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BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HANSARD VERBATIM REPORT

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BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

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Cannington

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Estevan

Mr. David Forbes
Saskatoon Centre

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Meadow Lake

Mr. Warren McCall
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Hon. Don Morgan
Saskatoon Southeast

Ms. Christine Tell
Regina Wascana Plains

[The board met at 08:34.]

The Chair: — Well ladies and gentlemen, I would like to call this meeting of the Board of Internal Economy to order. This morning we have present Minister Morgan, MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Doreen Eagles, and MLA Warren McCall.

We will start off with approval of the proposed agenda. I wonder if I could have someone move the acceptance. Minister Morgan. Second? Mr. McCall. All in favour? Agreed.

Okay. First item of business on the agenda is approval of the minutes from the meeting of #6/11. Ms. Eagles has moved adoption of the minutes. Second? Mr. McCall. All in favour? Carried. Thank you.

Okay. Next item of business is the tabling of the audit letter to the Provincial Auditor. I believe you have it in your books already. So this is tabled.

Item No. 3 is the decision item, the review of the 2012-13 budget for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. So we'd like to call forward the . . . Sorry, I skipped one here. We're moving ahead too quickly here.

Ok, tabling a decision item, the approval of the Legislative Assembly's third quarter and expenditure report. Are there any questions on that item from the members? Mr. Morgan?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I have some questions I wanted to deal with, with personnel matters, and would like to deal with those in camera. I don't think we'll be long, but I have a few.

The Chair: — So you wish to go in camera on this particular item?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I do.

The Chair: — Okay. Is it the committee's pleasure to move in camera? Agreed. We will now move in camera.

[The board continued in camera from 08:37 until 08:48.]

The Chair: — Any further discussions on item no. 1, the approval of Legislative Assembly third quarter expenditure report? If not, would somebody please move adoption? Mr. Morgan. Second? Mr. McCall.

It has been moved by Mr. Morgan, seconded by Mr. McCall that the third quarter expenditure reports for the fiscal year 2011-12 for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay. We will then move on to item no. 3, the review of the 2012 Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. By the looks . . .

Mr. Fenwick: — Mr. Speaker, indeed I am not the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. He is not only more distinguished

looking but indeed more distinguished than I am as well. But he is out of province and unavailable and has asked if I could sit in just to say a few words on his behalf, given that we share office space and are somewhat familiar with each other's work.

Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

The Chair: — I'd like to welcome the Provincial Ombudsman, Mr. Kevin Fenwick, to the chair. If you would like to proceed, Mr. Fenwick.

Mr. Fenwick: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I will be brief. The request that Mr. Barclay had given me was to entertain any questions that the board might have and to very quickly outline on his behalf the administrative side of things, if you like, in terms of his submission with respect to the budget. The board members will have Mr. Barclay's budget.

Essentially if I can summarize in his words, and I'm reiterating what he's given me in a memo that he prepared for today, is that the budget request is relatively straightforward. It consists largely of the statutory salary for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and some incidental expenses. There are, if you'll note, some provisions that he has to make for things like legal fees and some additional administrative services. Those amounts are relatively modest. The difficulty with a position such as that is one never knows what suggestions might be made of conflict of interest, so it's difficult to budget with a great degree of certainty.

Administratively, which is what he's asked me to comment on primarily, I can advise that the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the Ombudsman's office share physical space. When Mr. Barclay was appointed as the Conflict of Interest Commissioner some three years ago, he needed some space and we had space available in our premises at that time. So he has moved in and we have been roommates essentially ever since. It's a relationship and a working arrangement that works very well. He's a welcome addition to our office and is, you know, available actually to provide wise and sage counsel to us from time to time.

The arrangement we have with respect to the physical plant is that we did a calculation of the square footage in the Regina office and there is some provision in the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's budget for a contribution to the rent that our office pays based on the square footage of his particular office. We don't have a charge to that office, for example, for the common space that we share.

More importantly, the Office of the Ombudsman is able to provide the Conflict of Interest Commissioner with administrative support services as well. Primarily those are in the form of my confidential administrative assistant, who acts in the same capacity for him, and I think that arrangement works quite well. When we have discussed between the two offices how much of her time is allotted, if you like, or taken up by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, it appears to be somewhere in the range of 10 to 20 per cent of her time. We do not charge for those services to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's office. We simply absorb that cost and we're more than happy to do that. It's an arrangement that's working well and we see

no reason why it couldn't continue.

Other ancillary services such as photocopying that are done through our office, again we are able to provide on the Ombudsman's side without a formal accounting back and forth because they're not particularly large.

There are other fairly significant services that are provided by the Legislative Assembly for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner as well, and Lynn might be in a better position to comment on those if there are any questions. And certainly I'd be happy to entertain any questions that the board members might have.

The Chair: — Any questions? I would note that his request is exactly the same as last year.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — And we support that zero per cent increase. There's strong support of that. That's why there's no questions.

The Chair: — If it's acceptable to the committee, we will hold this in abeyance then for discussion in camera.

Okay. We will move on to item no. 4 which is the review of the 2012 and '13 budget of the Office of the Ombudsman. And I see Mr. Fenwick is ready but he's on his own this time.

Office of the Ombudsman

Mr. Fenwick: — I will put on my other hat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually I will be joined, I think, shortly by two colleagues from our office. The agenda we had had us somewhat later on the agenda, so I don't think they planned to arrive for a few minutes yet. But I will perhaps introduce them in their absence so that you know who is walking in I think probably in a few minutes. I anticipate being joined today by Janet Mirwaldt who is our deputy ombudsman in our Regina office and Leila Dueck who is our director of communications and public education.

What I propose to do this morning for you, fairly briefly I hope, is just hit the highlights of what was in our submission. Our budget request this year is I think relatively straightforward. It is what I will call a status quo programming budget, and I'll be explaining briefly in a moment what exactly that means.

The written submission contains more detail about the role and history and mission and vision of our office. That's available for your reading pleasure. I don't expect that I will spend any time on it this morning in my verbal presentation, but I certainly would be more than happy to answer any questions.

Suffice it to say that the mission of our office is to promote and protect fairness in the design and delivery of government services. And there are a couple of key words in there that I think are important that will be alluded to in the longer submission, and those are the words promote as well as protect, and design as well as delivery of government services. And what those words promote and design include is the philosophical shift that is happening in many ombudsmen's offices — and I'm pleased to say that I think Saskatchewan is in the lead in that regard — to move more towards a proactive

type of work rather than just responding to complaints that come in to us.

There are three essential types of work that we do in our office. Responding to complaints from the public is certainly one of them. It remains the core of our mandate and is probably our first priority. Our experience of the last four years suggests that the number of complaints about matters that are within our jurisdiction is very steady. In fact in 2011, we received 2,160 complaints to our office about matters that were within our jurisdiction. That's up slightly from 2,130 in the previous year. In fact for four consecutive years now, we have received between 2,100 and 2,200 complaints a year. That seems to be sort of a natural plateau for the number of complaints that we are going to receive unless we embark on a major advertising campaign of some kind.

In addition to those 2,160 within-jurisdiction complaints, last year we received another 758 complaints that were outside our jurisdiction, for a total of slightly less than 3,000 — 2,918 in fact.

With respect to that part of our mandate, responding to complaints from the public, we are asking for the necessary funds to maintain status quo programs. And what I mean by status quo programs is I appreciate that in the strictest sense of the word, truly a status quo budget would be a zero per cent increase, would be exactly the same dollars as the year before. We distinguish what we call status quo programming, which means that we know that we have certain costs that we will have to absorb this year. We know that there are certain increases coming for both our in-scope and out-of-scope staff as a result of collective agreements and Public Service Commission policy. We know that there is inflation that happens for non-personnel expenses, etc. So using the guidelines that have been provided by Public Service Commission and the Legislative Assembly, we have built those additions for known increases into our budget submission. Other than that, we are not asking for anything in addition to what we received last year.

Very briefly I can tell you that we do know that our three in-scope staff will receive a 2 per cent economic adjustment on October the 1st of this year. They are also entitled to regular increments as a result of their years of service. The cost of those two additions for us will be about \$3,000 this year.

The vast majority of our staff, and we have 24 in total, are out of scope. In fact, all but three of them are out of scope. They are scheduled to receive an economic adjustment of 2 per cent on April 1st, and that's a cost to us of just over \$38,000. They're also entitled to a 2 per cent increase in the flexible benefit plan to which public servants are entitled. That has a cost to us of about \$300. And we also have some staff that are not yet at the top of their salary range, and they are expected to get incremental increases based on performance. We anticipate that cost to us will be just over \$17,000. The combination of these various adjustments will affect our personnel costs in the upcoming year by some \$58,600 or an increase of 2.8 per cent. So we are asking that that be covered.

With respect to our non-personnel services, we're using the guideline that has been provided to us by the Legislative

Assembly of 2.6 per cent, essentially for inflation for non-personnel, and we've stuck to that 2.6 per cent. But I would point out that the board did see fit last year to provide us with some one-time expenses, or money for some one-time expenses. And so before we applied the 2.6 per cent, we did deduct those one-time expenses from last year. So we're trying to be as transparent and straightforward as possible with respect to that. So the actual number in fact is less than 1 per cent based on real dollars from last year, but after deducting the one-time expenses, we're looking at the 2.6 per cent.

[09:00]

It's worth noting at this time as well that in addition to the office space and some of the services we share in our office with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, we also share a number of services with the Children's Advocate office, particularly in our Saskatoon office. We share physical space. We have been roommates together there for a number of years. We share a considerable amount of services in that office in terms of a server for our computer system, in terms of boardroom space, on occasion with respect to our reception staff who are able to cover for each other, photocopiers and shredders and those types of things. We have an arrangement that has been in place for a number of years, and that I think is working well.

The challenge that both of our offices face is that our leases are expiring this year, for us in both Regina and in Saskatoon, and for the Children's Advocate's office in Saskatoon. So we are currently working with the Ministry of Government Services in order to find other space or find additional space where we are, which looks difficult, but to accommodate the needs that we have.

We have not in our budget submission requested a specific amount for rental increases because we don't know what those will be. We have been advised by the Ministry of Government Services that we can expect increases in what we will have to pay for rent, potentially significant increases. And so I am simply pointing that out to the board to put you on notice, I suppose, that that might be forthcoming. And it is not included at this time in our budget submission because we just don't know what it will be. If it is significant, there is certainly a possibility we may be back to this board asking for some additional support later in the year if that happens.

When you sum up everything that's in our submission, and including the statutory expenditure which is essentially the salary of the Ombudsman, what our status quo programming means is that we're asking for an increase over last year's actual dollars of 2.9 per cent.

The second part of our mandate deals with systemic investigations or own-motion investigations. And this is one of the areas where we have significantly expanded our services over the last number of years as we endeavour to be more proactive in the work that we do. And while I'm proud to say that I think Saskatchewan is one of the leaders in this area, we're not unique either. Certainly this is a trend that's happening in most offices.

I believe — and board members have probably heard me say

this before — I believe that if we receive 10 complaints into our office this year about the same issue that we had 10 complaints about last year, then we haven't done our job. So what we try and do is we try and look beneath the tip of that proverbial iceberg when someone comes to us with an issue, and we look for the underlying causes. Because it's a rare circumstance that an underlying cause for a complaint from the public is only important for that one individual.

And so what our systemic reviews do is try and improve on a broader scale the delivery of government services so that a number of people are affected so that there are fewer complaints that come to us about those kinds of issues. I'm very happy to say that that approach that our office has taken has been welcomed almost universally by government agencies. Government agencies that we deal with are not generally overly defensive when we try and work with them on these systemic reviews. They are anxious to provide better service. We don't always agree on what that looks like, and there are sometimes some tense moments when we do those reviews. But for the most part we work towards, and I think government agencies accept that this is a collaborative approach that leads to better service, and better service leads to fewer complaints. And we have, compared to a decade ago, seen a reduction in the number of complaints that come to the Ombudsman's office.

The challenge of course is that it is much more resource intensive to conduct one of these systemic reviews than it is to conduct an individual review. In fact it's probably more resource intensive to conduct one systemic review than 10 or 20 or potentially 50 individual complaint reviews. But we believe it's very good bang for the buck because we believe that is an investment of resources that in the long term pays for us dividends in terms of being able to respond to not just complaints that are coming to us, but that are anticipated. But more importantly it's good bang for the buck because it means that the citizens of the province get better service from their government agencies.

We're not asking for an increase with respect to this area either. The numbers that I gave you previously in terms of the anticipated increases in salary, etc., that we will have to pay are built in to the systemic reviews as well. At the present time, we would estimate that we spend about 1.5 full-time equivalents working on systemic reviews, although that's not necessarily in one body.

I'd be certainly happy to talk to you about examples of the own-motion on systemic reviews that we have done. The most recent that received some coverage in the media was a review that we did of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and delays in post-operative treatment for breast cancer, essentially the management of the waiting lists at the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. That was a review that resulted in a number of significant changes, although I am very happy to say that the Cancer Agency was simultaneous with our review looking at their processes and management of their wait-lists as well. And we're in the process of making significant changes and our efforts coincided with theirs.

The third area that I want to mention, which is the third part of our mandate, involves public education, fair practices training and communications. And again, consistent with the idea that

we want to be proactive and we want to work towards the best and fairest government service possible for the citizens of the province, we have shifted our emphasis over the past few years from going and talking briefly to government agencies about what to do when the Ombudsman calls to more intensive two-day workshops that focus on what to do so the Ombudsman doesn't call. Those fair practices workshops have been extremely well-received. Again I'm not asking for additional resources to deliver those, but I want to point out how successful they have been and the demand that we are facing with respect to those fair practices workshops.

The Ministry of Corrections and Public Safety has incorporated our fair practice training as a part of their basic training for new corrections workers. The Ministry of Social Services in one of its divisions has asked us to deliver that training for all public servants working in that division and most recently has engaged in discussions with us about delivering that training for all employees of the Ministry of Social Services. A colleague and I had an opportunity to speak to some 400 managers within the Ministry of Social Services at two different management forums this spring, and those training workshops are extremely well-received.

And if I can just very briefly blow our own horn a little bit with respect to those workshops in a different way. Every two years the umbrella organization for ombudsmen across Canada get together. It's called the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman. And that meeting was last May in Vancouver, and there was one pre-conference workshop. From all of the ombudsman organizations across Canada, there was one pre-conference workshop that was offered, and we were requested to deliver a scaled-down version of our fair practices workshop to the ombudsman community from across Canada. We're proud to say that we were chosen to do that.

I'm also proud to say that as a result of that workshop, and two delegates who were present at that workshop from Pakistan, we have now been asked to deliver two workshops in Pakistan to the ombudsman community. And we'll be doing that at the end of March. That training will be sponsored by CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency, in conjunction with the banking ombudsman from Pakistan. It will be delivered by myself and one of our staff at no cost to the people of Saskatchewan because it will be covered primarily by CIDA. But I think it is a testament to the good work that our staff are doing with those workshops and the value of those workshops that not only are we being asked to deliver it within the province and nationally but now internationally as well. And I think it speaks well for the province that, you know, in our small sphere of influence, that we're being recognized for that work as well.

Very briefly I would comment to bring the board up to date on two initiatives from last year. Board members may recall that last year our office was fortunate enough to receive a significant budget increase to help us with the expansion of our services in the health field, and I can tell you that that work has been ongoing. We were able to hire three new staff last year to assist us in the health field. We have established within our office a health team whose primary responsibility is to respond to issues that come to us from the public with respect to public complaints about health issues, and that's health regions and the

Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and the Ministry of Health, and also to do some systemic work. The breast cancer wait-list management review that I talked about a few minutes ago is an example of that.

What this team does is looks after the existing health files that come in. They have spent a considerable period of time establishing and building relationships and networking with other service providers in the health field, particularly the quality-of-care coordinators in the regions and at the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

What we have seen is how a modest amount of public awareness work can have a huge impact on our numbers. So compared to two years ago, in 2011 we received almost twice as many complaints as we did in 2009. In fact we went from 80 complaints to 159 in a matter of two years. It's not because we think that the health service has been deteriorating. I should stay out of the political arena, but that's not our observation. It's because I think of the raising the level of public awareness and working with the quality-of-care coordinators within the regions who are primary referral agents for our office. So the funding that we received allowed us to expand that health team, which in fact has allowed us to make our presence known and has resulted in more work. So it becomes somewhat of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

We also received some funding last year with respect to the new public interest disclosure Act. And I'm not going to comment on that to any great length except to say that the board did give us some money last year to prepare for the new public interest disclosure Act and the possibility that the Ombudsman might be appointed as the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner.

Last year our budget included \$100,000 for that purpose. We were able to hire an experienced individual to work with us partway through the year, and that individual has been leading the preparatory work that we've been doing within our office in case the Ombudsman is appointed as the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner. He has been working with the designated officers designated under that Act within ministries and Crown corporations. He has been working on the preparation of a website, that is separate from the Ombudsman's office, on materials that will go to public servants with respect to that office.

I'm not here today to ask for any specific funds with respect to that initiative because of course an appointment has not been made under that Act. But I want to point out that we did receive some funds last year, and those funds I think have been well spent. If the Ombudsman does end up being appointed, then we're ready to roll. If not, then that's preparatory work that has been done and I think will be very valuable if the board and the legislature decides to go another direction.

I can certainly expand on that work and where it's at if board members have any questions, but I won't elaborate more than that unless there are questions.

In conclusion, board members, I can say that I believe our office continues to be fiscally responsible. We have worked very hard over the last number of years to find efficiencies within the office. And I'll give you some very quick examples

of that. We're now saving about 55 to 60 per cent on our paper costs compared to a few years ago because we've gone to a lower grade of paper for letterhead, and those numbers can be significant. We have given up one CVA [central vehicle agency] that was a cost to our office. We have reduced our reading materials and journals budget. We've reduced our computer hardware budget by some \$4,000 annually. We've even done things like purchasing a binding machine so that we can produce a lot of our materials in-house rather than farm those out at considerably greater cost.

So we have tried very hard to be an efficient operation. I think that we are. Virtually all of our budget within our office is allocated to salary. We have little control over that. Even most of our non-salary is largely composed of issues like rent and other fixed costs. We have little control over that as well.

So in conclusion my submission is, is that we are asking the board to fund us at the same level as last year, with the exception that we would like to build in the known costs that we will be incorporating into our expenditures for fiscal year '12-13.

[09:15]

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Fenwick. And thank you for recognizing the difference between status quo budgets and status quo programming. Any questions from the committee members? Mr. Morgan.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The salary adjustments that you are contemplating, your collective agreement for your in-scope people, those are the ones that are . . . That contract is now in place and ongoing?

Mr. Fenwick: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — So the salary increases for the in-scope people are ones that are known now because of the contract?

Mr. Fenwick: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — And the ones that are out-of-scope, they would be receiving a similar adjustment as this?

Mr. Fenwick: — Yes, that's correct. The only number in there that's a little less clear is with respect to the performance increments that our out-of-scope staff are entitled to. That number can't be finally determined of course until the performance reviews are done. We have actually estimated relatively conservatively with respect to that number. There's a sliding scale, and we've not assumed the high end. We've simply incorporated based on past experience what we think that number will be.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Okay. And then you're projecting the same number of FTEs [full-time equivalent] throughout?

Mr. Fenwick: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Okay. I don't have any further questions, but if you would pass on to your staff, we, I think everybody as an MLA has worked, on both sides we've worked

with your office, and we appreciate the collaborative and constructive approach that's been used. It works well for the individual employees that you work with throughout government, and we continue to hear good things from the employees and also from the citizens that use your office. So thank you.

Mr. Fenwick: — Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — I guess it's . . . attach myself to the comments of the Minister of Justice, the good work of the Ombudsman's office. But I guess I'm interested around the public interest disclosure activity of the Ombudsman's office, and I guess if you could go back over that. Again there's a certain extension of the work that has been done this year, but there's a certain series of questions to be answered in terms of the involvement of the Office of the Ombudsman with ongoing work under under PIDA [*The Public Interest Disclosure Act*]. Do you think that will entail additional expenditure, and how is that anticipated in your request here today?

Mr. Fenwick: — First of all let me say that I absolutely recognize that it is the prerogative of the Legislative Assembly to decide who will be the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner. The Act does provide that it may be the Ombudsman, but it doesn't require it to be, and I absolutely respect that that's the decision ultimately of the Assembly. And with respect to an acting or interim Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, if a decision is made to appoint an acting, that's the prerogative of this board and I certainly respect that, and will respect whatever decision is made.

Specifically what I can tell you, based on our experience over the last year, is that if in fact the Ombudsman was appointed as the commissioner, there would be some additional costs over and above what we were funded for last year. The person who was hired is hired at a salary that, with benefits, uses up almost all of the \$100,000 that we were allotted last year, in fact all but about \$500 of it. It takes more than \$500 to look after the travel expenses and the printing costs and the maintenance of a website, etc., that are ancillary to those responsibilities. It's difficult to estimate with a great deal of certainty what those additional costs would be because we don't know what the experience will be in terms of numbers.

My best guess is, is that number for maintenance of those things like the website and printing costs, etc., would run in the 20 to \$25,000 range. So certainly if the board should chose to appoint the Ombudsman as acting commissioner, if the Assembly should do that, we would have, I guess, three choices. One would be to certainly absorb those costs from the Ombudsman's budget at the expense of some other program; to come back to the board for some further funding by way of a special warrant, I suppose; or the board could see fit I guess to include that, anticipate that, and include it in our budget if it's anticipated that that appointment would be made.

There is considerable work that has been done. In fact the website is ready to be turned on either by the Ombudsman's office or someone else. We think it is important because the Conflict of Interest Commissioner . . . sorry, the Public Interest

Disclosure Commissioner is a separate, independent office, that there be a distinct identity even if the Ombudsman is appointed to fulfill that dual role. Hence the reason for a separate website and separate letterhead and a distinct identity.

I can tell you that when that legislation was being contemplated, our office was consulted by the Public Service Commission at some length because in several other provinces the office of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner is housed within, or simultaneously, with the Ombudsman's office. Our experience in talking with Nova Scotia and Manitoba is that they felt that was very appropriate because many, in fact the vast majority of complaints that come forward under *The Public Interest Disclosure Act* do not fall within the purview of that Act and in fact get rolled over into the Ombudsman's office because they are more likely ombudsman issues. Now that's the experience in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, what they've shared with us and what we shared with the Public Service Commission. The legislature and the board may decide to go another direction, in which case the work that's already been done would be valuable.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Okay. Any other questions? I do have a question for the Ombudsman. You've talked about sharing services with the other independent officers. Do you think this should continue and do you think it should be expanded?

Mr. Fenwick:— I certainly think, Mr. Speaker, that the discussions should continue. And I will declare my bias, if I can call it that. I'm a fan of the concept. I have in my own mind always envisaged that the citizens of the province at some point, if they have a complaint about some kind of government services, should be able to come to a location with a sign above the door that says, complaints are us. And the citizen shouldn't have to figure out whether it happens to be a privacy issue or an Ombudsman issue or Children's Advocate issue, etc. I think that, more from the point of good service rather than efficiencies, it makes some sense to do that.

I'm not sure that all of my colleagues feel as strongly about that as I do, and I certainly respect those opinions as well. I also think that there are some efficiencies that can be achieved through that sharing because none of us, with the possible exception of the Provincial Auditor, are large enough to be able to have as much a variety as we would like to have in our own physical plants, for example. We enjoy our roommates in Saskatoon, the Children's Advocate's office, but we sometimes, as roommates will, have to fight over who gets the kitchen this morning, if you like. In Saskatoon it tends to be the boardroom, and neither of us can afford more than one boardroom. But there are times when one boardroom isn't enough for two offices. I can see things like meeting rooms and boardrooms, if you have a number of offices together, being available to a wider variety at more times because you'll have more of them given the economies of scale, etc.

So yes, the short answer is I think that there can be additional efficiencies. And there will be some hurdles to overcome, absolutely. But I would like to see us continue those discussions to come up with a plan and then decide whether the hurdles can be overcome or not.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you. Are there any further questions? If not, this item will be held then in abeyance for discussion in camera. Thank you very much.

Okay. Next item of business is the review of the 2012-13 budget of the office, the Chief Electoral office.

Okay. I'd like to welcome the Acting Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. David Wilkie. And, Mr. Wilkie, if you would introduce your guests and proceed with your presentation.

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Mr. Wilkie: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Speaker. And I've got Sandra Arberry, the chief operating officer; Brent Nadon, the manager of election finances; and Jeff Livingstone, the manager of information technology and register of electors; and Daniel Bogdon, the communications consultant.

Mr. Chair, and members of the Board of Economy, I'm especially pleased again to be here this morning — it's the fourth time as Acting Chief Electoral Officer — and firstly to discuss any questions and let you know more about our budget estimates. Also I am secondly glad to be here, period, because as some of you know, I had a grave illness this past summer. So I'm lucky to be here, period.

So we will go through some of the accomplishments of this past year and talking about the priorities of the coming year and a bit about our mission and mandate. And then I'll also touch briefly on our organization and accountability and human resources and the foundations of this 2012-2013 financial estimates, which also includes the wrapping up of the November 7, 2011 general election as well as administrative support to the Constituency Boundaries Commission, and then ending off with non-base-year estimates, which are by-elections.

Firstly I do also want to thank the Board of Internal Economy. You've had a significant role in the success of our office in the past year. That you, last time we got together a year ago, you confirmed the acceptance of the *Report of the Review of the Operational Environment and Accountabilities of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer for Saskatchewan*, or in other words the Hamilton report, which confirmed the recommended staffing level of 13 for our office, excluding temporary election personnel.

Also the Board of Internal Economy, through the Speaker, confirmed the hiring of the chief operating officer who was hired on a period of two years ending 2013, March 2013, while the hiring of a permanent Chief Electoral Officer was still pending.

And also last August the Board of Internal Economy approved enumeration to take place outside of the writ period, which was useful in that it was a longer period and an extended revision during this past general election.

And so we'll go on in more detail about what things were accomplished in the past year and then coming up for this coming year.

Firstly in the operations area, GIS [geographic information

system] mapping, great improvements. We went from probably the worst maps in the country to amongst the best maps, and all candidates and political parties have been telling us that they liked those maps. That was a considerable amount of work for our office, but we think it was well worth it. And this is also the first time they've been produced in-house which has been useful. For the large quantities for the election we did send outside, but in between times we produce in-house.

Special colour coding of lakes and parks and residential, non-residential as well as civic lots which were a big plus for the candidates and the enumerators, having the civic lots actually on the maps for the urban areas.

Also the northern and rural maps were greatly improved because we made use of RM, rural municipality, maps to provide further detail to our maps. And also the section, township, range are more clearly put on our maps, and they're all on our website. And also this provided a base for the upcoming Constituency Boundaries Commission which is pending.

We also went through the hiring of 27 more returning officers — there was 27 vacancies — and improved our training. And also we have a new evaluation program for returning officers which will help, be useful when it comes time to look at what returning officers may be reappointed, as when the boundaries change, all of the appointments are finished.

Also we made a considerable amount of improvements for persons with disabilities. We had a lot of contact with those people in disability communities — sheet magnifiers, clipboards, pencil grippers — lots of things that could be done without changes in legislation which I gather might be coming soon for the next election.

[09:30]

We had more information, brochures, etc., for persons with disabilities and also advertised more about our curbside voting. And as well we had our returning officers do an accessibility checklist to make sure that we tried to ensure maximum accessibility wherever possible. And entrance ramps and mats were placed in locations as required.

A lot of changes to our forms in order to train our poll officials better and also the bingo sheets which we hear that candidates' representatives appreciated on election day. And we did a RFP, request for proposal, for a call centre, and that worked well to have a call centre to handle our numerous calls about less detailed election information.

Also we had a lot of changes with regards to payroll. For the first time since 1998, the office is complying with the legislation. Two previous CEOs [Chief Electoral Officer] did not comply with the legislation with regards to making deductions for election workers that have worked more than 30 hours. And so that did require some, a lot of work, especially on Brent's part. We went through a request for proposal selection process, and Ceridian company was chosen. And Brent, as manager of election finance, worked with Ceridian in order to set up a new payroll system that allowed us to make those required payroll and tax deductions while still maintaining an

effective payment schedule.

Also something that was asked for many times, and we were able to deliver it this last election, was the in-person training for the candidates and their business managers, which was quite well attended. If you have any questions, Brent can fill us in more on that. As well there's a special section on the website for a business manager's bookshelf which helps those business managers to do their work.

Also long promised with the previous CEO, a strategy for elections finance reporting system. That was completed as well so that there is now an electronic expense return form so that people so inclined can do it electronically, adds everything up, etc. So that's been well . . . A lot of business managers have used that this time.

Also we had, in the communications field, had a competition to choose the agency of record, and that they were able to provide us with some creative assistance with regards to our website, to make it more usable, more accessible and user-friendly, and also gave us a general theme that people can effectively recognize our brand. So a lot of our things have that branding on them.

Also we did more advertising in order to recruit election workers and talk about the new voter ID requirements and things like cinema screen advertising, online banner advertising, Facebook advertising, etc., so that was something that was able to be done. And again as I've said, our website was completely redone, and it's much easier for people to find where they vote and also for people to apply for jobs on our website, as well as using Twitter and Facebook. That is much easier on our new website. And we noticed with our social media that the candidates' campaigns as well as the media followed on Twitter quite extensively during this past election.

Our outreach. We realized after the last election and the by-elections in between elections that we were going to have a hard time finding enough people to work at the election, so we launched an outreach program where community relations officers were hired for the summer and part-time in the fall leading to the election in order to go to communities across the province. And all constituencies, all 58 constituencies had at least one if not more visits by the community relations officer people with our booth. And so that was done in order to tell people information about the coming election, but also it did help a lot with recruiting for positions.

Also we finished the migration of the servers, which was even since the last time we met. And this time as well we've given laptops, software, and cellphones to all of the returning officers in order to get them more technologically oriented, and that has worked out well. We also have a new elections night results module which was successfully utilized on election night. And also Jeff has developed some online webinars to train various positions in elections across the province. So that has been very, very much used. And there was also remote computer support during the election for all the IT [information technology] staff in each office, one IT person in each office that would be connecting with Jeff and his staff. We've also got call-tracking database in order to keep track of calls that come into our front office, and also on elections finances. And that's what you've

been able to help us do in the past year.

And now looking ahead for the 2012-2013 year, we are completing the candidates' financial returns; some of them have come in. And those of you that haven't got yours in yet, the deadline is tomorrow, so either get them in by tomorrow or, as a number of people have asked for an extension, and that's still possible as long as you do it by tomorrow, the 8th. And so that takes a considerable amount of processing time to do that which will go on past March the 1st which we'll talk about in a moment. Also the registered political parties will be sending theirs in in a very short time as well.

Also something that we did last election and we fully want to do this election as well is to do a debriefing with returning officers and their election clerks, all of our . . . and some of their staff, registered political parties. Also something that . . . just got this idea from a recent meeting with New Brunswick, from New Brunswick, that we're going to offer a survey to all candidates, including yourselves, if any comments of things that you would like changed as far as policies, procedures. So we're going to open that more to candidates and business managers. Also continuing on our debriefing with persons with disabilities and our major suppliers, Canada Post, printers, etc.

And we are in the process of completing unpacking and sorting of all of our boxes. We try to recycle as many things as possible. Some things of a privacy nature have to be shredded, and then others are kept for specified times. We're doing that at the moment.

Also we have started to work on the integrated voters list which means that all of those people that were not on the preliminary list or the revised list, but were added either on advanced polls or election day, those are all being incorporated into an integrated voters list so that those will be made available to the political parties later on this year.

Also then we have three reports: our statement of votes which has all the details of the election from an operations point, so we call that volume 1; volume 2, the campaign contributions and expenditures, and that takes a considerable amount of time after all the candidate returns and the political party returns have been processed; and then volume 3 are recommendations for changes to *The Election Act*.

And then we start beginning the planning cycle for the 2015 general election based on input from the debriefing process and also have to be ready in case there are any by-elections in the year, and then finally providing administrative and technical support for the 2012 Constituency Boundaries Commission which is coming up.

And speaking of that specifically, in mid-November, shortly after the election, the Clerk of the Executive Council requested to meet with myself, and the manager of information technology joined us, to discuss the mechanics of the upcoming 2012 Constituency Boundaries Commission. And the Clerk indicated that it was most appropriate for our office to have the budget for the Constituency Boundaries Commission situated within our budgeting area and within our office.

So the first census data is due to arrive to the Clerk of Executive

Council shortly after February the 8th, and that is regarding population. And then after that, in a few months, it will talk about more age of population, age portion. And then within 30 days of this information coming, then the Executive Council then will work on establishing the Constituency Boundaries Commission.

And so we at Elections Saskatchewan, our team is committed to wrap up the November 7, 2011 general election and then take on such activities as previously outlined in regards to the Constituency Boundaries Commission and be election ready, be by-election ready.

And just as a reminder of our mission:

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 the awareness and understanding of electoral processes that are transparent, efficient and accessible.

So that's our mission again, as a reminder. And then our primary mandate: to direct and supervise the administrative and financial conduct of the provincial electoral events in a fair, equitable, and cost-effective manner; and further, that we facilitate the electoral process to ensure that all stakeholders, including electors, candidates, political parties, and election officials are aware of and able to exercise their democratic and constitutional right to an impartial, open, and honest electoral event.

And of course there's many partners needed to achieve these strategic outcomes. So rather than reinvent the wheel, we are always listening to see what other provinces are doing, and we share information back and forth across the country, very much so, especially in the past five years.

And as far as organization, as you know, the Chief Electoral Officer is appointed by resolution of the Legislative Assembly and heads the office, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, also known as Elections Saskatchewan. And we report through the Speaker to the Legislative Assembly. And the Chief Electoral Officer is independent of the provincial government and political parties. And normally the Chief Electoral Officer is assisted by the assistant chief electoral officer, but in the absence of a permanent CEO we do have the chief operating officer who joined us in April 2011. And then it's broken into the four areas: election operations; elections finances; communications or community relations; and then information technology and register of electors, which we don't yet have but is in the title should that so happen.

Human resources, just as a reminder, since there are some new members on the committee, that we started off the 2009 year with seven positions: three permanent staff including myself, one temporary term staff, and three vacancies. And then in January 2009, the Board of Internal Economy hired David Hamilton, the former chief electoral officer of the Northwest Territories and clerk of the Legislative Assembly there, to conduct a review known as, short form, Hamilton report.

And then at the May 26, 2009 meeting of the Board of Internal

Economy steering committee, it was decided that the OCEO [Office of the Chief Electoral Officer] or Elections Saskatchewan was indeed understaffed, and I was told to immediately take action in order to have staff necessary for the two by-elections and to start to prepare for the 2011 general election. And the steering committee further acknowledged a need for the OCEO to advertise and hire individuals for three positions for a six-month basis, and those three positions were hired.

Then as time went on and there was still no solution to a permanent Chief Electoral Officer, then in the 2010-11 budget, the Board of Internal Economy agreed that those three positions previously listed should be extended for additional one-year terms, and then two more be hired. In June 2010 another position was agreed that it should be filled.

Then in late 2010 the . . . myself met with the Speaker and he agreed that another person should be hired as of February 2011. And then in December 2010, I met with the Speaker again who told me to add those seven positions previously listed in the budget last year. And then this past January 2011, I spoke with the Speaker who asked or agreed that a chief operating officer should be filled, should be hired to fill the role of assistant chief electoral officer on a term basis effective 2011 for a two-year term to March 31, 2013.

[09:45]

And so I again wish to thank both the former and current Speakers and other members of the Board of Internal Economy for their assistance. It's been much appreciated by the team at Elections Saskatchewan and we look forward to continued co-operation with the Board of Internal Economy for this coming fiscal year.

I won't go in detail with our organizational chart. That's there for you to look at. But before I go on talking about 2013, I do wish to add that we are very appreciative of the assistance that the Legislative Assembly Service, LAS, has provided in the past year. And thank you to Greg and his staff, Ken Ring, Ginette Michaluk and her staff in human resources, and Linda Kaminski and her staff in member services. They have given us a lot of assistance this past year. Also to the staff of the technology branch which we've mentioned in regard to moving the server, but also in other assistance that they have given us the past year.

And so in our actual presentation, as far as the base year, last time we provided in great detail as to what the estimated cost of the election would be, but that was the first time that we had a set election date. But because of the way fiscal years run and that we're only . . . and the way the legislation runs, that we're getting in our candidate financial returns now, then there is additional staff time that goes into the next fiscal year with regards to extra people to help for the financial returns and also the political party returns and also getting the list ready, which has all the updated names on it, and that is more detail shortly.

In the past, there has been questions as far as the permanent register of electors. I would say that we are two-thirds there, and it's up to the Legislative Assembly to decide whether we go that final third. And so initially, the 2007 election and electronic

voters list, rather than having it in a Word document that couldn't be easily used by the parties and candidates, it was put into a database format. So that was done in 2007, and then the second part, enumeration outside of the writ period that we spoke of earlier, and then part 3, future steps. There would have to be legislative change or regulatory change in order to set up processes, procedures, guidelines, or technological tools to accept data from other sources such as SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], drivers licences, Ministry of Health, and ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], vital statistics, in order to keep that list updated in between elections. So that again is beyond our control. We await to hear more from the legislature about that. And so until we know what is in the legislation, we couldn't give any estimates as to what additional costs might be and what the savings would be during an actual election. More costs are in between elections but savings during an election.

In the non-base year, which go to our pages here to follow along, we'll talk about by-elections shortly on that. But if you go to page 16, actual expenditures, we say what the actual, sorry, the estimated 2010-11 budget was and what the actual payments were, 2010-11. And then for summary budget approval figures, the base year operational and capital is outlined. And then next we give an outline of base year and capital plus the general election carry over.

And then thirdly, or (c), base year and capital plus 2011 GE [general election] carry over and the Constituency Boundaries Commission. If you look at the specific figures comparing the request for 2012 to 2013, some categories are up, some are down. I can give you those details shortly. For capital asset acquisitions, there's no monies requested for this period. For those of you who like pie charts, again that is on your page 18.

Then for details, 71 per cent of our budget is personal services. That is an increase of 75,215 over last year, and that includes the 2 per cent increases for all salary ranges due to cost-of-living increases. All of our people are out of scope but they follow the union agreement.

And then most of the people in our office are new to the office, so therefore they are therefore eligible for merit increases, and so we have the merit increases of 3 per cent merit increase.

Then in contractual services, which is 19 per cent of our budget, there are some decreases. The accessibility audit has been completed. The electronic expense return project phase 1 is complete; that's the subtraction of 20,000. We have added . . . One of the reasons why the amount is more than the 4 per cent, which is payroll suggestions, but we also have the ESPREE [Elections Saskatchewan permanent register of eligible electors] payroll data collection module of 25,000 estimate and an ESPREE elector move module of 25,000, which we can answer those questions that you may have on that.

There was an increase in our accommodation costs, so that's been included. We have a . . . We are year to year at the moment, but we told our landlords that we could not possibly move before December 2012. That's where we are at the moment. And we await any movement towards shared services, which I'm sure you'll have a question about later.

And then we've added an inflationary factor there for contractual services, advertising, added an inflationary factor. We have made some decreases in the amount of travel for returning officers, been decreased. Supplies and services, inflationary increase; equipment and expense, inflationary increase; and then again no capital acquisitions. So that's our office budget.

Then if we go to the general election carry-over, personnel services again for the persons to finish candidate return processing, the registered political party returns, and data entry of the voters list, those figures come to that 177,467 which is in the next fiscal year, so we can't pay it out of the previous election budget.

And then the Constituency Boundaries Commissions costs, our best guesstimate based on changes in technology and what we think will be needed, again it's hard to do that when the Boundaries Commission hasn't in fact yet met, but we do have our figures there for personnel services, contractual services, advertising, travel and business, and supplies and services for a total of 477,000.

And then for a by-election, should there be one, we have the estimated cost for a by-election.

And then now we would open things up to you for the questions that you may have.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Wilkie, for a very complete report. Any questions from the members? Mr. Morgan.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The current voters list — and you may not want to provide the information on this today — I'm wondering about sort of a cost comparison of how much it will cost once it's developed, maintaining it on an annual basis, compared to how much the cost of the enumeration might be with now having set — and notice how I use the word set rather than fixed — elections. I'm looking sort of about what would the cost comparison might be, one as opposed to the other. And I realize the benefits of having a permanent one in place all the time, but I'm worried about whether people would bother to keep it up to date or what process they might need it to be or what other information that you would have to tie into to try and have access to it to keep it up to date, sort of. So I'd be looking for a bit of an analysis of it. And if you don't have those answers today, we'd welcome it some time in the future.

Mr. Wilkie: — Sure. We don't have that information now, but with us having gone through the enumeration outside of the writ and now there is some time to do that, that we can look at what the experience of other jurisdictions that have gone that route.

There would have to be some agreements put in place, whether it be with SGI or with ISC or with Ministry of Health in order to provide those updates of people that move. Also there's some chance for co-operation with Elections Canada who get their information also updated through income tax return check-off. So, Jeff, did you want . . . anything more you wanted to add?

Mr. Livingstone: — No, but we could definitely do a cost-benefit analysis.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I realize it may not . . . You know, a lot of it may come down to sort of speculation as to what, you know, what information might be available, but I'm sort of trying to get a sense of what's the most cost-effective way. And I realize you could very well get caught with all of this when you had a number of by-elections in a year and then to have to go through enumeration and whatever the process might be.

The next which I have deals with the staffing levels. When I read through this and you were referring to base years, I sort of thought there should be a base-year salary where there was no unusual events, where it would be a non-election year, non-boundaries year, and a non-by-election year. But you've included in here sort of an assumption that there will always be a by-election. And I don't know whether that at any given time you know whether there's a by-election, and in any given year you might have zero, one, two, or three. So I'm wondering, my question is whether by-elections are better dealt with through supplementary estimates when they do happen rather than sort of including sort of an ongoing cost. And I know that, you know, we have the planned unusual events but there's sort of the non-recurring events of a general election or a Boundaries Commission. So my question goes back to, sort of, what would be your FTE count and your costs on a year where there was no by-election, no boundaries, or no unusual processes under way? And then I sort of thought that should be our starting point, and then it would come up when one of those events occurs — even though you may know about them ahead of time, you'd sort of . . . they're not a regular annual event. So I don't know if you want to comment on that.

[10:00]

Mr. Wilkie: — Okay. With regards to the figure of 13, the Hamilton report suggested that that was the staff level that should be in between elections, particularly when we compare it with other jurisdictions across the country. Newfoundland, with half our size, has 14 staff. New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, which . . . almost as many people as we do, have 19 staff. So we think that Mr. Hamilton's suggested staff level of 13 is reasonable.

And just to be clear that when I mentioned the cost of the by-election, that's there to . . . so you know what a by-election might cost. But we don't actually, we're not actually asking for the by-election cost this fiscal year.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The issue of disabilities, there was some concern before the election that there may be complaints made to the Human Rights Commission. I'm wondering whether there is anything pending with the Human Rights Commission and whether we were able adequately to deal with it. I know the direction that the Board of Internal Economy had given before was, notwithstanding that there was no legislation in place, the expectation was that you would proceed as if there was.

And I don't know whether you met that expectation in your view or whether there's outstanding matters regarding . . . Because certainly if we do anything with the legislation, that would be something we would, I'm sure, would have support from both sides of the House to include, including requirements so we maintain full compliance with and best practices in the area of disabilities.

Mr. Wilkie: — Right. In regards to complaints, we have had one complaint that Sandra and I have been dealing with that was, I think five entrances to the school, two of which were accessible and were signed accessible, but some people chose to go to a non-accessible entrance which had a 5- or 6-inch rise. We think it's reasonable that if the school has two accessible entrances and that we have signs directing people to those entrances that people would go to them. Perhaps we need an extra information officer at a school like that to direct people. But that's the one.

Plus there is, not a formal one yet, but the individual who has made formal complaints to the Human Rights Commission after the 2003 election and 2007 election, visually impaired voting, that person has made a complaint individually to us. We're anticipating that that will go to the Human Rights Commission again. But I think the last time that, one of the last times that we got together, we said that certainly what the individual was asking for, to have machines in every poll, if we say there's 15, 1,600 polling locations, so 3,000 polls across the province. That 15, 16 . . . That's not on; the expense is too high. But Ontario and New Brunswick have used having the machine in the returning office for the advanced poll period. So that's something that we might further look at, given that 1,500 machines versus 58 is a big difference.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — This deals with the . . .

Mr. Wilkie: — Yes. An individual in Saskatoon that is . . .

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — You indicated 58 machines. Would it be possible, if we had to go to that expense, to have one or two machines in, say, in Saskatoon and Regina, rather than 58, where we've got 10 or 12 polls or 12 constituencies in the same municipality?

Mr. Wilkie: — That might be a good idea for Saskatoon, Regina. For Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, that might make some sense. The advertising that that one, whatever, central location, that's something that could be looked at.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — You had indicated that not all MLAs have filed a return. How many are outstanding? To quote Mr. Gantefer, how many sleeping dogs are still lying under the bed that have to be prodded out?

Mr. Wilkie: — If I'm correct, Brent, is it 80 that have turned in and 85 have asked for extensions?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Okay.

Mr. Nadon: — About 25 outstanding.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Okay.

Mr. Wilkie: — And we have, in order to help individuals and parties to know who has in fact turned in their returns and who has asked for an extension then, Daniel, on our website, we have . . . If it's been received it's a certain colour; then if they've requested an extension there's an asterisk.

So I think we're pretty well up to date as of yesterday, although I know . . .

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — So it's a matter of public record who is . . . And that's on the website?

Mr. Wilkie: — Right.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I am sure that the caucus Chairs of both of the parties that have members in the House will be wanting to speak at the next caucus meeting to nudge people along, so we thank you for bringing it up.

During the election, this time was the first time that we had required the additional ID [identification]. Are there outstanding complaints from either members of the public or the parties regarding that, that are still pending?

Mr. Wilkie: — We answered those as they came along, and there were a number of them. Also in order that, the same as Elections Canada had done when they first introduced it, we had a form that each poll official was asked to indicate how many persons essentially walked away from the poll because of the ID requirements and what type of ID they generally used. Because we're doing this in a systematic way, going through all the boxes, at this point, out of 58, we've done 32 constituencies and 67 of those, 67 people were indicated to have walked away which ranged from zero to nine in those constituencies that have been, the boxes all opened.

But of course there are some as well . . . We did get complaints from people who didn't make it to the polling place or didn't make it to the desk where the deputy returning officers were located in order for that form to properly take that into account. So as soon as we get all 58 we will let you know, but again, it ranged from a high of nine in Athabasca to the two in Cannington, one in Saskatoon Southeast, on these forms. Now we hope that the poll officials completed them properly. We can only hope that they did that. And again that doesn't take into account people that may have walked away, but that gives you some information.

Also as far as the most popular type of ID, driver's licence was used by 85 per cent of people, the voter information card by 89 per cent of the people, and the health card by 4 per cent. So those seemed to be the most popular ones that were used.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — You're aware there's legislation dealing with the number of constituencies in the province. Will that make a difference to your timeline dealing with the Boundaries Commission?

Mr. Wilkie: — Something that has come to our attention, Jeff had said that the information coming from Census Canada is going to be, the population information coming February 8th and then the age is in May. So that might affect things somewhat. We actually are doing some research as to what other jurisdictions have the population base and how they have operated. It is somewhat more challenging in Saskatchewan because of the 5 per cent plus or minus. I think we were one of the only jurisdictions to have that low plus or minus. I think New Brunswick is now going to that plus or minus 5 per cent. Other jurisdictions are either plus or minus 10 per cent or 25 per cent. So it might take a bit longer, but the legislation allows for extra time to be requested. So for example the Boundaries Commission 10 years ago did request a bit longer to produce

the interim report. So there is that flex in the legislation to do that.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I don't have anything else. I don't know whether my . . .

The Chair: — Other questions? Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Mr. Wilkie, and welcome to you and your staff and thanks for getting through a very busy season with some very trying circumstances. But thank you very much for doing for the job that you'd done.

Tagging along on something that my colleague opposite had asked concerning the use of voter ID attestations. And the use of attestations on First Nation was something of a question going into the election. Elections Saskatchewan ruled that attestations, as is the case with the federal election procedure, would be available to on-reserve First Nations, and I was very glad to see Elections Saskatchewan make that ruling, and I think improved the voting conditions for people in Saskatchewan and was a good safeguard for democracy in this province.

I guess, as per the statistical analysis of what happened at the polls, do you have any information on how many attestations were used on-reserve?

Mr. Wilkie: — We don't, but that's something that we can . . . So we can look at those numbers and let you know.

Mr. McCall: — Well it would be good information to have in terms of doing that proper consideration of what happened in the election.

I guess one of the questions on the Boundaries Commission 10 years ago. Do you have the cost, do you have the figure involved in what happened 10 years ago?

Mr. Wilkie: — We do have some of those figures, but we also know that two CEOs ago, Jan Baker used a pencil and calculator. So things have progressed since then. So you know . . .

Mr. McCall: — I'm fine with context, Mr. Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. Wilkie: — A little over 200,000. So with technology and with the possibility that it could take a bit longer, that's been taken into account in our calculations.

Mr. McCall: — So again in extending from a question raised by my colleague opposite, the whole question of the timeline of the boundaries redistribution process lining up alongside two fairly significant changes to the election . . . to the boundaries distribution system period: one being the addition of three extra seats; but two, the moving from general population to those 18 and over as the means by defining population. So again how do you see the timeline unfolding if the information that is required, anticipated by the changes in the legislation, doesn't show up until May? How do you see the timeline playing out?

Mr. Wilkie: — That's something we've just actually, you know, we've just been informed about those times. I think some information can . . . Maybe Jeff, do you want to add anything on that as far as some information we can do with what we'll get in the population? But some of it, we'll have to wait . . . [inaudible].

I think some of the work can be done in advance. I had occasion to be in Saskatoon on the weekend and was shown — by someone who used to live here; he lives there now — some of the areas of growth. So some of the things can be anticipated a bit as we're waiting for things. But again there is the possibility of extending the timelines as per the legislation. So because of getting it in May, it may mean for example that last time the boundaries interim report was done in about the middle of July and then the hearings going across the province were in September. That might have to be a little bit delayed.

[10:15]

Also we, by coincidence I guess, Elections Canada is also doing their 10 boundaries commissions, and so we have been co-operating with them. The technicians, GIS technicians that will be working on the boundaries commission, were in Ottawa last week getting training on the Elections Canada boundaries tool so that we can use some of their equipment, let's say, or the software. And there's another boundaries commission for a bit more administrative support that I would plan on attending later this month that Elections Canada is putting on.

But Elections Canada has requested, to both of our benefits, that we don't have the hearings at the same time, that people would get confused. So things might be later. You know, it might not be October that the final report is done. Maybe it will be more November, December. It's hard to say. But those are some things that we have to, now that we've just been informed about that information about in May, that we're going to — Jeff, myself, and the two GIS technicians — have to sit down and do some more thinking about.

Mr. McCall: — But to recap, under the legislation, generally the starting gun has been the release of the population data after the 10-year census which is coming tomorrow, February 8th.

Mr. Wilkie: — Right. Right. The commission is to be put in place within 30 days, and then there's, the wiggle room for it could be longer. And then three months to do the interim report, and then another three months to do the final. But some of that information won't be available until May.

Mr. McCall: — Now the question of the use of total population for the basis of these calculations, the federal system uses total population as the basis of its calculations, does it not?

Mr. Wilkie: — Right.

Mr. McCall: — Manitoba, Alberta, they both use total population as the basis of their calculations, do they not?

Mr. Wilkie: — I believe so. Now I am getting someone to check to see if there are any others that are based on . . .

Mr. McCall: — But to your knowledge, are there any other

jurisdictions in Canada that use what is being proposed in the amendment?

Mr. Wilkie: — Not to my knowledge, but I have not been able to check all of them. But I will be shortly checking all the . . .

Mr. McCall: — And you'll be able to provide that information to the committee.

Mr. Wilkie: — Sure, sure. I can provide that.

Mr. McCall: — That would be great. Thank you.

Mr. Wilkie: — You're welcome.

The Chair: — Any other questions? Ms. Eagles.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Wilkie, for your presentation. Regarding the Boundaries Commission, am I correct in saying that the population count within the proposed boundaries will be based on those not only 18 years old but that will reach the age of 18 within the next four years? Is that right?

Mr. Wilkie: — That is something that isn't necessarily clear in the wording, so that's something I'm not sure whether the Boundaries Commission itself will have to, or maybe perhaps . . . I don't know if there's any background information that your colleague the minister has on that as far as what's meant by that. Because it's new, we're not sure exactly what that means, whether it means extrapolating ahead to 2015. Or I guess there's a possibility that the election could be 2016 instead if the federal election is still in the fall.

Ms. Eagles: — Okay. And because we now have set election dates, is there a certain number of days before the next set election date, whether it is in '15 or '16, that the Boundary Commission has to have all their work done? Is that set out by a number of days before the next election?

Mr. Wilkie: — It's all supposed to be done in this fiscal year, or I mean this calendar year I should say, so that there's amounts of, I think it's 90 days. It could be later. So towards the end of the year. It could go perhaps into January, but generally it's in this calendar year.

Ms. Eagles: — And after that is complete, then . . .

Mr. Wilkie: — Then it goes to go the Legislative Assembly for approval.

Ms. Eagles: — Okay. And you know, if and when it's approved, then is the next step for you to instruct the returning officers to draw up very detailed accounts within their own ridings. Is that right?

Mr. Wilkie: — Right. And so in the legislation as well it says for returning officers that their terms finish if there's any change at all — minor, major — to their constituency. So given the change, increased by three, and the population growth and movement in the province, I would expect probably all 59 southern to change. So then that means that the appointments for all the 59 would — it's 56 currently — would be null and

void. We have and Sandra had this responsibility, that we looked at some of the other jurisdictions that did evaluations. So we have an evaluation program to evaluate which returning officers we might in fact reappoint. So I could have the option of reappointing. And then some will perhaps be told that if they wish to apply, they can apply, and then other ones that we would say, we wouldn't advise you to apply.

So what we would plan on doing then is, as early as 2013, in the spring of 2013, we would start with, say, those returning officers that we are planning to reappoint, for them to start doing the detailed work on their maps. And then as we go though, we would also then be appointing new returning officers. And then as new returning officers, just spread it out over a longer period because it will be more work than it was for this past election because of the changes. But I think by spreading it out over a two- to three-year period that that would be possible to do a good job.

Also we have learned a lot in the process with the current maps, with GIS technology. So we've learned a lot so that it may be somewhat more streamlined the next time.

Ms. Eagles: — Okay, thank you. And just one other question regarding enumeration. It of course took place outside the writ in 2011. How significant was that in your office? I mean, I'm sure it relieved a lot of pressure and gave the enumerators more flexibility and ability to contact more electors. So was that something that you felt was really beneficial?

Mr. Wilkie: — Yes, yes, for a variety of reasons that the returning officers were able to concentrate on enumeration as opposed to dealing with a number of things like the candidates and finding, confirming polling places, etc — those things that when it's combined in a short period is difficult.

Also I think that the candidates and the political parties appreciated getting the voters' lists early and also appreciated getting the revised lists in a typewritten or a date-entered format, as opposed to under the previous format was they were handwritten. And so I think all in all that it was a good process and that people did appreciate it.

Ms. Eagles: — All right. Thank you, Mr. Wilkie, and to your officials as well.

Mr. Wilkie: — Thank you for coming.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you. Any further questions? If not, I have one. I know, having been through redistribution now a few times, I know it causes angst amongst the sitting members and some confusion amongst the electorate. With the sitting members it's, do I now represent the current riding that I was elected in, or should I be representing the people that will be in perhaps a changed riding? And on behalf of the electorate, their confusion is, is who's my member now? You know, my whole community may have moved to a different constituency, so do I go to that MLA, and who is that MLA, or do I carry on with my existing MLA?

So I just wanted confirmation I guess that any by-elections between now and the next general election will continue to be held on the current boundaries, not any changed boundaries.

Mr. Wilkie: — That's correct.

The Chair: — And that the MLAs continue to represent the boundaries of the constituency that they were elected in, not any proposed changes. So I just wanted some confirmation on that to, you know, relieve some angst and confusion.

Mr. Wilkie: — That's a good question. And in the same vein, we have to keep lists of the two streams of returning officers because, should there be a by-election, then the returning officer under the old . . . would have to be under the old boundaries. So some people may be on the list for both and some may not — so, depending on where they live.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you very much. Well thank you for the job you're doing and for, I think, a well-run election last year.

Mr. Wilkie: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Okay. At this point in time, we will hold this decision in abeyance for going in camera. And as well, we will take a 15-minute health break.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

The Chair: — Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to call the committee back into session. And before us we have the review of the 2012 and 2013 budget of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. So welcome, Mr. Dickson. If you would introduce your staff and proceed with your presentation.

Mr. Dickson: — Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, members. I'm accompanied this morning by Pam Scott on my left, our director of operations in, we call it the OIPC, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. On my right is Diane Aldridge, who is our director of compliance. And immediately behind Diane is Kara Philip, who is our intake officer/database manager. So I guess you have in front of you 50 per cent of the OIPC staff complement to answer your questions.

Since Mr. McCall is new to the board, my intention is to spend a few minutes highlighting my office's role and mandate. We oversee more than 3,000 organizations in Saskatchewan in terms of their compliance with three different laws: *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or FOIP; *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or LAFOIP; and *The Health Information Protection Act*, HIPA. We use the acronyms a lot because the titles are just too darn long to keep repeating.

FOIP and LAFOIP are actually quite similar laws but they apply to different organizations. FOIP applies to a list of government agencies, so that would be the ministries, the Crowns, and a list of provincial boards, commissions, and agencies. It's less than 100 organizations. LAFOIP applies to municipalities, regional health authorities, colleges and universities, school divisions, and a myriad of library boards and other organizations created by municipalities.

In the case of both FOIP and LAFOIP, what you get are essentially two laws in one. Each of those two laws has a kind of a dual theme. The one theme is that public information must be accessible to the public, and the other theme, equally important, is that personal information provided to any of these public bodies needs to be protected. So if you think of FOIP and LAFOIP in more concrete terms, they set out not only the process for an individual to be able to make an access request, but they also define the rules for the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information.

What happens is that HIPA is quite a different kind of law. When HIPA was created, it wasn't so much Saskatchewan had a desperate need in the late . . . in the early 2000s for another privacy law. It's designed to facilitate an electronic health record for each man, woman, and child in the province. And so HIPA sets out and codifies the rules for the collection, use, and disclosure of personal health information or PHI, sets out the rules for storage and destruction of that information, and then finally it talks about the patient's right to access and seek to have errors corrected.

When I was selected . . . That's really all I was going to do in terms of background, but of course I'm happy to deal with any questions that come up subsequent. When I was selected by the all-party selection committee eight years ago, I was assured that since Saskatchewan was only then creating an office with the first full-time commissioner, there was an understanding, indeed an expectation, that the office would need to grow and build capacity over time. I was told that the committee wished to create an access and privacy regime similar to what existed in the other Western provinces.

And when I look back at old *Hansards*, the observation of my part-time predecessor, Dick Rendek, and before him Gerry Gerrand, you found their observation that our province had fallen behind our partners in the New West Partnership, the other Western provinces, in creating the conditions for robust access and privacy.

Over the last eight years, we have seen a remarkable increase in awareness of these three laws in use, by the public, of these laws. And in fact you don't have to take my word for it. The Ministry of Justice access and privacy branch puts out an annual report and the very latest report had this to say, that in 2010-11, provincial government institutions processed a total of 1,470 access to information requests. This is a substantial increase — over 833 processed in '09-10 and a previous four-year average of 588, so a very dramatic increase. In fact the number of requests for personal information rose 185 per cent.

And keep in mind this, when you look at kind of the FOIP [freedom of information and protection of privacy] regime in Saskatchewan, the statistics are only collected and tracked on that small number of provincial government institutions, so we don't have any good tracking of what's going on in all of our RMs, cities, municipalities, school divisions. So I can tell you from speaking with those organizations and our 13 health regions, they're also seeing a substantial increase in activity.

Although our office is only eight years old and there's been this remarkable increase in access and privacy activity, we still only

have three investigators. We call them portfolio officers. Now over the years, we've worked hard to introduce efficiencies within our office to maximize our work product, but the chief limiting factor we continually bump up against in dealing with an increasingly complex and challenging workload is that we only have three portfolio officers. And I make the observation, Mr. Chairman and members, no other office of our kind in Western Canada is handicapped in the same way.

It's for that reason for each of the last four years I've requested one additional investigator portfolio officer, and each time my request has been denied. And I'd respectfully suggest that other provinces in the West, frankly, have done a better job of providing adequate resources to their access and privacy oversight offices. If you look at the chart on page 4 of the Estimates booklet, you can see the contrast.

Although it may be trite to say, I won't hesitate to say it: I don't define the mandate of the OIPC. It's defined by the three statutes I referenced at the outset. In other words, it's your Assembly that has created this broad mandate and yet, in my respectful submission, has not provided the tools we need to meet that mandate.

Really all of our work is reactive in the sense that we respond to requests for service in four different areas. We review decisions by public bodies or trustees to deny access to citizens. We investigate privacy breaches but only as a last resort after there can be no resolution of a complaint dealing directly with the involved body. The third thing we do is consultation and detailed advice to public sector bodies and trustees. And the fourth area of activity — mandated activity — is education and awareness raising. The problem with having only three portfolio officers, as I've advised the board in the past, is it just takes far too long to provide service to both citizens and public bodies.

Now what I want to do is spend a moment talking about an area of my work that we don't focus on a lot historically and in board presentations. An important part of what we do is working with public sector bodies and trustees to help them build in and design good privacy and access features when they're rolling out or creating a program or creating a piece of legislation or a policy. In terms of a lot of what we do has an IT dimension, I can tell you that it's prohibitively expensive to try and retrofit a computer system after you've rolled it out if you discover it's not actually compliant with the legislation. So we have in our jurisdiction, and it's true in other jurisdictions too, what I submit is a compelling need that we follow access by design and privacy by design and work harder in terms of baking in those requirements and those principles when we design all of the things that we do in the public sector in Saskatchewan.

Members, Mr. Chairman, I've worked in this area for 20 years in a number of Canadian jurisdictions, and I can assure you that if we improve the privacy and access practices of these 3,000 bodies we oversee, we can significantly reduce the number of requests and complaints that end up coming to our office. In other words — and this is going to sound like a paraphrase of something one of my colleagues said earlier, but the truth of it continues — if our office gets the same kind of complaint or the same kind of appeal involving the same government institution a dozen times, then surely that's a strong suggestion there's

some kind of a systemic issue at play and either we spend some time trying to figure out what that is and work with the public body to remedy, to correct it or we anticipate we just get more and more of those case files coming in at, sort of, the back end of the process.

Now as a province, we've not yet developed, I'd say, a deep pool of expertise in terms of access and privacy. We're certainly making good progress in Saskatchewan, but there's still very much . . . This is a work-in-progress. We find as our public bodies are moving to exploit new information technologies and we're moving more and more to a shared service model, which makes sense, but that's a very different world than what was contemplated in our 30-year-old model for our FOIP and LAFOIP statutes. There were just more access and privacy issues that arise, partly because of the technologies and partly because of the move to shared service.

[11:00]

My experience, and my investigators' experience, is that public bodies really want to do the right thing. I mean by and large these are men and women who take their . . . are professional. They take their mandate seriously, and they take the statutory requirements seriously. The difficulty is that often organizations are not sure what compliance would look like and what that will require.

So you might be saying, what's the result, Dickson, if your office just closes the door and you say, we're not able. We're too busy with our huge backlog of cases; we're not able to help providing advice in a proactive way on these other things. Well I think the result will be that those ministries, those health regions, those school divisions, they will want answers, and they will want assurance, and they will want guidance. So what's likely that's going to translate to is they're going to have to hire consultants, and they're going to have to pay them a pretty penny. And even at the end of that process, they're still not going to have often an assurance that they're going to be statutorily compliant with whatever the relevant statute is.

And something I haven't spoken of much at the board in the past is let me try and give you a sense of some of the changes that have been effected through this detailed advice and commentary work. And I point to a number of things.

The province no longer uses the SIN [social insurance number] number as a provincial employee identifier. That was an initiative that we invested a lot of time and effort and consultation with the government . . . or the previous government.

There have been fundamental changes in Saskatchewan in the area of electronic health records, in the areas of accountability, consent, and proactive disclosure to patients. And I'm happy to tell you our EHR [electronic health records], it's still not perfect, but it's a lot closer to reflecting the patient-centric approach of this government. It's a lot closer to realizing some of the, part of the Tony Dagnone patient-first initiative.

The prevention program for cervical cancer and indeed all of the surveillance programs of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, as a result of a 200-page investigation we did into the PPCC

[prevention program for cervical cancer] back in 2005, these programs are all now more responsive to patients, and they allow patients to be able to opt out of sharing their sensitive health information with anybody other than their family doctor.

Incidentally, the recommendations we made in that particular report have been followed by the Alberta Cancer Board and by the Alberta OIPC. They end up following the same analysis we've done.

There is a cancellation of the original SGI program for enhanced driver's licences that were going to have an embedded radio frequency identification antenna in them. This has resulted in substantial savings to taxpayers, and since I note with some interest in the other provinces that continued down the road of that program designing those RFID-enabled [Radio Frequency Identification] enhanced driver's licences, it turns out they've been grossly underutilized in other provinces and grossly more expensive than was intended. So a courageous move by Minister Cheveldayoff, who was responsible at the time.

But that was triggered by work my office had done, and we've been involved in offering amendments, working with public bodies to strengthen and improve *The Vital Statistics Act* and regulations, the youth drug detoxification Act, *The Medical Profession Act*, *The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act*, *The Gunshot and Stab Wounds Mandatory Reporting Act*, the mandatory HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] testing Act, *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*, and more recently, *The Correctional Services Act*. We had a lot of input in terms of a telephone inmate surveillance system that was being rolled out.

In addition we've provided tools and resources on our website with a view to trying to reduce the number of complaints that come to our office, making it clear to the public bodies we oversee, and to the public, what the law provides for and what it does not provide for. So on our website we have, I think, an extensive suite of tools and resources, including privacy breach guidelines, guidelines for faxing, guidelines for records storage and destruction, mobile device security best practices, an annotated section index so people can go and find out how our offices interpreted all of the moving parts of these three laws or most of the moving parts. And we've produced over 83 issues of a monthly e-newsletter with tips and best practices, again to try and reduce the number of complaints that are coming to our office.

So that what happens is that we have gotten excellent feedback from the bodies we oversee on the usefulness of these tools. And they in fact often will republish them to their own constituencies, but this takes time away from addressing our backlog of case files. So what we're simply now doing with these detailed advice requests, we're putting them in a queue. We advise the public bodies we're putting them in a queue, and if and when we can find some time, we will get at them. But the difficulty is that often doesn't correspond with tight legislative deadlines for proposed legislation and a host of other things, but we have little choice.

And just in terms of what's waiting in the queue right now, there is a very ambitious electronic medical record in Saskatoon in Heartland Health Region which is being developed for

primary health care. This is innovative. It's innovative in Canada. It involves some very unique issues and thorny privacy kinds of issues to sort out. A privacy impact assessment the size of a small phone book has been sitting on my desk since late fall. We haven't been able to get to it because we've been working on the backlog.

There's a ministry with a huge caseload has developed a new information sharing system they're working on. They want our input and advice before they sign off on this. They will need to make sure it's going to meet HIPA, it's going to meet FOIP requirements.

And then finally, we're working with e-health Saskatchewan, or they're waiting for us to come to the table and assist them. They're now doing an overall privacy impact assessment on the overall electronic health record infrastructure. This is a huge project. They insist that they need and require our input. We're not able to get to that because of the other things we've got on our desk.

Now let me just talk briefly about individual case files and individual citizens. What I've been talking about is the role we have working with collaboratively with public bodies. Citizens have to wait years for us to issue our reports and recommendations.

Now I developed a target when I assumed this role eight years ago, looking, considering the experience in other jurisdictions. You know, we've been doing access and privacy in Canada for 29 years. This is not new, and lots of jurisdictions have been at it even longer than we have. And my recommendation was that our target should be 80 per cent of all access reviews and 60 per cent of all privacy investigations are closed and finished within five months of the time that the citizen comes to us and we open the file.

In a number of provinces, the deadlines are much tighter. And I remember Minister Morgan last year reminded me of some jurisdictions, in fact it's 90 days. In some cases it's a couple of months. So we're talking five months. Five months, we're not going to be world-beaters. We're not setting any kind of a national standard, but I think it's reasonable and I think it's defensible. In fact the average length of time it takes in my office to close a file, currently, is 14 months. Because that's an average, what that tells us is a substantial number of files are much, much older than a year, are a number of years old.

A dissatisfied applicant — and I also hearken back to something Minister Morgan had raised a year ago — a dissatisfied applicant under the law has the option, if we make recommendations to a public body and the public body accepts only some or none of our recommendations, the aggrieved applicant has the right to go to the Court of Queen's Bench and ask for a binding order requiring somebody to do something. The difficulty is they can't go to court until we finish with it, until we get a report. So even though in my experience a small number of people ever have the resources to follow the court route, the point is that the delay in our office being able to finish these things impedes their ability to go to court and get a binding order.

The difficulty with having only three investigators is when one

takes a mat leave, when one gets seriously ill, when one suddenly dies or leaves because they figure they can take their expertise to another organization to advantage their own career — and we've seen all of those scenarios — we lose any ability to address all four parts of our mandate. I mean it's trying to juggle, but at some point there are so many things that you have to keep in the air, you just can't keep them all going. We have next to zero flexibility.

And so what happens is, like last summer or last spring when on March 23rd when we discovered in a recycling bin 2,700 patient files, over 180,000 pieces of personal health information, that took me and two investigators almost a total of four months working on that single . . . It's only a single file, but that impacted a huge number of patients. Those things come along. Then that just means all the queue gets longer and the caseload backlog gets longer because we needed to spend time working on that.

We were provided with funding last year for a fourth portfolio officer, and I was very grateful for that decision. But it was for the 2011-2012 fiscal year only, and it was made very clear to me by the board at the time this was a term, limited position. We hired that person. She started a training program. We have a 7- to 10-month training program we put our portfolio officers through. After four months she was still in training mode. She left for a permanent job elsewhere in government. And our experience is the people we want to hire really want permanent jobs, not a 12-month position.

So our experience has been, we just cannot find persons with the requisite subject matter expertise, so we hire the best people we can find. We immerse them in this, Diane Aldridge's 7- to 10-month training program. We find with a term position, you train them up. And by the time they're trained, it's the end of the term, and so the net benefit to our office, the net benefit to the people we are serving, either individuals or public sector, is just extremely modest.

So what we're asking for in our estimates this year is the amount that the board provided to us last year. We've backed out some supplementary funding. We had asked for, last year, \$100,000 in terms of supplementary estimates. Before it actually went for formal approval, we realized that that was too much, so it was reduced to 60,000. And what we've done is, I'm not sure all the 60,000 . . . So there would be money coming back — right? — from that 60,000. So that's of course been backed out, but otherwise we'd look for a status quo in terms of programming.

We would have the amount provided by the board last year allow us to make that fourth portfolio officer position that was temporary, permanent. So we would have four portfolio officers. Provide us with . . . now there's an error we noticed after we sent our board package, and I apologize for this. After we sent our package out, the amount should be \$183,745 which is our best estimate of one-time capital costs to move walls, construct an office for the fourth portfolio officer, one-time cost. And then there would be some related costs for equipment, tuition. All of our investigators need to be graduates of the University of Alberta department of extension information access and privacy program. It's the only kind of program of its kind in Canada.

So that's my pitch, Mr. Chairman, and ladies and gentlemen, and I look forward, my colleagues look forward to your questions.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Dickson. I wonder if you could give us that number again. And that would be under equipment and fixed assets, would it? Oh, okay. Where is that \$183,000 number going?

Mr. Dickson: — I'm going to invite Pam Scott to explain.

Ms. Scott: — Actually what happened, if you look on page 4 of the estimates package we submitted to you, the second-to-last paragraph, the number was inverted. So it's \$1,279,745; it should have been 1,297,000, which is the same number that is on page 5 of your estimates book, so it was just a typo. That means that the actual requirement to add this person is now 183,745 rather than 165,745. So if you just scratch out the 165,745 on page 4 and put in 183,745, that would be the correct number.

[11:15]

Mr. Dickson: — I have advised Mr. Speaker and members that approximately I think 150,000 was our best estimate of what we would need to pay Government Services to reconfigure walls and create that office. Obviously we don't require that funding. That comes back to the Provincial Treasury. So the biggest part of it is that one-time cost to be able to accommodate that fourth investigator.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you. Questions from the members? Mr. Morgan.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The additional money for the investigator, you had indicated just now that before you could use a one-year term position, you want to do a seven-month training course.

Mr. Dickson: — What happens, Minister, is that because FOIP is still . . . I mean the legislation is old, but the kind of activity we see now is new. When we advertise for an investigator — we've done this lots over the last eight years — we simply have never been able to, we can't find people who have the requisite knowledge, experience, and background in terms of access and privacy. The other thing is, you might find people who come from executive government and may have no familiarity with *The Health Information Protection Act*. So because of the three laws we oversee and because we also have three federal laws that are in play in Saskatchewan, our investigators need to be able to . . . We can't afford to have specialists.

Each of our investigators has to be able to provide deputy-minister-level advice on any of the four provincial laws — the three we oversee and the provincial privacy Act — has to be familiar with the federal legislation and has to understand our investigative techniques, the way we do our investigations, the way we write our reports. So as I say, seven to ten months is what's been our experience to be fully productive.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm trying to recollect what the discussions that you and I had at the time we agreed to this. My recollection was that there was one or two existing people that

had been there on a temporary basis, I think, filling in on some leaves or something and that your intention was to continue some existing people. I don't think with the benefit of hindsight we would've been very willing or supportive of having provided a one-year term position knowing that more than half of that time was spent on training. This is sort of the first I've heard of that. So I guess the questions I have is, was there a change or something that was different on that? And then the person was only there four months, so I'm not sure whether the money was coming by way of a supplementary estimate that wasn't all used or whether there's money coming back to GRF [General Revenue Fund] on it because there was only four months of the 12 that was actually used.

Mr. Dickson: — Yes. Well certainly there was money coming back. In terms of the training, we had at the time, a year ago when we were in front of the board, we had some persons in our office who had come in and our hope was that we would be able to retain those people, Minister. And if we had, then a portion of the training would have already happened. The difficulty is that one of our regular portfolio officers left in, I guess it was in the fall, July 2011, one of our portfolio officers left. So one of those people that we would have considered as a fourth, the person that would be using this term position, we actually moved her into the vacant spot so she became that extra portfolio officer.

So in fact our intention had been and our expectation was that we would have been able to slide somebody in and we wouldn't have had that 7- to 10-month lag to do the training. As it turned out we had somebody go so we had a vacancy and then we ended up having to start over again. Did you want to . . .

Ms. Scott: — I would just add to that, that throughout appearing before the Board of Internal Economy we have always stated that our training program takes 7 to 10 months. That's not to suggest that this person who is in the training program isn't being effective in, in our reviews or our privacy breaches. But to be completely trained, to be able to do all four parts of the mandate . . .

Mr. Dickson: — Work independently.

Ms. Scott: — Work independently, that's correct, it takes 7 to 10 months.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We made the investment and I guess what I . . . You know, you indicated first the person was training the whole time. I guess my question is, where is the rest of the money? You've answered that. And the second question is, what do we get for the extra money we spent, if you're asking us to do it again? You know, I was sort of hoping that when we dealt with it this year we would have, yes, we were able to have this person in place for X number of months, and this is the reduction in backlog or this is the number of cases that that particular individual had handled. And I don't see any of that in the materials.

Mr. Dickson: — Well we can certainly provide the information to you, Minister. I think this, I think . . . And let me just preface by saying, because we are a reactive kind of business, it would have been hard to contemplate or anticipate the Dr. Ooi situation that we encountered in March. And when that

happened, I made a decision that because of the volume of information involved, the volume of patients, that there were a large number of people in Regina affected by that, that we took that out of the queue, if you will, and we made that a priority and we spent four months working on it.

In spite of that, we were able to close last year, I think, was it over . . . The files that were closed last year were 184 files from April to December, which was the . . . We're getting better at closing files, and last year we closed the most files we've ever been able to close in that time period. It was significantly more than files before, and I think Ms. Aldridge can add to that.

Ms. Aldridge: — Right. My job is of course to work with the portfolio officers to train them but also to manage all of the case files in the office. And, you know, that has ranged anywhere up to, you know, 150 to 300 case files at any given time as well as the detailed research and commentary, presentations, and doing summary advice which we have a weekly rotation.

The portfolio officer that we had was contributing to the office. She was carrying a caseload of 14 files just before she left, and it was a four and one-half month period. One of the strategies that we utilized at that time was, because when someone's newer, they don't yet have the capacity and the subject area mastery to work on some of the more difficult files, so I shifted, of course, the complex, older files to the more experienced portfolio officers in the office. So clearly we were still able to make a dent in the backlog. It just was not as substantial as we had hoped.

Mr. Dickson: — But I might just, if I can just add again to that, Minister, my view would be that frankly, given the amount of resources our office had to put in to the one big medical breach file, I was actually thrilled that we were able to close as many regular case files as we were. So I'd like to think that . . . I mean there were still certainly advantage and net benefit from having that person even for the four and a half months. It's just we didn't sort of get the benefit that we'd hoped to in terms of having 12 months of that person's production.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm looking at the chart you provided with the other provinces on it. We've got about 1 million population, so we've got eight people working. British Columbia has got about four and a half million population, so on a per capita basis, they seem to be far behind your office. So I'm wondering what their backlog or what their timeline to close files is.

Mr. Dickson: — I'd make two observations. I think the first one is that Alberta has, I think, in the view of most people in the access and privacy community, has done the best job as a province in terms of providing training tools and resources to people managing FOIP requests. British Columbia is a close second. So they have tools, resources, and training that haven't been provided to government service workers in Saskatchewan. So in fact they tended not to have to do a lot of the things which our office is engaged in to help move the yardsticks. I think what you'd find is this: British Columbia does not have a health information protection Act or anything like it; Alberta does. They have the health information Act. But I can tell you that — and I've said to the board before — more than 50 . . .

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — [Inaudible] . . . BC's [British Columbia] legislation. Their general legislation is embodied in one Act rather than in two separate Acts, but there the protections exist.

Mr. Dickson: — Well with respect, Minister, the FOIP Act in British Columbia covers the self-governing professions. So it covers the College of Physicians, but it doesn't cover all of the . . . Like the reason we get up to 3,000 bodies we oversee, it's every doctor in private practice, every physiotherapist. The FOIP Act in British Columbia covers government ministries like ours, covers local authorities like ours, but it does not cover individual trustee, health trustees like ours. So yes, the colleges are covered, regulatory bodies are covered but beyond that they're not. And in fact Elizabeth Denham, the new Information and Privacy Commissioner in British Columbia, one of her initiatives is working with the government encouraging them to develop a law like HIPA in Saskatchewan. Is that a response to your query, Minister?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Yes, thank you.

The Chair: — Okay. Any other questions? I have a couple of questions. You talk about the consultations that you do with other agencies and I can see that it's certainly a benefit to the other agencies. But does your mandate include a formal consultation, a recommendation, or a presentation as part of your mandate?

Mr. Dickson: — The mandate for each of the statutes is very broad. The specific provisions in HIPA, for example, where we spend a lot of our time and effort is this: "offer comment on the . . ." This is section 52 of HIPA, Mr. Chairman:

(a) offer comment on the implications for personal health information of proposed legislative schemes or programs of trustees;

(b) . . . recommend that the trustee:

(i) cease or modify a specified practice of collecting, using, or disclosing information that contravenes the Act; and

(ii) [recommend the trustee] destroy collections of personal health information . . .

(c) in appropriate circumstances, comment on the collection of personal health information in an indirect manner;

(d) from time to time carry out investigations with respect to personal health information . . .

(e) comment on the implications for protection of personal health information of any aspect of the collection, storage, use, or transfer of personal health information.

And then in addition — as I say, it's quite broad — and so when the law came into force it also mandated the commissioner to:

(a) engage in or commission research into matters affecting the carrying out for purposes of this Act;

Part of the research is consultation with public bodies and finding out what they're doing and why they're doing it and why they couldn't do it a different way.

(b) conduct public education programs and provide information . . .

(c) receive representations concerning operations of this Act.

So part of what we do is we're often making recommendations to the Minister of Justice, Minister of Health in terms of legislative changes that we think are required to make the laws work better for citizens and patients. Am I responsive to your query, sir?

The Chair: — Yes. No, my question was along, thought process was along the line of, if you're doing these consultations at the request of those agencies, that have you thought of putting in place, and is it even possible for you to put in place, a fee structure that would allow you then to provide that service, but recoup your costs?

[11:30]

Mr. Dickson: — The only . . . It's an interesting proposition, Mr. Chairman. The only jurisdictions I know do something similar, jurisdictions where they have privacy oversight only or in the case of the United Kingdom Information Commissioner, they have data protection responsibility over the entire private sector as well as the public sector. And private sector organizations are required in the UK [United Kingdom] to pay like a licensing fee, depending on the size of their organization. So actually my colleague in the United Kingdom generates revenue every time somebody registers. They have to pay this licensing fee and so my UK counterpart uses that revenue, of course, then to provide a range of service. As just pointed out to me what's tricky is, he can't spend any of those dollars on the public sector side though. He can only spend those . . . So it's kind of a bifurcated revenue stream and it can only be spent in the one area.

Other than that, I'm not . . . We have 13 Canadian, actually 14 Canadian jurisdictions, 14 different laws like ours and in none of the other — that's the three territories, the federal level, and the 10 provinces — I can tell you, not only are there no fees charged in any of those organizations, but I've heard of no proposal in any of those offices to do that kind of fee-for-service arrangement. But there would be some pretty significant issues, I think, for the board and the legislature to explore. I would just love to be able to get the fourth portfolio officer and if that were a way of doing it, I'd be interested in exploring further. Pamela.

Ms. Scott: — I think that basically our money is coming and being funded through the General Revenue Fund. So if we were applying a fee to a public organization, public body, it's coming out of the same pot of money basically. And I might also add that there would be administrative costs involved in that as well. So I guess what I'm trying to say is, we are the experts in the information and privacy field and we're asking for this fourth portfolio officer to enable us to be able to give the advice to the public bodies without having to do that kind of fee for service.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you. Second question, different subject though — one I'm sure you're familiar with me asking — is about sharing services and your views as an independent officer on sharing services with the other independent officers.

Mr. Dickson: — Long before I took this position, I was impressed with what I saw in British Columbia where the Information and Privacy Commissioner shares office space with the ombudsman in British Columbia, shares space with two other independent officers.

And my position has been, since I started eight years ago, shared service makes sense. It's more economical. It's, I think, what taxpayers are entitled to expect. And I'm pleased to tell you that the OIPC, I think, is probably, there's probably no other independent office that is more linked with the Legislative Assembly Service. We use, rather than trying to create our own structures and capacity, we use the IT, and gratefully use I can tell you, and have always used the IT from the Legislative Assembly Service, the HR [human resources] service at the Legislative Assembly Service, the financial processing through the Legislative Assembly Service. We're big users of the excellent library facility and the library specialists. So I think we have been quite integrated in an operational sense already with the LAS, and that's made sense to us.

It's been an enormous advantage I think. It's meant the dollars we get, we're able to spend more on our core work instead of the infrastructure kinds of things, and we've got excellent service. And I've been a keen advocate since I've been here that since most of us have the same landlord, most of us have Government Services as our landlord, I think there's all kinds of advantages with finding a common facility. I love my friend the Ombudsman's title of complaints are us. I mean, why not?

And I think the only frustration, to be candid, is we had sat down with Government Services a couple of years ago and had understood that there was going to be somebody assigned to work with us, explore what our needs were, what, you know, how many board rooms do you need, and how many common things would you be able to share. And I think it just kind of hasn't . . . We're waiting for somebody to come and meet with us and talk about what might be available in the city of Regina. We just have the single office. We don't have any satellite offices or anything.

But no, we're all for it. I think it's long overdue, and as long as we can sort of adequately protect sort of the core parts of our work, the confidentiality of our files, those kinds of things, which we're required by statute to do, otherwise I'm a strong supporter of it, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Dickson. If there are no further questions then this item will be held in abeyance until we go in camera. Thank you very much.

An Hon. Member: — Thank you for coming. Nice job.

Office of the Children's Advocate

The Chair: — Okay. Next item of business is item no. 7, a review of the 2012-2013 budget for the Office of the Children's Advocate. I'd like to welcome Mr. Bob Pringle. Mr. Pringle if

you would introduce your staff and proceed with your presentation.

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, board members. This to my left here is Bernie Rodier, our outstanding director of administration. Bernie has been before you on many occasions. I say outstanding because she is. And we had no audit observations last year at all, so we appreciate that leadership from Bernie.

We appreciate the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, board members. And I want to say first of all, thank you very much for your kind support in my first year. Thanks to access to the former Speaker and to yourself, sir, and also access to the board, and to Mr. Putz, Mr. Ring, and all the legislative staff. They've been very supportive to us and very helpful, and we appreciate that.

I just want to say it's an honour to be the Children's Advocate in Saskatchewan, and I look forward to working with you and all members of the legislature in the next year. You have our budget proposal obviously. It outlines our vision and our mandate, the operating principles, and the four major goals that we've just recently agreed to in the office, the challenges. And you have a copy of course of our status quo and our new initiative requests.

In the first year there's been a lot of change at the office, been a lot of consultation, a lot of reflection, evaluation, discussion, and planning. And this document represents our best effort to provide a complete picture to you of what our situation is like.

Fundamentally I see our role as being able to assist the provincial government to provide high-quality services for all children and youth in the province. I feel very comfortable here reporting to you because I know that we share together the responsibility to ensure that all of our children and youth are protected and safe. I know that all members of the Legislative Assembly in Saskatchewan prioritize the health and the quality of life for our youngest citizens, and if I may say so, especially those who are most at risk.

Of course, children and youth live in families if they're fortunate. There are a number of youth who do not live in families, which we're well aware of. So because most live in families, we do need to be supportive to vulnerable families and strengthen them, which is a way we strengthen our communities. If we do not do this properly, we all know that many children and youth are put at even greater risk. Historically most of our advocacy work at the Children's Advocate office has been in resolving casework issues, over some 2,000 in 2011. And I would say that on most occasions these issues are sorted out with the various ministries. I think that's important to say.

Our advocacy work has been complemented by investigations, issue and research analysis, public education, and the act of engagement with government and community stakeholders. This engagement often elevates to the level of structural or systemic issues, not unlike my colleagues' systemic issues, of a social and policy nature that impacts on many children and youth in Saskatchewan. You will know that Saskatchewan has the broadest legislative mandate in Canada for the Children's Advocate office, and the new Act broadens this mandate a bit

further and strengthens our role. And we're very grateful for the new Act, the new children and youth Act, in that youth do not want to be called children. So we're grateful to the province, the provincial government, for bringing in a new Act, and it will also make it easier for us to access information which is very important in our work.

It is clear that the child welfare review recommendations have strong support throughout the province and a lot of interest nationally. The province's response, that is the child and youth agenda or the provincial transformation strategy to a new and renewed child welfare system, has the potential to reverse many of the long-term negative social indicators in Saskatchewan for children and youth. This ambitious plan is very important, and it is just in its infancy, and clarity is required of course in some important areas. I commend the Government of Saskatchewan. Our youth and our children and youth do have rights, not only to be safe and to be protected but also to be nurtured. It is in everyone's best interest to see these young people grow up to be healthy, well-adjusted, and employed adults.

This child and youth agenda is a window of opportunity to look outside the boxes, which we have for so many years, the boxes of social services and youth justice, to consider and address the actual drivers of the current demand for those government services. My office is in a position to help play a lead and facilitative role in addressing these broader issues. We can help to bridge the gaps in trust between, in many cases, the clients and the government ministries, can help to bridge the gaps in communication and coordination between the many stakeholders. We're already doing this in terms of First Nations agencies and for example the Ministry of Social Services, or foster families and the Ministry of Social Services, as but two examples.

My commitment last year to you was to shift from just criticizing what's happening, which is actually quite easy to do, but it's not the way I see the role. The role is to really, to ensure that we provide . . . we engage in collaboration and partnerships in approach. And my knowledge of the child welfare review recommendations, I believe, positions us to play an increasingly important leadership role. And this is the feedback I get from the stakeholders, given the kinds of things we're being asked to engage in that we haven't been before.

One of the things I first embarked on last spring was a major externally led comprehensive evaluation of our advocacy program, which is our bread and butter program. This included direct feedback from government and community stakeholders and from young people themselves. This really ended up extending to an evaluation of our investigations program as well, as the external stakeholders expressed deep concern about the usefulness of delayed information. Even the provincial coroner has concerns about some of these delays in getting the answers which could provide important recommendations so these deaths and critical injuries would not happen in the future.

[11:45]

The advocacy evaluation laid out an expectation that we evaluate and monitor services to children and youth, that we begin to connect some of the dots on services that are not being coordinated — are often working at cross purposes — and that

we identify systemic gaps in these services and of course offer solutions to address some of these gaps. The child welfare issues in Saskatchewan are long-standing, and they are increasingly complex. So the only way to make progress is for all of us to work closer together. There are many Saskatchewan children and youth who are at risk in the province today, and we know there have been several deaths in the last two or three months alone.

I tried very hard last year to provide fair critique in my first year in a respectful tone and by offering best practice suggestions. As everyone knows — at least as I interpret my accountability to you — I need to call it as I see it, but also with the expectation to have proper documentation, good evidence, and research to back the statements that I make.

We have done a reasonably good job of individual advocacy and public education over the years, but only in parts of the province. For example — this is a matter of fact — we have not been going to places like Carnduff, which is my hometown, or Estevan or Weyburn or Swift Current or Moose Jaw. We tend to go where the child care resources are, and we've tended not to go to the northeast part of the province, the far Northeast or the far Northwest. And there are lots of issues there. Children have, young people have issues there as well.

Undue delays and investigations of critical injuries and child deaths is putting both children and youth and, I would say, the credibility of our office at risk. Only in the past two months did we dedicate a full-time, permanent support to research and development, research and analysis, which is critical to gathering factual information about successful approaches, social trends, and systemic issues. And this reassignment to the front lines was done, as the board will know, from a downsizing of our management structure. In fact I would say, in the last six years that 2.6 FTEs have come from downsizing management. And so I think that's, if we could do it, it was the right thing to do.

Our four major strategic goals and priorities for the future relate to — and there's some detail in the report which I won't go into — organizational development, strengthening that, strengthening our core services; public and stakeholder relations; addressing important issues and opportunities; and public accountability.

For your information, Mr. Speaker, board members, I myself and Bernie, our managers and some staff, have taken the lean training. By the way, we also just took the fair practices training as a staff last week. And the Ombudsman's office does an excellent job of that because that's critical for us as well, to make sure that we're fair to everyone.

We also have been efficient in streamlining some of our processes, focusing on maximizing the service to young people.

In terms of our status quo budget, we basically are in a situation where . . . The summary is on page 14, but I'll just indicate that the approved status quo programming request last year was — that is 2011-12 — the approved expenditure was 1.833 million. Our request this year is 1.819 million, which is a point six seven six per cent decrease over last year, keeping in mind that we had the one-time \$60,000 figure of course. But apart from that,

then the total increase in the status quo budget is 2.6 per cent. And it does stick in my mind, Mr. Speaker, last year that you indicated that status quo doesn't mean zero. So we understand that and respect that.

I want to just turn for a few minutes then to, if I can, to the request for new initiatives. The Children's Advocate office requires additional annualized funding to meet client and stakeholder demand for advocacy, public education, investigation, and research services. In 2011 extensive restructuring was done in the Children's Advocate office to increase front-line capacity. However, even with the redistribution of resources — that is 1.6 to the front line, from management staffing to the front line — significant pressures remain on the organization to deliver its legislative mandate and provide good public service.

There are four critical factors that require action by our office. Number one, advocacy and public education services are not equitable and accessible throughout the province, as I just indicated, to all children and youth due to the vast geographic area of the province and the fact that services must be delivered where the young people are. No one comes to our office. We go out to do our advocacy community work out in the community.

Secondly, death and critical injury investigations are not currently completed, I would say, not only not in a timely manner but not even in an acceptable time limit, which mitigates the effectiveness of findings and recommendations to prevent harm of other children and youth. And I would say as well from our perspective there is also a lack of prioritizing the resources within government in the ministries, but including our office, dedicated to this important work of doing these timely investigations. Sometimes we can go two or three years without getting even the . . . By the time we get the coroner's report, sometimes the police report, the Ministry of Social Services does their own investigation, and sometimes that process takes two or three years. And what's happening increasingly: we have nine outstanding investigations of child deaths; another three or four are coming our way shortly — that is the notifications to do the investigation — and we are still waiting on reports that are outstanding by two and three years. And so we're being seen in some ways, if you can't make a difference to speed these up, who can? That's supposed to be your role. So that's a challenge for us.

The third challenge: research and analysis of systemic social and public policy issues must be accurate and reliable, and the knowledge gained must be effectively translated to front-line service providers to have value.

And fourthly, the relationship building and facilitating discussions with partners with and between the child serving ministries, agencies, and organizations and communities in response to the child welfare review and the children and youth agenda set by the Government of Saskatchewan is the expectation. There are expectations on the Children's Advocate offices. These external partners, including First Nation and Métis agencies and organizations, are approaching our office to become a more active leader in bringing people and information together to solve issues affecting children and youth in our province.

Some of the implications of not proceeding with the new initiatives. I'll mention three: diminished credibility and effectiveness when the Children's Advocate office cannot meet the needs of children and youth clients, system and community stakeholders and the public, as well as the expectations created by our broad legislative mandate and public profile; second risk, missed opportunities to support communities and service providers to build upon the good work started by the Government of Saskatchewan in the completion of the child welfare review and initiation of the children and youth agenda; and four, preventable harm occurring to children and youth resulting in undermining the public confidence in the provincial government and the Children's Advocate office.

Key considerations. Option one, we're proposing, it's a 2 per cent, 2.6 per cent increase by . . . That's 1.819 million. So the option one in terms of the new initiatives is adding three FTEs — one advocate, one investigator, and one research policy analyst at a total cost of \$270,000 per year, or a total of 2.089 million which I recognize, Mr. Speaker and board members, is a 17.5 per cent increase in our 2011-2012, over our 2011-2012 budget.

Option two I lay before you: add the flexible personal services resources of \$125,000 which takes the request up to one million, nine hundred and forty-four — this is on page 17 — or 9.6 per cent increase over the 2012 . . . 2011-2012 annualized budget.

We're a small office with a broad mandate and big external expectations that we are not able to fully meet. We believe that we have done what we can to improve front-line service within our status quo funding. Not to get into provincial comparisons too much, Mr. Speaker, board members, but Manitoba for example has 22 employees, full-time equivalents; we have 14.6. Ideally, as outlined in option one of this new initiatives funding request, we require three additional staff to provide the level of . . . And just a clarification: on page 17, level of expected services, not unexpected services — so I apologize for that — of expected services and advocacy, public education, investigation, and research functions. Therefore we recommend to the board that the board approve this annualized funding request for our office.

The Children's Advocate office has a broad mandate to protect the rights of children and youth in Saskatchewan and we need the capacity to fulfill this growing mandate. I recognize this is a significant increase to our budget and provide option two for your consideration. As I say, this smaller annualized funding request would allow the office to alleviate some of the pressure points on a strategic or discretionary basis through the use of non-permanent staffing as required. This would reduce but not eliminate the risks, as I see it.

In conclusion, a status quo funding request in the amount of one million, eight hundred and nineteen dollars maintains the existing staffing and service levels. While this budget proposal reflects a slight increase over 2011-2012 budget allocation, the 2011-2012 budget — a slight decrease, pardon me, over the 2011-2012 total budget allocation — the 2011-12 budget included one-time funds and when these funds are removed for the percentage, the overall increase to our base budget funding is actually 2.6 per cent. As I have indicated, the status quo

funding level will not address the pressures in areas outlined.

In my preface, in my new initiatives section, I have presented two options to the board for consideration to address the pressures and identified risks of not proceeding. Option one includes a request for three FTEs for a total of 270,000, which is an overall increase to our base funding of 17.5 per cent. Option two is a request for personal services funds in the amount of \$125,000, which is an overall increase to our base budget of 9.6 per cent. To best address the pressures as outlined in my submission, I would respectfully ask the Board of Internal Economy to recommend to the Legislative Assembly a total appropriation for the Children's Advocate office, vote 076, in the amount of \$2.089 million for the year 2012-2013.

Thank you very much for your patience in listening to my presentation. And I look forward to your questions, and I know there will be some.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Pringle. Before we get into questions, though, I believe our lunch is here so we will recess for half an hour and reconvene at 12:30 where we will proceed with our grilling of the child advocate. I declare this meeting recessed.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

The Chair: — Okay, ladies and gentlemen. I think we will resume our hearings. Mr. Pringle, the child advocate, is with us, and his staff. So members if there are any questions, please indicate.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Mr. Morgan.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — You had indicated, Mr. Pringle, that you had participated in the lean program. And I'm wondering, sir, what your thoughts were on the program and whether there are any savings or efficiencies that were realized as a result of . . .

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Actually I just attended that course about a month ago myself, but some of our managers have been there, and I just wasn't able to get to the previous sessions. But what we're going to do is to try and, early on in this year, try and get ourselves signed up for a thorough review. We just haven't had the time.

But we have certainly all the economies that we certainly . . . Some are identified by the Ombudsman, you know. We share those, and we have by necessity in terms of just trying to respond to the demand had moved to a bit of a team approach with our investigators and our advocates in terms of trying to streamline and do the investigations quicker and look at them differently and then try and look at which ones we really even needed to do. Because that's the other thing: just because we've always done investigations doesn't mean we always need to do them.

So we try to look at being as efficient as we can and then as per the, you know, lean philosophy. And also if it's not value added, that is, if it's not going to enhance the service to children and youth, then we need to look at why we're doing some of the

processes. So I did mean to suggest that we were going through the training, but we've all taken the training to kind of position our organization to do that.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We'll be interested to hear what your experience is with it in subsequent budget years or if we're back later in the year.

At the bottom of page 15 of your presentation, you talk about the death and critical injury investigations. And I don't know whether . . . I know you're new in your role, but I'm wondering whether you can comment on the conversation or the discussion you had with the coroner and what things could be done. I can't imagine anything more horrific for a family member or a family to go through than the loss of or a serious injury involving a child. I just think it would be one of the worst things that's imaginable. And I'm wanting to know that we're using the best practices that we can within our ministries and also with your office and the office of the coroner to try and ensure that when those tragedies do happen — we hope that they are seldom or never — but when they do, we're learning the most we possibly we can. So if you have any background you can give us in that area.

Mr. Pringle: — Well thank you very much. I met with the coroner to just kind of open that door, and he had indicated early in 2011 that he was a bit concerned about the delays in investigations on a number of the child deaths. And that even though historical practice has been not to do anything until we get his report, till we get any police reports or the investigation from the Ministry of Social Services or Corrections and Public Safety, we look at those to see if there's additional issues that perhaps weren't explored and we can explore further.

And sometimes we decide not, in fact probably the most, in the majority of times we decide not to do an investigation. But there are, there were some commitments made by the previous advocate. And there may be some investigations that will have to be released publicly, but there was a commitment to do some of those high-profile deaths. And the coroner was feeling that, you know, kind of challenging me to say that, you know, there are some things you could actually begin in advance of those other reports. And so we talked about how we could kind of work together in the future, which included bringing our investigation people together to make sure that we can learn from each other and there are . . . You know, investigation work is isolating. It's very difficult to do those reviews.

Actually when I got here last year, we had an investigator on stress leave because you're just doing those all the time, and it's very, it's kind of accumulated in terms of the stress and anxiety of reading about all the things that, in many cases, have gone wrong. The fact is that a child has died. And so we looked at getting, talking about getting our staff together to be supportive to each other but also to share investigative techniques. Basically we need to know what happened, what are the issues, as you well know. We need to be thorough; these are time-consuming, and we need to be objective.

And then we also were invited, which myself and four of us attended — our two investigators and our director of operations — the annual training session of the coroner's office in Saskatoon.

So I would say, Mr. Minister, we're just beginning to find ways to work together, but a key part of it is to speed up the investigations. That's his interest and my interest.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you for that. I'm asking the Chair for us to go into camera because I have another issue that I wish to raise in camera.

Mr. Pringle: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — While we're here, I did want to comment on the nature of the presentation that was put forward. I noticed that you made favourable comments about your staff before, and I think I'll do a little piling on. It was . . .

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — It was one of the best presentations. When I read through, it was short enough that it went . . . matched my attention span, which is quite limited some days. And it was really presentable and it was very readable, so thank you for how it was done.

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

The Chair: — Any other questions? Or did you want to go in camera right away, Mr. Morgan, or later?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — While his officials are here, so now would be a good time.

Mr. Pringle: — I'm happy to stay around, yes.

The Chair: — Do you have any questions that you want to put on the record? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We can do it in camera? Okay. Well Mr. Morgan has requested we go in camera. We will go in camera at the present time to the recall of the Chair. And you want Mr. Pringle and his staff to stay? Okay.

[The board continued in camera from 12:41 until 12:51.]

The Chair: — Okay, I'd like to reconvene this meeting with the child advocate, Mr. Pringle, and his staff. Are there any further questions members have?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank them very much for coming.

The Chair: — Okay. I have one question that you may have heard me asking the other independent officers about sharing of services, and what your thoughts on that, and do they see this as a beneficial program, and should it be carried forward?

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, we've discussed this a lot in our office, you know, anecdotally but not systematically, but I . . . We share now, as you know, with the Ombudsman. Personally I think it's gone very, very well. You'll also know, and I'll just share with members, that we're looking at the potential of locating a worker, an advocate, in both Prince Albert and Regina. Obviously if we did that, we would have to share.

And we're hoping that, I'm hoping that we can stay where we are with the Ombudsman in Saskatoon. If we move into, have to move into another space, I would hope it would be together. And so I think it's . . . Historically I think a lot of our staff have not really supported this, which is perhaps what the Ombudsman was alluding to. But for me personally, assume we all have our own space and, you know, the privacy for those we serve and whatnot, I actually don't have any problem with it at all. I think it makes sense, and so I would be supportive.

The Chair: — Okay. Well thank you. You mentioned the possibility of the advocate's office operating as well out of P.A. [Prince Albert]. I'm assuming that would cover the North as well. And what were you thinking of in that particular area?

Mr. Pringle: — Well actually it was mentioned to me by the MLAs in Prince Albert that, why is there not an advocate there. And you know what? I agree with them, and so we're exploring that.

And you know, we talk about lean and the efficiencies. I'd feel a lot better if the person who handles the North actually lives in Prince Albert and handles the North from Prince Albert rather than spending an hour and a half to get there from Saskatoon and an hour and a half to get back. Similarly in Regina, it's a two-and-a-half-hour drive to get to the area, right? And as it turns out, actually the majority of our cases, by a little bit, are actually in the South. It's interesting because we don't get Estevan, Weyburn, Swift Current, and Moose Jaw. And again there are different styles from different advocates and so on and different resources around the province.

But I would foresee the time when hopefully we could have an advocate here. And I think that, so we're not grabbing numbers out of the air, I'd like to explore that seriously over this year. And I would be open to talking to any of the Regina MLAs or the southern MLAs. And I would hope that, I would hope that when we come back next year, I could have a proposal for you so that again the person who serves the South lives here, now that isn't in the other communities, but lives in the South and doesn't spend that time travelling back and forth.

So I think that's, you know, in terms of lean and other . . . [inaudible] . . . I think that makes a lot of sense. Plus it's probably more equitable in terms of equability of our services, which are limited. So I hope that we would be in a position to do that, and then we will find ways to support those people not being together with the other staff. But through video conferencing and, you know, staff meetings, and so on, I think we could be supportive to those folks because it's . . . And the other thing is I believe that, in some ways, you're more effective if you live in the communities you're serving.

And I understand why we're all in Saskatoon. It's central, but it isn't central to places like where you live, which takes six hours to get there. So I'm not only open to the idea; I think we need to actively explore a position here, at least one, and a position in Prince Albert. Thank you.

The Chair: — As somebody who lives on the US [United States] border, anything north of No. 1 is northern Saskatchewan. Okay if there are no further questions, we will hold this decision item in abeyance for when we go in camera

for further discussion. So thank you very much and thank for the good job you're doing.

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much. Thanks for your great support.

Legislative Assembly

The Chair: — Next item on the agenda is the decision item of review of the 2012-2013 budget of the Legislative Assembly. And our Clerk, Mr. Putz, and his staff will now take the chair. Mr. Putz, if you would introduce the staff that you wish to introduce and proceed with your presentation.

Mr. Putz: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With us today, and I'll ask them to wave as I introduce them, are the managers responsible for assisting with putting together this budget: Melissa Bennett, our Legislative Librarian; Lorraine deMontigny, director of visitor services; Lenni Frohman, director of parliamentary publications; Darcy Hislop, he's our chief technology officer; Lynn Jacobson who's at the table with me, executive director of member and corporate services.

We have Pat Kolesar, our assistant legislative librarian; Iris Lang, our Principal Clerk; Linda Kaminski, director of member services; and Ginette Michaluk, director of human resources; Ken Ring, our Law Clerk who's been assisting us here today; Patrick Shaw, Sergeant-at-Arms; and two of the staff who are supporting the meeting here today, Allison Gartner who's pinch-hitting for the Speaker's office today and Darlene Trenholm, of course known to everybody, is our Hansard panel operator today. Thank you.

So, members, what I propose to do today is to give you some of the broader highlights of our budget. You have the booklet in front of you. We'll be looking forward to answering your questions at the end of our brief presentation. And as I said, I'll introduce the budget with some of the broader highlights, and then I'll turn it over to Lynn who will take you through some of the salient points of the budget book and our budget proper.

So what I'd like to do is begin by telling you that we have basically a status quo programming budget, if I could borrow a term from the Ombudsman earlier today — hopefully that keeps Mr. Speaker happy — and I'd just like to take you through that and tell you what is accounted by our status quo programming budget. There are a number of points here: our statutory payment obligations; funding and services linked to the Board of Internal Economy directives; carry-overs of the board mid-year approvals, and we'll talk about that a little bit later; and the reinstatement of the funding that we removed last year because of the expected savings in an election year.

I'd like to begin with the last point. Last year as you will recall, we presented you with a zero growth budget, and we were able to do that partly because of the budget and savings we anticipated in an election year. And those savings were fewer sitting days, fewer committee meetings, etc. This budget we've restored the money we took out of last year for the committee support, Hansard, members' committee pay, and the additional allowances. We also have of course an ongoing statutory obligation in the next fiscal year for those 15 retired and defeated members through the Assembly's transition allowance

provisions. And of course that'll be for this year; that will be complete and will not be part of our budget next year.

Some of the other cost drivers that affect our base budget will be of course familiar to the board members. As you know, the employee benefits that are applicable to the public service are also applicable by law to the Legislative Assembly Service. We'll be applying the 2 per cent adjustment to employee salary in in- and out-of-scope range movements. In other words, the staff who are eligible for those, their increments, and the flexible benefit to our out-of-scope employees.

[13:00]

In accordance with the board directives, we'll also be applying that same 2 per cent economic adjustment to your constituency assistants.

For the members and the maintenance of your constituency offices, we have applied a 2.8 per cent consumer price index increase. The CPI [consumer price index] is the same number that is being used by executive government, and we've applied it in accordance with the board directives. The CPI applies to members' salary, the extra duty allowances, constituency service expenses, and caucus operations. We've also applied the increase that you as a board approved last year for the operation of constituency offices and that was the extra \$5,000 per constituency. Although you approved that last February, it was not applied to the budget because of the anticipated elections . . . savings that we'd have in an election year.

The estimates also include the in-year approvals that you as a board approved for the LAS's reorganization of our members' and corporate services units. The plan and cost estimates were put before you in June, and you approved those in August of last year. Now of those, the ongoing costs include the salary of our new executive director, Lynn, and the upgrade of a small number of existing positions to address the succession planning and skill gaps in our organization. I mentioned a little bit about that when you asked questions about our third quarter financial report.

We also have made one last major adjustment. You recall that last year the board increased our annual asset refurbishment fund to enable us to complete in one fiscal year the rehabilitation of the library stack areas in the Walter Scott Building. So we've removed the additional \$50,000 that you provided to the Assembly for our base funding this year.

This year we've proposed three projects that are within the regular framework of our Refurbishment Asset and Replacement Fund, RARF — some of you know it by RARF — and another for committee facilities. As usual we've presented these in our budget book as distinct items, and the managers who are responsible for each of those projects will be available to answer any questions that you might have on these.

So these are the major cost drivers for the Assembly budget. And I do want to emphasize that this budget request reflects our best efforts to contain costs while ensuring that the Assembly meets all of our statutory and budgetary obligations and of course our existing commitments. We believe that with this budget, we'll be able to provide our regular and ongoing

services to members and the public, and we'll continue to make improvements, find efficiencies, and make enhancements to our services.

We've expressed our commitments to these goals by our action plan which is presented in the budget book on page 15, and we'd also be pleased to answer any questions about anything we've listed in our summary of actions. These actions, as I've mentioned in previous years, are based on our core responsibilities. And those core responsibilities are catalogued every year in our *Guide to Members Services*, which you would have received after the orientation meetings that we had after the general election. And we can thank Allison because she's principally responsible for putting that together.

So at this point maybe I'll turn it over to Lynn to take you through some of the highlights of our actual budget book.

Ms. Jacobson: — Thank you. In the past, we've presented our estimates in the form of more of a narrative, and in this year we've taken somewhat of a different approach and tried to capture as much of that information in a graphical or chart format to make it easier for presentation and understanding of our readers. The same content is there and the same level of detail, just a slightly different format.

Before I get into the detail itself, I'd just like to take a few minutes to highlight some of the notable features of the new layout. One would be there's six key sections. We certainly have a mandate. We have our service delivery. Greg's spoken about our cost drivers and our assumptions. We've talked about our planning overview. And then we also have sections on our Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund projects as well as information on our additional funding request.

With respect to the mandate section, we've framed it somewhat differently this year. And it's been presented along our client service delivery lines, three continuums: our parliamentary services, our member services, and our public services.

In our service delivery section, which is covered on pages 2 to 7, we've tried to break our service delivery down by subvote, and descriptions are included as well as graphs and pie charts showing the breakdown of expenditures by the subvote. And you'll note variations as you move through that section in terms of the percentage that is expended on salaries differently in each of the different subvotes. So it's a low of 60 to a high of 90 per cent.

Cost drivers and assumptions, those are covered through pages 8 through 12 and on 17. That Greg's already spoken to.

Our planning overview in terms of our plans for the coming year I'll touch on in a moment, but they're also covered on pages 15 through 16. And then our RARF, our Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund, is a five-year fund that's dedicated to the replacement of furnishings and non-capital equipment and minor capital asset acquisition. A summary of the projects is provided on page 13, as well as we have individuals here to speak to the projects presented for this year. And our additional funding request, request details are captured on page 13 of the document. And again, I'll be asking Darcy Hislop to speak to this further on if there's questions.

In terms of spending details, I'm really going to focus my comments on page 11 of our presentation. As Greg indicated, this is principally a status quo programming budget request, and in terms of the way that we've depicted it this year, there's two components to the budget. There's the status quo budgetary, which is the first section on page 11, and then the status quo statutory. In terms of a breakdown for the members: roughly 66 per cent of our expenditures are statutory in nature, and that's been historical in terms of trends, and 34 per cent is into the budgetary. The budgetary is really for our operational funding. And it really goes to the services provided by the Legislative Assembly Service, whereas our statutory is member payments, is the payments to the caucuses office, and committee expenses are captured there.

The differentiation here in terms of the statutory is presented as a project expenditure. However, these expenses receive ongoing spending authority, regardless of whether or not the project amount is exceeded. Our status quo preliminary budget total which includes both the budgetary and the statutory is a request of \$25,823,000. It does not include a one-time funding request for \$350,000 which brings our total request, budgetary request, to \$26,173,000. Our request does not include a request for any additional funding that will change our FTE complement beyond those changes approved in 2011-12, which Greg already alluded to in terms of the increase of the Executive Director position.

So not including our 2012-13 request, LAS's budget request has grown by approximately 31 per cent since 2002, compared to 69 per cent for other government ministries. Because the LAS is relatively . . . our core budget is relatively small, the proportion of salary expenses so large being at 70 per cent, it really impacts our budget request on that basis.

By way of context, in terms of the LAS, we employ about 61 permanent employees who provide services to 58 members of the Legislature, approximately 170 constituency assistants and caucus employees, 80 employees of the independent officers' offices, as well as to the internal employees of the Legislative Assembly proper. Overall this represents about 400 clients that we serve on a regular basis.

In terms of transactional numbers, we are the fourth largest processor of invoices in the government, compared to executive government. We're only behind the ministries of Highways, and Government Services, and Justice and Attorney General. On average the LAS processes in excess of 3,000 invoices per quarter in respect of its clients. So as some of the independent officers indicated this morning, that's one of the services that we do provide assistance with, is in terms of invoice processing.

Following on the major restructuring that took place in the LAS in 2011, which resulted in the creation of the member and corporate services division, our strategic planning efforts for 2012-13 and into '13-14 will be on reviewing our own internal business processes, our structures, and our systems with a view to simplification and more effective service delivery. These will include initiatives such as developing long-term management strategies for our library collection, researching integrated media technology, developing new formats for delivering educational and research information, evolving the structured database of legislative information, and the directives review, to

name a few.

In addition, because 2012-13 marks two milestones — the Legislative Building turning 100 and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee — along with our regular delivery of parliamentary and professional services, we will also be celebrating the Legislative Building's historic past and raising public awareness of this institution.

That concludes my portion of the presentation. I'd be pleased to answer questions.

Mr. Putz: — Would members like to have a briefing on each of the projects we mentioned, or is reading in the book sufficient and you just want to go straight to questions?

The Chair: — Okay. It sounds like the members would just like to proceed with questions without a review by the individual managers. So the floor is open to questions. Mr. Morgan.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The X-ray scanner was brought in some number of years ago, and there's no corresponding level of protection at individual MLA offices or homes of members. So I'm not sure whether we're not locking up a door when the window next to it is wide open. And I sort of question, are we getting any benefit from . . . Does anything ever turn up in it, or are we just sort of glad that we're providing the protection and there is nothing there?

Mr. Shaw: — We haven't ever had anything turn up in it. It's strictly a precautionary thing, and it's done in all of the other legislatures throughout Canada and in the House of Commons in England and all over the world. It's to prevent any improvised explosive devices from turning up in the mail, hazardous materials being sent to MLAs or ministers, etc., the possibility of having weaponry sent in through the mail. Every piece of mail that comes into the building goes through the scanner. Every piece of mail or couriered item goes through there. We haven't picked it up — not to say that it can't happen.

Mr. Putz: — Just to add to what you asked, Mr. Minister, is yes, it's a protection for the inhabitants of this building, but you are on your own in your constituency offices.

Mr. Shaw: — Yes, that's true.

The Chair: — Mr. Morgan's not asking any questions presently. Would it also not be a liability protection as well that we are trying to provide some protection to the members and to the employees in the building?

Mr. Shaw: — Yes, that's very true as well.

The Chair: — Further questions?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — On page 14 of the presentation is the summary of the expenses. And the one that I'm asking about is the payments to individual, to members, the 14.1 to 14.9 million. Or is that . . . That's the section where you were including the payments to the retiring or defeated MLAs?

Mr. Putz: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Okay. Then that answered my question on that.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Yes, on the private members' furniture. In 2009 the 28,000 was allocated for ergonomic chairs. Was that completely subscribed?

Mr. Putz: — That was done on a voluntary basis, and members were advised of the program and invited to participate, and the money was spent on only those who came forward. The plan this time is to do a more comprehensive replacement of that furniture. We've had a lot of comments from many members over the last number of years about the state of their office furniture and chairs. So in going forward this year, we felt it was appropriate to replace the chairs that needed replacement. Obviously we won't replace the ones that we replaced only a few years ago if they're still operational, but certainly we'll be assessing what the needs are. And this is the amount of funds that we had estimated to basically replace the 20 or so private members in the building.

[13:15]

Mr. McCall: — Okay. So was it totally subscribed, the \$28,000 or . . .

Mr. Putz: — We can't recall how many members actually received a new chair in 2009, but we can get that for you.

Ms. Lang: — Yes, there was a significant uptake to that. There was only a handful that chose not to purchase, or we did not purchase on their behalf. And then we had some issues of people who were in cabinet and out of cabinet and those kinds of things.

Mr. McCall: — Okay, thanks. The year to come with the anniversary of the building and the Diamond Jubilee, what particular events are on the agenda for the year to come?

Mr. Putz: — The Assembly is involved with the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission, and a number of events are taking place. Some have already taken place. But for most of these, we are participants in one way or another. We might not be at the forefront of some of these events, but we are participating.

And the two legacy projects that we are participating in is, one, as you'll be familiar when you came on to the board, one of the first things you were asked to do was approve the replacement of the carpet in the Chamber. And of course the second is the second committee room that's been a long-standing desire on the part of the Legislative Assembly Service and a number of members. And it's my understanding we'll be proceeding with that as well. We have put in funding for our portion of that. The balance of the funding will be through the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission.

But the other events that we'll be involved in, we're planning a commemorative day here where we'll have a commemorative debate in the Chamber for the jubilee. Of course we'll be having a visit of Prince Charles. If you want, I can get the list

out . . .

Mr. McCall: — I guess that's more of what I was after, were the opportunities to invite the public into the legislature. What kind of occasions would be involved there?

Mr. Putz: — Do you want me to give you the list now?

Mr. McCall: — If the list's in the mail, that's good enough for me.

Mr. Putz: — Okay, I can do that for you. I do have it here with me, but it's like a three-page list of all of the events that are planned for the upcoming year.

Mr. McCall: — Well I guess for instance we just recently had the folks from Heritage Regina had met in the library and . . . [inaudible] . . . The more times we can have people come in to their legislature, the better. And it's, you know, what better year than the 100th anniversary? So I'm just wondering what sort of particular things are planned in that regard.

Mr. Putz: — I'll get you a list, and if you're not aware, there's a website that is dedicated to announcing the various events around the centennial, the building as well.

Mr. McCall: — Excellent. Thank you.

The Chair: — Any other questions? Mr. McCall, go ahead.

Mr. McCall: — I guess more of a comment if we're at the conclusion. I guess as long as I've been here, this is obviously the first time I've been to this table through this. So I'd say, you know, good to be here, and welcome to Ms. Jacobson. But I'd just like to go on record saying thank you very much to Ms. Kaminski and as well to Ms. Borowski for many years of good service at the Legislative Assembly, not just to the legislature, but to the members. Certainly it's been much appreciated. But with that said, I thank Mr. Clerk and your officials for the presentation.

The Chair: — Mr. Morgan.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I think from all members, we would want to thank the retiring employees. I've been here over eight years now, and we've been very well served by the members of your staff. So I thank all of them and not just . . . [inaudible] . . . retirement. We appreciate it.

Mr. Putz: — I thank you for those comments. They're very well taken and appreciated. Thank you to all members for your continuing support.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you. And I'd also like to pass on my thank yous to Marilyn Borowski and Linda Kaminski for their service to the legislature, and to all of the other staff members. I know, especially just going through the budget process and how many times we had to meet to deal with that, and I know that there was a lot of meetings going on prior to that. So thank you very much for your hard work and dedication and for the presentation of this budget this year.

If there are no further questions, this will be held in abeyance to

go in camera for further discussion. So at this time, since it's the time to go in camera for our discussions, this committee will now move in camera.

[The board continued in camera from 13:21 until 14:35.]

The Chair: — Okay. The committee will reconvene. We will now proceed with the decision items. The first decision item is the motion to accept the budget of the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. The recommended motion is:

That the 2012 and '13 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.

Is someone ready to move the motion? Ms. Eagles. Second? Mr. Morgan. Madam Eagles will read it out. Go ahead.

Ms. Eagles: — Okay. I make the motion:

That the 2012-2013 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.

The Chair: — All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay. The next decision item is the review, is the determination on the budget of the Office of the Ombudsman. The recommended motion is:

That the 2012-13 estimates for vote 056, Ombudsman, be approved in the amount of \$3,075,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$2,863,100; statutory, \$211,900; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Somebody ready to move that? Mr. Morgan. Second? Mr. McCall.

It has been moved by the Hon. Mr. Morgan, seconded by Mr. McCall:

That the 2012-13 estimates for vote 056, Ombudsman, be approved in the amount of \$3,075,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$2,863,100; statutory, \$211,900; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Everyone in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. The next decision item is the budget of the Office of the Chief Electoral office. The recommended motion is:

That the 2012-13 estimates for vote 034, Chief Electoral Officer, be approved in the amount of 2,471,000, statutory; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to

the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Could I have a mover, please?

Mr. McCall: — So move.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall. Second? Ms. Eagles.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Chair, I move:

That the 2012-13 estimates for vote 034, Chief Electoral Officer, be approved in the amount of \$2,471,000, statutory; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Mr. McCall, seconded by Ms. Eagles:

That the 2012-13 estimates for vote 034, the Chief Electoral Officer, be approved in the amount of 2,471,000 statutory; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Any discussion? All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay the next item is the budget of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The recommended motion is:

That the 2012-13 estimates for vote 055, Information and Privacy Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$1,065,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Can I have a mover please? Ms. Eagles. Second? Seconded by Mr. Morgan.

Ms. Eagles: — Okay. I move:

That the 2012-2013 estimates for vote 055, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$1,065,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Ms. Eagles, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Morgan:

That the 2012-13 estimates for vote 055, Information and Privacy Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$1,065,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Any discussion? All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay the next item of business is the budget of the Children's Advocate. The recommended motion is:

That the 2012-13 estimates for vote 076, Office of the

Children's Advocate, be approved in the amount of \$1,944,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$1,738,000; statutory, 206,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Can I have a mover please? Mr. Morgan. Second? Mr. McCall.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I move:

That the 2012-2013 estimates for vote 076, Office of the Children's Advocate, be approved in the amount of 1,944,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted on, 1,738,000; statutory, 206,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — It has been moved by the Hon. Mr. Morgan, seconded by Mr. McCall:

That the 2012-13 estimates for vote 076, Office of the Children's Advocate, be approved in the amount of \$1,944,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$1,738,000; statutory, \$206,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Discussion? No further discussion. In favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[14:45]

The Chair: — Carried. Okay we move on to the budget of the Legislative Assembly. We have a number of motions here to deal with this. The first motion deals with the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund. The recommended motion is:

That for the 2012 and '13 fiscal year the following Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund projects be approved: private members' office furniture, \$187,500; mailroom security X-ray scanner, \$60,000; educational program development for young visitors, \$2,500 — for a total amount of \$250,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Can I have a mover, please? Mr. Morgan. Second? Mr. McCall.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I move:

That for the 2012-2013 fiscal year the following Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund projects be approved: firstly, private members' office furniture, \$187,500; secondly, mailroom security X-ray scanner, \$60,000; thirdly, educational program development for young visitors, \$2,500 — for a total amount of \$250,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — Okay. It's been moved the Hon. Mr. Morgan, seconded by Mr. McCall:

That for the 2012 and '13 fiscal year the following Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund projects be

approved: private members' office furniture, \$187,500; mailroom security X-ray scanner, \$60,000; educational program development for young visitors, \$2,500 — for a total amount of \$250,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Any discussion? All in favour? Carried. Okay. The next recommended motion is:

That for the 2012 and '13 fiscal year, the amount of \$350,000 be approved for the procurement of broadcast equipment and office furnishings for a second committee room and committee support office space on the fourth floor of the Legislative Building; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Can I have a mover, please? Ms. Eagles. Second? Mr. McCall.

Ms. Eagles: — Okay. I move:

That for the 2012-2013 fiscal year that the amount of \$350,000 be approved for the procurement of broadcast equipment and office furnishings for a second committee room and committee support office space on the fourth floor of the Legislative Building; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Ms. Eagles, seconded by Mr. McCall:

That for the 2012-13 fiscal year, the amount of \$350,000 be approved for the procurement of broadcast equipment and office furnishings for a second committee room and committee support office space on the fourth floor of the Legislative Building; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Any discussion? All in favour? Carried. Okay. The next recommended motion is:

That the 2012-13 expenditure estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$26,173,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$8,948,000; statutory, \$17,005,000; including capital acquisitions of \$220,000;

and further, that the 2012-13 estimated amortization expense for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$114,000;

and further, that such estimates and estimated amortization expense be forward to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Could I have a mover for that, please? Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall. Second? Mr. Morgan.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move:

That the 2012-13 expenditure estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$26,173,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, 8,948,000; statutory, \$17,005,000; including capital acquisitions of \$220,000;

and further, that the 2012-13 estimated amortization expense for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$114,000;

and further, that such estimates and estimated amortization expense be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Mr. McCall, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Morgan:

That the 2012-13 expenditure estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$26,173,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$8,948,000; statutory, \$17,005,000; including capital acquisitions of \$220,000;

and further, that the 2012-13 estimated amortization expense for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$114,000;

and further, that such estimates and estimated amortization expense be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Any discussion? All in favour? Carried. Okay. The final vote, recommended motion:

That the 2012-13 revenue estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$4,200; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Can I have a mover for that motion? Mr. Morgan. Second? Ms. Eagles.

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

That the 2012-2013 revenue estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$4,200; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — It has been moved by the Hon. Mr. Morgan, seconded by Ms. Eagles:

That the 2012-13 revenue estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$4,200; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Any discussion? All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. We have one final motion under other business. The recommended motion is:

That directive #4.1, constituency services expenses, be amended by adding the following after clause 10(c):

(d) communication material that includes information or graphics related to a commercial or non-commercial organization and the organization's logo or trademark. This provision applies to householder mailings, handbills, posters, and billboards but does not apply to congratulatory messages where the commercial or non-commercial organization's logo or trademark is used with the express permission of the commercial or non-commercial organization.

Can I have a mover, please, for this motion?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'll make the motion, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: — Okay. Secunder? Mr. McCall.

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

That directive 4.1, constituency service expenses, be amended by adding the following after clause 10(c):

communication material that includes information or graphics related to a commercial or non-commercial organization and the organization's logo or trademark. This provision applies to householder mailings, handbills, posters, and billboards but does not apply to congratulatory messages where the commercial or non-commercial organization's logo or trademark is used with the express permission of the commercial or non-commercial organization.

The Chair: — Will the committee take the motion as read? Moved by Mr. Morgan, seconded by Mr. McCall. All in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay. I think that concludes the business of the Board of Internal Economy. I would like to thank all of the officials that attended with us today, including the independent officers, for their presentations. So thank you very much. I wonder if we could have a motion to adjourn? Mr. Morgan.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I so move and would like to thank once again all of the officials that came today and for the continuing hard and good work that they do.

The Chair: — All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The board adjourned at 14:57.]