working. And so this FTE request is reflective of the actual hours, so there's about \$8,000 of expenses to fund the data entry person for 312 hours each fiscal year.

And a slight change is in parliamentary publications. You might have noted that we have actually described the FTEs on the basis of a regular non-election year, because we don't want to show a blip next year that all of a sudden we have more transcription hours. So we have indicated in the budget that there is a slight increase, a few extra House transcription hours being offset by a reduction in some senior proofreading costs for an overall change in FTEs of point zero six. However what we expect what's actually going to happen with the election year, we're actually suspecting a little bit of a decrease in our transcription hours related to the House and committee sittings. So overall 1.49 FTE increase.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — You're expecting less filibustering to happen?

**Ms. Kaminski:** — Possibly.

**Mr. Putz:** — Expecting less intersessional committee, because you won't have the time likely to be tending to those things.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — On the RARF program, whether we continue the program, I think we should probably go ahead for another five years on that program rather than make it a permanent part of our funding, that we do it in increments and therefore have the opportunity to re-evaluate it on an ongoing basis.

**The Chair:** — I recognize Minister Morgan.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — The centennial projects that you are contemplating, the . . . [inaudible] . . . Has there been interaction or a lot of discussion with either the Capital Commission or with Government Services at a point where they haven't talked what their budget may be?

**Mr. Putz:** — I am on the committee and we have representation on that intraminsty committee. As I pointed out, we were asked to sit on that and it is chaired by Harley Olsen who is responsible for the Capital Commission. Some senior people from Government Services sit on that committee. Now there was a package of proposals that was, for the executive side of the celebration, to go to Cabinet. I don't know what the status is. Harley hasn't reported back to us yet.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — And maybe I should be asking him directly. You know, I'm reluctant for us at this time to commit to things that they may be planning to fund. Or they may have different priorities, and we haven't had any informal discussion with them at this point in time. But that's what my concern is. I would hate for us to commit some small portion of something that they're not, that they're not supportive of or that they're going in a different direction. We'd want to sort of interlock with them as well as we can, so we may want to just table some of the initiatives. But if we chose to do that, don't read into that we're not supportive of it. It may be we just want to interlock and see where they're at with their funding on it as well.

I think one thing we're . . . and I didn't talk to Mr. Yates about it, was I think we all felt strongly that the library initiative was one that we want to do as much of as we possibly could this year, and if there was a saving to do the humidification and temperature control, we think it would be worthwhile for us to. Even if we were exceeding the allowance for this year, we would.

**Mr. Putz:** — No that is understood, Mr. Morgan. Just by way of explanation, this project for the committee room was raised with the intraminsty committee, and from the perspective of the people who are represented on the committee — heritage, archives, government services — everybody felt it was a worthy project; it was a good legacy project to help propel this building into the next century. We all know that it comes with a high price tag and then that would probably be the deciding factor.

The reason, just to reiterate, why it was brought forward in this year is that if we are to finish that room by the anniversary date, we'd have to get a start on it this next fiscal year. If funding isn't provided for this fiscal year, we will not bring it back next year because we don't want to have scaffolding and refuse chutes and that sort of thing sticking out of the building during the actual centennial year. So if you as a board feel that it's not something that's affordable at this time, then you won't see this in next year's budget.

As I mentioned, the other project that's sort of a legacy, in that legacy category is the carpet. We talked about that last year. Mr. Harrison, you'd asked for a quote on that. We do have a number for that now. It'll be about \$185,000 to put the carpet in. There's some question on this intraminiistry committee. The heritage folks think it should stay red. I know there's a lot of members who believe if we are to have a new carpet, it should be green. I must admit I am in that category. But that is something we'll bring forward next year as . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm in the green category — for the carpet. Make no other further inferences from that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, I am, yes. Okay, you can add that to the list. Thank you, Dan.

So we will bring the carpet and also the other kind of more celebratory type things, events that we might be hosting in the building, as part of next year's budget proposal.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — [Inaudible] . . . did when we last talked about the carpet that it was unusually expensive because they had to do an extra wide piece that had to go on . . . [inaudible] . . . If we decided we were willing to live with a seam in it or stitching, how much if we went with conventional, with carpet? How problematic is that and how much of a saving might that be?

**Mr. Putz:** — I can ask Darcy to speak to that because he's been our person who's been in touch with Government Services.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — So I wouldn't mind knowing how much we could save by going to green because that would certainly be very persuasive in my book.

**Mr. Hislop:** — It's tempting to say it'd be a whole lot cheaper just if that would make the deal. The revised quote is based on sort of a standard carpet-grade nylon carpet of a good quality in standard 12-foot width. So it's not wool; it's not a 24-foot width. And I think there's a fair bit of the savings came out of using a more standard grade.

I believe the carpet itself was about 122. There was about 12,000 in labour costs for removal of some of the benches and whatnot in the gallery, and I believe we have a rough estimate of about 40 to 50,000 for reworking some of the conduit for the power, microphone, tally, network connections under each of the desks in the various areas.

**The Chair:** — I recognize Mr. Yates.

**Mr. Yates:** — I have a number of questions but I want to start out talking about, and it's not in the proposal, but the . . . We're starting to see deterioration in the steps of the legislature, coming up to the legislature. And just wondering, in particular,

there have been days when it hasn't been, snow removal hasn't been at the level you'd like to have for the Legislative Building of the province which is the showcase of the province. And it's been an unusual year with the amount of snow and ice but that, I think, adds to the fact that we're seeing now some cracks in the stone in the steps at the top and that.

Who has responsibility for refurbishing the steps? And the reason I'm asking that, they're not huge problems today but if you let them go another four or five, six years, you know, we may end up with a much larger problem than what we would have if intervention was earlier.

**Mr. Putz:** — That responsibility is not with the Speaker. I mean, in many parliaments the Speaker is responsible for the building but, you know, that is not the case here. It's been Government Services and before that Property Management Corporation.

I know it's part of the discussions for the centennial. The steps have been raised as something that they want to look into. But more importantly, Government Services identified some other major structural issues that need attention over the next few years. And those include the dome, and of course the Tyndall stone around the building and the envelope around the building. I don't know what the plan is. I don't know . . . Paul can speak to that better than I can because it is a Government Services responsibility.

**Mr. Nepper:** — Regarding the structural issues that you were talking about, there's really four cornerstones on the dome. They're very severely deteriorated, and we would like to actually go up this summer and dress them back for safety reasons; at the same time, measure them so we could create new stones. So that would be about a one-month project and it's on our books right now and it's approved for capital. So that's something we'd like to do.

The bigger plan is really to I guess initiate a major rehabilitation over the next few years, starting off by getting a consultant team involved to start looking at what needs to be done, and then phase it and fund it, of course. So it's something we want to, an initiative we want to start this fiscal year, and again just acquiring consultants to start the process.

[09:15]

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. My concern is the same as we had a number of years ago, Dan, when we put in the RARF funding. It's an older building. It's going to continue to need to be upgrading. And one of the questions becomes, I guess, at some point we need to have some discussions whether or not the building gets different priorities — if it's run through the Board of Internal Economy like the building itself is, becomes part of the Clerk's responsibility to oversee or not, those types of things.

But just visibly, my only concern is that if early intervention saves money in the long run, when we start to see deterioration of issues and anything we can do to prevent that is helpful. This is a building we all love, and we've all had the opportunity to work in. So those are my questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Yates. I recognize Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I know that Government Services did the study about two years ago on the exterior of the building and to make an evaluation on what the needs were, and I believe that's still under consideration. So I mean, the steps, etc., would be all a part of that, but that's a very major project so a proper evaluation needs to be done. But the testing has been done on the exterior of the building.

**Mr. Yates:** — Just keeping this building going is a major project.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Pardon?

**Mr. Nepper:** — I could get that if you'd like.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Sure.

**Mr. Nepper:** — The end of this fiscal year we're consolidating all our reports from that investigation project, and that's going to be the driving force for our plan for the future. I can't tell you what that plan is other than the fact that we want to prioritize the work. We do have lots of good information from that project that will help us to prioritize over the next 10, 15 years what the next step should be.

Regarding some of the miscellaneous repairs, we should be doing those ongoing, and we have. They're identified to us as priorities, and we address them through maintenance or small projects.

**The Chair:** — Minister Morgan.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — You know, we've talked a lot about the capital and the needs, and it is an old building. But I would ask that all of you pass on to all of the building staff, I think we're remarkably well served by the maintenance people that work in this building. You know the cleanliness and, you know, where the gravel is sprinkled, and the assistance that we get, it's got to have a lot of challenges with the number of people that come in, the weather that we have, and the fact that we've got a building that's approaching a century old. So thanks to all of you, and pass it on to all of the staff. I think we walk by everybody every day. You say hello to them, but you just don't take the time to let them know how much you appreciate that they're there. So thanks to everybody.

**The Chair:** — Do we have any further questions from committee members?

Just a comment I'd had in regard to broadcasting. I'm not sure how many MLAs get, but I know there are different people that I've run into, especially in rural Saskatchewan, who miss the broadcast. And as Greg said, we've discussed it with other Clerks and Speakers across Canada. Unfortunately until we find a new avenue of broadcasting . . . We do have an excellent team. We do have the ability, but until we have access to a broadcaster or a satellite outside of cable in our rural communities, we do not have an opportunity to . . . and Internet. Outside of that we do not have additional opportunities to broadcast. Mr. D'Autremont has a comment.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Don. I agree. But we're coming to the point where television is for people like yourself and me with grey hair. My children watch their television on their computer. They watch programs there. And so more and more people are watching the legislative channel actually on their computer — if they watch it. And although I think perhaps our target audience is either people in the building or people with grey hair who may be interested in this and not the young people right now.

**Mr. Yates:** — You mean we don't have 400,000 viewers every time . . .

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well if we did have, then they would be coming to us trying to get us to . . . They'd be paying us to do it.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — [Inaudible] . . . the audience is rather small.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — You know, so I think maybe the fact that we're on the Internet is a big part of broadcasting today and getting our message out to the people who are interested. And maybe more of our focus should be spent on making people aware that it's always available on the Internet since we do have limited opportunities on television.

**Mr. Putz:** — As the Clerk and responsible for all of this, I can say that I agree with you, Mr. D'Autremont, that Internet is the future. In fact some of the enhancements Darcy talked about in response to your earlier question I think will make our proceedings easier to access and easier to watch.

Right now we archive it. We could probably produce a better picture, a larger resolution, that sort of thing. You know, just researching, I think people would like to be able to research *Hansard* and then actually watch what the person said. And it's virtually impossible to do that with our current situation. That's one of the enhancements we hope to make over the next year or two.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Actually they were talking about *Dragons' Den* the other day on TV and one of the people who came forward on that actually had a software development that allowed you to type in a bit of text and it would go to that point in the video.

**Mr. Putz:** — That's what we're talking about.

**Mr. Hislop:** — A couple other things when we're looking at broadcasts, the traditional broadcast over the air. We've seen the evolution of TV over the Internet. We're also looking at being able to push that to mobile devices, and that could be audio; it could be video. Again the technologies are there that allow us to tailor it to those particular devices, whether it be BlackBerrys or iPhones.

We'll be looking at that and hopefully piloting a couple of things over the next few years, see if that gains any attraction with any audience. The capabilities are there now and the technologies are proven. It's a matter of putting some resources to it and seeing if it's appropriate.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much, members. And just one

other comment I would add in regards to the building. We look at this building, its centenary coming up in a year's time. But when we look at Eastern Canada or even Europe, there are some amazing buildings that have been around for a long time. And this is one that I think, I would hope that we'd take care of well, that in the future, in maybe two or three centenaries down the road, people would be still marvelling at how well we've managed to keep this building.

So thank you to each and every one of you. Seeing no further questions, I would entertain a motion then that we move in camera to discuss all of the budgetary proposals that have been . . . Moved by, Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. Morgan that we move in camera.

[The board continued in camera.]

**The Chair:** — Well, members, I'll call the meeting back to order. And following our discussion and the presentations from all of the independent members, we have a number of items that we need to have motions to approve expenditures on.

So the agenda item 2 we're going to bring before the members right now on the floor is a motion:

That the 2011-12 estimates for vote 057, Conflict of Interest Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$145,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Could I have a mover for this motion please? Minister Morgan. And a seconder? Mr. Yates. And we're all in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you.

The second motion before the board this morning is:

That the 2011-12 estimates for vote 034, Chief Electoral Officer, in the amount of 1,736,000 statutory for base year; and further, that the amount of 12,573,000 statutory be approved for general election expenses; and that both amounts be transmitted to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Can I have a mover for the motion? Mr. D'Autremont. Secunder? Mr. Yates. Are we all agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you.

The third item before the committee is:

That the 2011-12 estimates for vote 056, Ombudsman, be approved in the amount of 2,979,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, 2,777,000; statutory, 202,000; and further, that such estimates be approved to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do we have a motion to approve? Minister Harrison. A seconder? Mr. Yates. Are we agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you. And the fifth item on the agenda:

That the 2011-12 estimates for vote 055, Information and Privacy Commissioner, be approved in the amount of 1,041,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do I have a mover for the motion? Ms. Eagles. A seconder? Mr. Yates. Are we all in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Agreed. Carried. Thank you. The next item for the committee is item no. 6:

That the 2011-12 estimates for vote 076, Children's Advocate, be approved in the amount of 1,773,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, 1,571,000; statutory, 202,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do I have a mover for the motion? Mr. Yates. A seconder? Mr. Morgan. Are we all in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you. Item 7(e):

That the Board of Internal Economy approves the continuation of the Refurbishment and Assessment Replacement Fund in the amount of 250,000 to be determined by the Legislative Assembly Service in consultation with the Board of Internal Economy.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — That was the refurbishing fund?

**The Chair:** — RARF, yes, next five years. And further:

That this fund shall remain in existence for each of the next five fiscal years as follows: 2012-13, 250,000; '13-14, 250,000; '14-15, 250,000; '15-16, 250,000; and '16-17, 250,000.

Do I have a mover for the motion? Minister Morgan. And a seconder? Mr. Yates. Thank you. And we're in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you. And item 7(a) project approval, RARF:

That for the 2011-12 fiscal year the following Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund projects be approved: library collection annex rehabilitation \$300,000, for a total amount of 300,000.

Do I have a mover for that motion? Mr. D'Autremont. Secunder? Mr. Yates. And we're in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you. The next item is approval for election readiness:

That for the 2011-12 fiscal year funding in the amount of \$309,000 be approved for election readiness for vote 021, Legislative Assembly.

Do I have a mover? Minister Harrison. Second? Mr. Yates. Are we in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you. And a motion before the Committee regarding directive #4.1:

That effective April 1st, 2011, directive #4.1, constituency service expenses, be amended as follows: in clause (2) delete the amount 42,366 and replace it with the amount of 47,366; and further, that the amount of 47,366 be adjusted by the annual consumer price index specified in clause 19.

Do I have a mover to the motion? Ms. Eagles. A second? Mr. Yates. Are we in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you.

The next motion before the committee is estimates for Legislative Assembly:

That the 2011-12 expenditure estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of 24,433,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, 8,295,000; statutory, 16,138,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do I have a mover to the motion? Mr. D'Autremont. A second? Mr. Yates. We in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you.

Agenda item 7(c), a motion regarding the action plan and statutory expenditure estimates:

That the Legislative Assembly Service action plan for the year 2011-12 be approved in accordance with the approved 2011-12 budgetary and statutory expenditure estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly.

Do I have a mover to that motion? Minister Harrison. And a second? Mr. Yates. And we're in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you.

Final motion before the committee this morning:

That the 2011-12 revenue estimates for vote 021,

Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$4,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do we have a mover to the motion? Ms. Eagles. Second? Mr. Yates. Are we in agreement? Are we in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you.

Any further business before the committee? Seeing none, I want to extend my thanks to the committee members for their attention to the matters, being available, and addressing each and every one of the issues very succinctly this morning.

To the staff, legislative staff, who have been able to join us this morning, I want to extend our thanks. Thank you for the work you do to serve the members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you so much.

Motion to adjourn? Minister Morgan. Are we in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Have a great day.

[The board adjourned at 11:09.]