



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Minutes and Verbatim Report



No. 1 — January 23 & 24, 2001

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Hon. Ron Osika, Chair
Melville

Bob Bjornerud
Saltcoats

Dan D'Autremont
Cannington

Hon. Jack Hillson
North Battleford

Carolyn Jones
Saskatoon Meewasin

Myron Kowalsky
Prince Albert Carlton

Hon. Eldon Lautermilch
Prince Albert Northcote

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Room 10 Legislative Building

5:27 p.m. Tuesday, January 23, 2001

Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy

Hon. Ron Osika, Chair
 Mr. Bob Bjornerud
 Mr. Dan D'Autremont
 Hon. Jack Hillson
 Ms. Carolyn Jones
 Mr. Myron Kowalsky
 Hon. Eldon Lautermilch

Staff to the Board

Marilyn Borowski, Director, Financial Services
 Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk
 Margaret Kleisinger, Secretary to the Board

Officials in Attendance

Offices of the Conflict of Interest and Information and Privacy Commissioner
 Gerald Gerrand, Commissioner

: Office of the Provincial Auditor
 Fred Wendel, Acting Provincial Auditor
 Brian Atkinson, Acting Assistant Provincial Auditor
 Angèle Borys, Principal, Support Services
 Heather Tomlin, Assistant to the Manager, Administration
 Sandra Walker, Manager, Administration

Office of the Legislative Assembly

Guy Barnabe, Director, Information Systems
 Gregory Putz, Deputy Clerk

AGENDA Moved by Mr. D'Autremont, seconded by Mr. Lautermilch, that the proposed agenda be adopted with the addition of Item 16 – Special Committee on Rules & Procedure, Budget Request. Agreed.

MINUTES Moved by Mr. Bjornerud, seconded by Ms. Jones, that the Minutes of Meeting #2/00 be adopted. Agreed.

The Board met in camera at 5:35 p.m.

The Board resumed public meetings at 5:48 p.m.

ITEM 1 Table Item - Members Accountability and Disclosure Reports for the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2000

The Chair tabled the reports.

ITEM 2 Table Item – Audited Financial Statements of the Government, Opposition and Liberal Caucuses for the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2000

The Chair tabled the financial statements and schedules of fixed assets.

ITEM 3 Table Item – Legislative Assembly Quarterly Financial and Fiscal Forecast Reports

The Chair tabled the second and third quarter reports.

ITEM 4 Table Item – Response from Revenue Canada re Directive #3.1 – MLA Travel and Living Expenses

The Chair tabled the letter.

ITEM 5 Table Item – Office of the Provincial Auditor: Annual Report on Operations for the year ended March 31, 2000

The Chair tabled the report.

ITEM 6 Table Item – Office of the Provincial Auditor: Memorandum of Audit Observations for the Board of Internal Economy for the Year Ended March 31, 2000

The Chair tabled the report and noted that a draft reply would be considered later.

ITEM 7 Decision Item – Review of the 2001-2002 Budget of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

The budget, in the amount of \$105,000, was presented by Mr. Gerald Gerrand, Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Moved by Mr. D'Autremont, seconded by Mr. Lautermilch:

That the 2001-2002 Estimates of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be approved, as submitted, in the amount of \$105,000

and that such Estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1514

ITEM 8 Decision Item – Review of the 2001-2002 Budget for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

The budget, in the amount of \$122,000, was presented by Mr. Gerald Gerrand, Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

Moved by Mr. Kowalsky, seconded by Mr. Bjornerud:

That the 2001-2002 Estimates of the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner be approved, as submitted, in the amount of \$122,000

and that such Estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1515

ITEM 9 Decision Item – Review of the 2001-2002 Budget for the Office of the Provincial Auditor

The budget, in the amount of \$5,136,000, was presented by Mr. Fred Wendel, Acting Provincial Auditor.

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the 2001-2002 Estimates of the Office of the Provincial Auditor be approved, as submitted, in the amount of \$5,136,000

and that such Estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1516

Note: Items 10-12 were deferred until later.

Item 13 Decision Item – Consequential Amendments to Directive #22 – Members' Accountability and Disclosure

Moved by Mr. Hillson, seconded by Mr. Bjornerud:

That *Directive #22 – Members' Accountability and Disclosure* be amended by substituting s.(1)(b) "Directive #3 – MLA Travel Expenses" with "Directive #3.1 – MLA Travel and Living Expenses".

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1517

At 8:28 p.m. the Board adjourned until 9:00 a.m. on January 24, 2001.

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Room 10 Legislative Building

9:15 a.m. Wednesday, January 24, 2001

Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy

Hon. Ron Osika, Chair
Mr. Bob Bjornerud
Mr. Dan D'Autremont
Hon. Jack Hillson
Ms. Carolyn Jones
Mr. Myron Kowalsky
Hon. Eldon Lautermilch

Staff to the Board

Marilyn Borowski, Director, Financial Services
Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk
Margaret Kleisinger, Secretary to the Board

Officials in Attendance

Office of the Provincial Ombudsman

Barbara Tomkins, Provincial Ombudsman
Murray Knoll, Assistant Ombudsman

Office of the Children's Advocate

Deborah Parker-Loewen, Children's Advocate
Glenda Cooney, Deputy Children's Advocate
Bernie Rodier, Office Administrator

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Jan Baker, Chief Electoral Officer

Office of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Guy Barnabe, Director, Information Systems
Lorraine deMontigny, Director of Visitor Services
Viktor Kaczkowski, Clerk Assistant
Linda Kaminski, Director of Personnel and Administrative Services
Jeremy Phillips, Systems Analyst
Marian Powell, Legislative Librarian
Gregory Putz, Deputy Clerk
Ken Ring, Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk
Gary Ward, Director of Broadcast Services
Margaret Woods, Clerk Assistant
Pat Shaw, Sergeant-at-Arms

ITEM 10(i) Decision Item – Review of the 2001-2002 Budget for the Offices of the Provincial Ombudsman and Children's Advocate

The budget for the Office of the Ombudsman, in the amount of \$1,533,000, was presented by Ms. Barbara Tomkins, Provincial Ombudsman.

The Board recessed for a period of time.

The budget for the Office of the Children's Advocate, in the amount of \$1,118,377, was presented by Ms. Deborah Parker-Loewen, Children's Advocate.

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the 2001-2002 Estimates of the Provincial Ombudsman be approved in the amount of \$1,533,000

and that such Estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1518

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the 2001-2002 Estimates of the Children's Advocate be approved in the amount of \$1,118,377

and that such Estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1519

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the Special Warrant requests for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman and Office of the Children's Advocate be stood until the task force established to recommend salary levels of certain independent officers of the Legislative Assembly has reported on its findings with respect to remuneration.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1520

ITEM 11 Decision Item – Review of the 2001-2002 Budget for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

The budget, in the amount of \$709,729, was presented by Ms. Jan Baker, Chief Electoral Officer.

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the 2001-2002 Estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, in the amount of \$709,729 (Statutory) be transmitted to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1521

ITEM 12 (b) (iv) Multimedia Streaming of Chamber Proceedings over the Internet

A multi-media demonstration was presented by Mr. Guy Barnabe and Mr. Jeremy Phillips.

ITEM 12 (b) (i) Decision Item - Establishment of Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program

The proposal for the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program was presented by Dr. Gordon Barnhart, University of Saskatchewan, and Professor Phillip Hansen, University of Regina.

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the Board of Internal Economy approve a budget request of \$40,600 for the 2001-2002 fiscal year to establish the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program to begin effective January, 2002.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1522

The Board recessed for a short time.

ITEM 12(b)(ii) Decision Item – Legislative Assembly Gift Boutique Proposal

The proposal for the Legislative Assembly Gift Boutique was presented by Ms. Margaret Woods and Ms. Lorraine deMontigny. The Board decided to stand this item.

ITEM 12(b)(vi) Decision Item – School Tours Hospitality

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That effective April 1, 2001, that \$7,000 be authorized to provide refreshments for school groups and official delegations touring the Legislature.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1523

ITEM 12 (a) Review Legislative Assembly Budget Document

The Board reviewed the Budget submission in the amount of:

A Budget - \$ 17,192,000

B Budget - \$ 500,600

The Speaker committed to supply the Board with an overview and breakdown of the number of positions, both fulltime equivalent and part-time positions, with explanations for personnel changes, for the Legislative Assembly for the past five years.

The Board met in camera at 4:50 p.m.

The Board resumed public meetings at 6:00 p.m.

ITEM 15 Decision Item – Special Warrant Request for the 2000-2001 Fiscal Year for the Legislative Assembly

Moved by Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That a Special Warrant request for the 2000-2001 fiscal year for the Office of the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$71,000,

And that such request be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1524

ITEM 12(b)(iii) Decision Item – Caucus Computer Network Infrastructure Proposal

Moved by Mr. D'Autremont, seconded by Mr. Lautermilch:

That the Information Systems Branch of the Legislative Assembly assume responsibility for the provision and support of a network infrastructure for each of the three caucuses.

That Information Systems Branch co-ordinate all cable management but each caucus network remain physically independent.

That the Board of Internal Economy approve funding of \$71,000 to support this proposal.

The question being put and a debate arising, it was agreed to.

Minute #1525

ITEM 12(b)(iv) Decision Item – Multimedia Streaming of Chamber Proceedings over the Internet

Moved by Mr. Kowalsky, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the Board of Internal Economy approves funding of \$25,000 to enable the Legislative Assembly to acquire the hardware and software necessary to form the foundation of a multimedia streaming service.

The question being put and a debate arising, it was agreed to.

Minute #1526

ITEM 12(b)(v) Decision Item – Amendments to Directive #6 – Constituency Assistant Expenses

Moved by Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That effective April 1, 2001, Directive #6 Constituency Assistant Expenses be amended as follows:

Subsection (1)

by deleting "maximum amount paid to the Program Support Level 4 position,"

and substituting the following,

“maximum amount paid to a Program Support Level 6 position”.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1527

ITEM 12(c) Decision Item - Financial Services Branch - Conversion of non-permanent to permanent full-time position request

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That effective April 1, 2001, the non-permanent position of Member Payment Entry Clerk be converted to a permanent position.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1528

ITEM 12(d) Decision Item - Human Resources and Administrative Services Branch – 2.75 FTE Positions Request

Moved by Mr. Kowalsky, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the Strategic Plan and Reorganisation of the Human Resource and Administrative Services branch proceed according to the attached document.

That effective April 1, 2001, that the following positions be created:

- a new permanent position of Human Resource Clerk;
- a non-permanent position of Support Clerk;
- and a full-time non-permanent position of Human Resource Advisor.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1529

ITEM 12(e) Decision Item - Visitor Services Branch - 1.5 FTE Positions Request

A debate arising, the Board decided to defer the decision for a year to see if existing staff could be re-deployed.

ITEM 12(f) Decision Item – Legislative Library – 1 FTE Position Request

A debate arising, the Board did not approve the request.

ITEM 12(g)(i) Decision Item – Members' Secretaries – Reclassification to New Class Plan Request

Moved by Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That, effective April 1, 2001, the Members' Secretary funding be based on the New In-Scope Class Plan, and that the funding be rolled into the new Caucus Resources Directive #7.2 as proposed in the Caucus Resources Amalgamation Decision Item.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1530

ITEM 12(g)(ii) Decision Item – Caucus Resource Amalgamation

Moved by Mr. Hillson, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That, effective April 1, 2001:

- (1) Expenses in the amount of \$375,000 be transferred from Subvote LG01- Administration to Subvote LG06 – Caucus operations;

- (2) Directive #7 – *Caucus Grants – Sessional Research and General Expenses*, Directive #7.1 – *Caucus Grants – Information Technology Expenses*, Directive #8 – *Caucus Grants – Secretarial Expenses* and Directive #9 – *Caucus Grant – Research Services* be revoked;
- (3) Directive #7.2 – *Caucus Resources*, as attached, be adopted;
- (4) Directive #23 – *Caucus Accountability and Disclosure* be amended by replacing “Directives #7, #8, #9, #11, and #15 ” in section (1) with “Directives #7.2, #11, and #15 ”.
- (5) Directive #10 – *Grants to Independent Members* be revoked and that Directive #10.1 – *Resources for the Office of an Independent Member*, as attached, be adopted.

DIRECTIVE #7.2
[cl. 50(3)(n) & (o), c.L-11.1]

CAUCUS RESOURCES

- (1) The Board of Internal Economy recognizes that a caucus is an organized group of two or more individuals who are elected members of the Legislative Assembly and who have the same party affiliation. The Board authorizes the payment of public money to each caucus to provide resources to support the members of that caucus in their roles as legislators in the Legislative Assembly and in legislative committees and to support the caucus in determining its political strategy regarding legislative business.
- (2) In order to assist each caucus in performing its function within the parliamentary system, the Board of Internal Economy shall provide funding for research, information technology, administrative services and other operating expenses of the caucus in the amount calculated in accordance with clause 3.
- (3) (a) Annual funding to a caucus, other than the government caucus, is to be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

A base amount of \$160,000 plus the product of \$21,000 multiplied by the number of Private Members in the caucus excluding Members of Executive Council, the Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party.
- (b) Annual funding to the government caucus is to be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

A base amount of \$160,000 plus the product of \$21,000 multiplied by the number of Private Members in the caucus plus two and excluding Members of Executive Council, the Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party.
- (4) The amounts calculated in clause (3) shall be prorated over 12 months and paid monthly in arrears.
- (5) With respect to the calculations specified in clause (3), any change in the number of Private Members in a caucus will increase or reduce the size of the caucus for purposes of calculating a caucus’ annual funding.
- (6) A caucus may pay caucus staff directly or may request that the Legislative Assembly Office pay an employee of a caucus in accordance with the written direction of the caucus chair or designate. Any portion of caucus funding that is paid directly to an employee by the Legislative Assembly Office shall be deducted from the amount of that caucus’ monthly payment.
- (7) Caucus funding shall not be used for items, services or activities that are:
 - (a) of a personal nature;
 - (b) a donation or loan to an individual or to a party organization;
 - (c) payments to an individual, association or elected member for anything that is not directly related to caucus activities;
 - (d) for any of the following or similar purposes:
 - (i) announcements of or attendance at party, or party constituency association meetings and events;
 - (ii) solicitations for party membership;
 - (iii) solicitations of contributions, monetary or otherwise, for a political party;
 - (iv) requests for re-election support, including election campaign material;
 - (v) the promotion and/or conduct of election nominations or party leadership campaigns; or
 - (vi) the conduct or commissioning of surveys about voting intentions.

- (e) On April 1 of each year, the dollar amounts specified in clause (3) shall be increased or decreased by the annual change in the Consumer Price Index for Saskatchewan, and this Directive may be reproduced to include the indexed amount.

DIRECTIVE #10.1
(s. 50(3)(p), c.L-11.1)

RESOURCES FOR THE OFFICE OF AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER

- (1) Each office of an independent Member is entitled to receive annual funding of \$21,000 for research, information technology, administrative services and other operating expenses. "Independent Member" is defined by s.50(1)(c) of *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* as a Member who does not belong to a caucus.
- (2) The amount mentioned in clause (1) shall be prorated over 12 months and paid monthly in arrears.
- (3) An independent Member may pay that Member's staff directly or may request that the Legislative Assembly Office pay an employee of that Member's office in accordance with the written direction of the independent Member. Any portion of the funding that is paid directly to an employee by the Legislative Assembly Office shall be deducted from the amount of that independent Member's monthly payment that is made pursuant to this directive.
- (4) Resources for the office of an independent Member shall not be used for items, services or activities that are:
 - (a) of a personal nature;
 - (b) a donation or loan to an individual or to a party organization;
 - (c) payments to an individual, association or elected member for anything that is not directly related to an independent member's activities;
 - (d) for any of the following or similar purposes:
 - (i) announcements of or attendance at party, or party constituency association meetings and events;
 - (ii) solicitations for party membership;
 - (iii) solicitations of contributions, monetary or otherwise, for a political party;
 - (iv) requests for re-election support, including election campaign material;
 - (v) the promotion and/or conduct of election nominations or party leadership campaigns; or
 - (vi) the conduct or commissioning of surveys about voting intentions.
- (5) An independent Member shall submit an annual statement showing all monies received and disbursed from funding provided pursuant to this directive. The statement shall be submitted to the Speaker on or before September 30 of each year and Directive 23 applies with any necessary modification.
- (6) When the office of an independent Member ceases to exist, the independent Member shall prepare and submit to the Speaker within 3 months a statement covering the period of time from the last statement submitted to the Speaker up to and including the date the office ceased to exist showing:
 - (a) all receipts and disbursements;
 - (b) any surplus funds; and
 - (c) all fixed assets (including furniture and equipment) that have been purchased with Crown funds.
- (7) When the office of an independent Member ceases to exist, all surplus funds and all fixed assets (including furniture and equipment) that have been purchased with the funding shall be returned to the Crown.
- (8) On April 1 of each year, the annual funding set out in clause (1) shall be increased or decreased by the annual change in the Consumer Price Index for Saskatchewan, and this Directive may be reproduced to include the indexed amount.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1531

Moved by Mr. Kowalsky, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That *Directive #4.1 Constituency Service Expenses* be amended as follows:

In subclause (7)(e), delete the following words: "enumerator's lists, party and constituency workers' lists and poll activities."

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1532

Response to the Provincial Auditor regarding the Memorandum of Audit Observations for the Board for the Year Ended March 31, 2000

A draft response to the Provincial Auditor was distributed, and the Board deferred its decision to a future meeting.

Proposed Amendments to Directive #23 Caucus Accountability and Disclosure

Amendments in response to the Provincial Auditor's recommendations were considered and deferred to the next meeting.

ITEM 14 Secondary Caucus Office

The Board deferred this item to a future meeting.

The Board recessed for a short time.

ITEM 12 (i) Decision Item – Motion to Approve Budgetary and Statutory Estimates

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the 2001-2002 Estimates for the Office of the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$17,571,000 as follows:

Budget to be voted -- \$ 5,977,000

Statutory budget -- \$11,594,000

and that such Estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1533

ITEM 12 (h) Decision Item – Motion to Approve Revenue Estimates

Moved by Mr. D'Autremont, seconded by Ms. Jones:

That the 2001-2002 Revenue Estimates of the Office of the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$9,000.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1534

ITEM 16 Decision Item – Request for Funding by the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the Board of Internal Economy approve additional funding in the amount of \$22,000 (statutory) for the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures, to be used in the 2000-2001 fiscal year for committee travel.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1535

The Board adjourned at 7:59 p.m. to the call of the Chair.

The board met at 5:27 p.m.

The Chair: — I'd like to call this meeting of the Board of Internal Economy — the first meeting of the first year in a brand new century — to order, and welcome each and every one here, and wish each and every one of you all the best wishes for a prosperous and productive first year in the new century.

What I'd like to do is, first of all on the agenda, is ask for approval of the proposed agenda that's been distributed and ask if there are any items to add to the agenda? If there are not, I have an item that I would like to add and that is a decision item. It'd be item no. 16, and that is the request for funding by the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures.

May I have that approval for the agenda? Mr. D'Autremont so moves. All in favour? Thank you. I'm sorry I needed a seconder for that. Mr. Lautermilch, thank you.

The next item is the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting that have been distributed and I would ask if there are any additions or any deletions, any problems with those minutes, and if not, I will ask for a mover and a seconder. Mr. Bjornerud and Ms. Jones, thank you very much.

Before we go on into the agenda as it's been presented to you, ladies and gentlemen, I would ask for your indulgence — those who are visiting — if we might, with your consideration board members, go in camera to talk about some housecleaning items and some logistics of the procedures that we will follow over the next day and a half with our meeting. If that's agreeable? Thank you.

Then I would ask, please, our visitors and staff to give us a few moments. Thank you.

The board continued in camera.

The Chair: — I'd like to welcome everybody back to the meeting, I'll call the meeting back to order and move on to item no. 1 and that's the tabling of the members' accountability and disclosure reports for fiscal year ending March 31, 2000, and those have been previously distributed.

Any questions or comments with respect to those documents? If not, we'll then go on to item no. 2 and that's the audited financial statements of the government, the opposition, and Liberal caucuses for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2000. And once again those documents were previously distributed. And I'll ask for any questions or comments with respect to those. If not . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'm not sure that anybody can answer this. Under the New Democrat Party caucus, they have an item listed under expenditures for office. Would that be office supplies and that kind of thing? Does anybody know?

That would be on . . . It's about the third page, I guess, fourth page.

A Member: — What's the amount?

Mr. D'Autremont: — 2,994 for 2000, and 12,962 for '99.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, I'm not sure but that would appear to me to be . . . it would look to me to be office supplies.

Mr. D'Autremont: — It just said office, I was curious.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, I would assume that's office supplies. I don't know. We could check and get back to you on that.

The Chair: — Okay. Now the next item, item no. 3, is the Legislative Assembly quarterly financial and fiscal forecast. That's been distributed as well. Any questions or comments?

No comments or questions, then we'll move on to item . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm sorry.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I'm sorry. I have one question. Am I to understand that there . . . the budgetary overexpenditure's at 71,000, but that in the statutory component that's where the offset comes from? Okay.

How close on those are we on an annual basis — the statutory component in terms of our estimates to our actuals. Are we generally fairly close?

Ms. Borowski: — Fairly close, usually under though.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Right.

Ms. Borowski: — It's usually under by, I think I kind of kept track of that . . . Expenditures for statutory are usually around, I would say, 95 to 97 per cent spent.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — . . . they are in a total of how much?

Ms. Borowski: — They show 10 million.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — About 10. So about 3 per cent of 10. Okay. All right.

The Chair: — Anything else on that report?

Mr. D'Autremont: — I have a question on it, under legal expenses. Is that item coming up later on in the agenda, I believe, isn't it?

The Chair: — Yes, it is.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, because I want to discuss it. That'll be fine, thanks.

The Chair: — Anything else? If not we'll go on to item no. 4. And that's a response to a letter with respect to directive no. 3.1, that members would have had distributed to them. Any questions or comments with respect to that item?

If not, then we'll move right along to item no. 5 and that's the tabling the Office of the Provincial Auditor annual report on operations for the year ended March 31, 2000. Any questions on that document? Comments? All right, thank you.

Item no. 6, the Provincial Auditor once again. The memorandum of audit observations for the Board of Internal Economy for the year ended March 31, 2000. If there are no questions or comments about that, I would just like to point out to the board that we will be working on a response to . . . Yes, Mr. D'Autremont?

Mr. D'Autremont: — . . . that item, if perhaps the auditor would care to address it. Under page number 4, our audit conclusions and findings. It states:

the Board complied with the authorities governing its activities relating to financial reporting, safeguarding assets, revenue raising, spending, borrowing, and investing, except for payments made to caucus offices.

What authorities are the caucus offices not meeting?

The Chair: — Mr. Wendel, thank you for being here to address that.

Mr. Wendel: — Just give me a second to get this back in my mind before I answer.

I'm looking at the *Fall Report Volume III*, which is nearly the same as the memorandum of audit observations that we sent to the board. This has been a longstanding issue, which is the grants to caucus offices and it has some history and there was some court cases in the past about how caucus office money was being used.

And the board made some new rules and regulations that really tightened things up a lot. But what's left is the board still doesn't know whether the money that it's given to the caucus offices is safeguarded until it's actually spent for the purpose intended. You don't get a report to that effect from the auditor and you also don't know whether they used it in full compliance with your directives. The financial statement won't tell you those two things.

And what we've been recommending for several years is that you should get the auditor of the caucus offices to tell you that. And that's essentially what we do when we audit each government organization, when we look not just at the financial statements, we look at the controls to make sure the money is properly safeguarded until it's spent and we make sure that all the rules and regulations are followed.

So that's the history and that's why we make the statement we make.

Mr. D'Autremont: — But is there some rule or authority that is being broken at the present time?

Mr. Wendel: — I think what we're saying is that you, as a board, don't know. You don't have that information from the auditor to know that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So it may be that the authorities are not being met, not that they are not being met.

Mr. Wendel: — It may be. All we're saying is you should get that assurance. And then you then ensure that public money is

being properly protected until it's spent and that it is being spent according to your directives, specifically.

The Chair: — We have copies of the previous correspondence that we directed in response to the auditor on that issue and I'd be prepared . . . We have copies here. I can supply it to the members.

And as I mentioned for this recent report, we will be preparing a response once again to that concern, with the board's approval. Okay? Is that . . . Okay?

Anything else on that item? If not, then we'll move on to item no. 7 and that is the review of the 2001-2002 budget for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

And Mr. Gerald Gerrand, Gerry Gerrand, I'd like to welcome you here this evening, sir.

Mr. Gerrand: — Would you like me to make some introductory remarks, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: — If you would, please. And thank you for prompting me, Mr. Gerrand; I appreciate that very much. Thank you. Please.

Mr. Gerrand: — Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. I propose, with your agreement, to deal with both offices at the same time. We did that last year and I presume that's satisfactory tonight.

A year ago or about ten months ago, this committee was kind enough to approve of a budget that was submitted for both offices by me, and I am pleased to advise you that I have not overspent the budget, which you approved last year. In fact, I have under spent it by some significant amount of money, if one looks at percentages.

The proposal is to reproduce the budget in the same amounts and items as last year. In the case of the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, the budget last year was \$122,000. Some amount under a hundred thousand dollars was in fact spent and will be spent in the fiscal year. The budget for Information and Privacy Commissioner was \$105,000 and something under that amount will be spent at the end of the fiscal year.

I've had about 10 or 11 months experience in both positions and in dealing with the budget and I'm satisfied that the amounts that were provided last year were adequate, and I'm asking that the same figures be approved again this year, Mr. Chairman.

And I'd be happy to answer any questions members of the committee have regarding either office.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, sir. I'll open the floor to board members for any questions. Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you for coming, Mr. Gerrand. Has there been any changes made to the forms necessary for MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) to fill out to simplify the forms so it's not repetitive every year.

Mr. Gerrand: — No. The forms that went out a week or two ago to each of the members, a copy of which you will likely have received, are exactly the same forms as last year. They have not been altered and I'm not sure when they will be altered, if they will be altered. I'm still considering it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I know from talking to my caucus colleagues, a lot of them are concerned about the fact that they put down the same information year in and year out. And why can't it simply be a matter of putting in changes rather than filling out the whole entire form again every time?

Mr. Gerrand: — Well I think the theory behind that is that you are setting out assertively what your position is regarding assets and debts, and I think it's more desirable to have it affirmed in that way each year rather than saying as last year. There would be room for confusion and perhaps inaccurate information being set out if you just try to repeat what was in last year's return. I've talked to other commissioners in other jurisdictions and they hold the view that these questions, having regard to the terms of the Act, should be fully answered and affirmatively answered each year.

I'm told it does not take a great deal of time for a member to complete those forms, especially when they have access to last year's forms and the figures are essentially the same. It's not a lengthy form to fill out.

Mr. D'Autremont: — No, it's not a lengthy form to fill out but in some cases it can be a lengthy time to find that information, every time.

Mr. Gerrand: — Yes. If it's the same information as last year, and you know it's the same information as last year, then it should be readily available. And if it's not the same information, then I think it's worth the time of the member to ascertain what the correct information is for this year.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I haven't had any complaints from any of the members about putting down any changes. It was the repetitive nature that they were concerned about and felt that there should be a better way of doing it than the current system.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Just a, I guess, a question with respect to the reporting . . . MLAs reporting . . . are you having co-operation with MLAs? I guess, what I'm asking is, are all 58 MLAs reporting on a timely basis, and are you finding that members are co-operating, in terms of the . . . their requirements to fill these forms?

Mr. Gerrand: — Well, I've only had the experience of the past year. I was appointed acting commissioner in February of last year and the process was just underway at that time. And as each member knows, the obligation for a sitting member is to file the private disclosure statement by March 31. Most of the members were able to do that last year; some with a bit of prompting. All members did not file their statements by March 31, but they were filed in their totality shortly after that.

The Act also provides that the public disclosure statements be filed with the Clerk by June 30 each year, and the members had filed their statements with me in sufficient time that I was able to prepare the public disclosure statements and have them filed

by June 30 last year, which I think had not happened for a year or two.

The Chair: — Any other questions for either the Privacy Commissioner or Conflict of Interest Commissioner budgets? Yes, Mr. D'Autremont?

Mr. D'Autremont: — No. I thought you needed a decision on that, do you not?

The Chair: — Yes, I'll be prepared to entertain a motion with respect to the 2001 and 2002 estimates for the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'll move.

The Chair: — In the amount as stated?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes.

The Chair: — Okay. I need a seconder. Mr. Lautermilch. This is for the . . . (inaudible) . . . for the total amount of \$105,000. Moved by Mr. D'Autremont. Okay, I have a motion before me . . . moved by Mr. D'Autremont and seconded by Mr. Lautermilch:

That the 2001-2002 estimates for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be approved in the amount of \$105,000 and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

All those in favour? Carried. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to very much thank the commissioner for the work that he does on behalf of members. I know sometimes we feel we're too busy to deal with some of the small things, but some of the small things can turn out to be some pretty major things if a little bit of prudence isn't expended to these issues. So I want to thank you for your work and thank you for your patience.

And I guess you've indicated you're planning to under expend this year in certain areas, and I'm sure that your submission for next year will reflect your actual experience for this full year. And hopefully you can contain your budgets, which I'm sure you're attempting to do, as we in this province are still in a little bit of a financial conundrum. Although we've had a pretty good year with oil and gas revenue and other revenues, we've still got to be careful and prudent. And I know the commissioner will be both careful and prudent. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Lautermilch.

The next item then, for the estimates for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Unless there are some questions or further comments, I will entertain a motion for the approval of the budget as presented. Moved by . . .

Mr. Kowalsky: — I move the approval of the budget.

The Chair: — . . . Mr. Kowalsky. Secunder? Mr. Bjornerud.

Moved by Mr. Kowalsky and seconded by Mr. Bjornerud:

That the 2001-2002 estimates of the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner be approved in the amount of \$122,000 and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

All those in favour? Carried.

Thank you very much, board members. And, Mr. Gerrand, I want to thank you very, very much for coming with your concise presentation to the board and answering questions for the board.

Mr. Gerrand: — Mr. Chairman, thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you.

The Chair: — Our next item on the agenda — decision item — review of the 2001-2002 budget for the Office of the Provincial Auditor. And I would invite Mr. Fred Wendel to join us and please introduce your guests, your officials that are with you, your support staff.

Mr. Wendel: — Thank you. With me today is Brian Atkinson, the acting assistant provincial auditor — he looks after my duties as I'm looking after the Provincial Auditor's duties — and Angele Borys, a principal of support services; Heather Tomlin, assistant to the manager of administration; and Sandy Walker, manager of administration.

The Chair: — Thank you. Would you please give the board an overview perhaps of your presentation, please.

Mr. Wendel: — So I have a brief overview here, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our business and financial plan for the year March 31, 2002.

We tabled our plan in November of 2000 and we table all our plans to ensure Members of the Legislative Assembly can review our plans before we appear before this board. And this allows members the opportunity to talk to you about what we do and to discuss our planned work with members, if they so wish — members of this board.

We also table an annual report. I notice that was on your agenda. You have our annual report for the year ended March 31, 2000.

Each year we try to improve our business and financial plan and our annual report, as we expect others to do. The plan and the annual report are two key elements of a sound public accountability relationship. Many of the items that we include in our public reports on government agencies relate to improving their public accountability.

In our reports we say a sound public accountability relationship requires an agreed-upon plan as to operations and finances, a reliable report on performance, and a reasonable review of performance. And in appendix 3 of this plan we explain an accountability relationship more fully.

This business and financial plan sets out our operating plan, which is the results we plan to achieve; that is, our goals and objectives and our strategies to achieve those results. The plan

also sets out our financial plan to achieve the results.

Our business and financial plan has four parts. The first part explains what we do and why, as well as our financial proposal for this year and next year and the previous three years. We discuss the forces and trends that affect our work, and our risk to achieving our objectives and how we manage those risks.

In this part we also talk about our employees. The knowledge, skills, and abilities of our employees determine how well we can serve the Assembly. We have about 60 people organized into five groups. At any time we have between 30 and 35 of our employees that are chartered accountants, or professional accountants rather, and 15 to 20 of our employees that are training to become professional accountants.

Each year about five professional accountants will leave the office. Many will go to government organizations. Each year we hire about five graduates from the two universities.

Our employees on average are about 35 years old — I'm a little older than average — and we have about the same number of female and male employees. And I was told yesterday that we now have more females than male employees.

Angele Borys is responsible for our training and recruiting. Our training program has been reasonably successful over the years. In December, five of our employees passed the exams to become chartered accountants, out of the eight employees that wrote the exams.

One of our measures of success is that the percentage of our employees that pass the exam to become chartered accountants exceeds the provincial average. This year our pass rate was 62 per cent; last year our pass rate was 67 per cent. The provincial pass rate is usually about 65 per cent.

The second part of the plan is in appendix 1. In this part, we provide detailed financial information and detailed work plans for several years. In this part we also include a report from the auditor that audits our office.

The auditor's report provides members of the Legislative Assembly with assurance that our request for resources is reasonable to carry out our operating plan; that is, our goals, objectives, and strategies as set out in appendix 1.

The third part of our plan is in appendix 2, and in this part we provide answers to questions previously posed by this board and to members of the Standing Committee on Estimates. These are good questions and we try to make sure we provide written answers to them ahead of time.

The fourth part of our plan is in appendix 3, and this part responds to requests by this board to suggest how the board could obtain independent advice to assess our request for resources. The auditor's report I talked about earlier responds to independent advice on the financial part of our plan.

The second source of advice the board needs relates to our operating plan; that is, our goals, objectives, and strategies. We suggest the board should seek advice about our operating plan from the Public Accounts Committee. That committee's

mandate states it works closely with the Provincial Auditor to achieve maximum accountability of the government to the Legislative Assembly. The Public Accounts Committee could advise the board if we were delivering the products and services that the committee needs to achieve its objectives.

Pages 5, 6, and 7 are a summary of our request for resources. We requested appropriation of 5.1 million for the year ending March 31, 2002. This request is 402,000 more than last year, or about eight and a half per cent. We face cost pressures for 2002 totalling \$540,000, or about eleven and a half per cent. We plan to absorb 138,000, or 3 per cent of the cost.

We explain on pages 5 and 6 the pressures that increase our costs for 2002. Two hundred and ninety-four thousand of our increased costs relates to the need to spend more of our resources auditing the government systems and practices at the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, and the Workers' Compensation Board.

A hundred and five thousand dollars of our increased costs relates to changes in The Tabling of Documents Act. The Act requires government agencies to give their financial statements to the Assembly earlier each year. To ensure agencies can meet their deadlines, we need to do our work more timely.

Sixty-six thousand dollars of our increased costs relates to new government agencies created in 2001. Fifty-two thousand dollars of our increased costs relates to providing our employees the same economic salary adjustments and benefits that the government gave to other employees in the public sector.

Twenty-five thousand dollars of our increased costs relates to hosting the national conference of legislative auditors next September. This conference is held in conjunction with the national conference of Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees hosted by the Legislative Assembly Office.

As you can see, the \$402,000 increase we are requesting relates to new work the office must carry out.

Over the last five years, the board has supported our office's requests for resources and recommended the amount we requested to carry out our plan. The board support has allowed us to discharge our duties to the Assembly.

This ends my presentation and I'd be happy to answer any questions the board may have.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Wendel. Board members, questions?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Wendel.

I guess, on appendix no. 1, page 44, on your report, I have some questions dealing with the increases in various areas. I see that the Department of Justice auditing estimates have roughly been running 200,000 plus, except for 1999 when they were significantly less. Is that going to be the normal trend in that department, is that they will be at 200 plus and growing?

Mr. Wendel: — That would seem to be where we'll be for the coming year, depending whether there is any new government agencies added or wound up, that would likely be that amount or near that amount. The Department of Justice — we may actually have even more problems for the coming year — there's some issues there with some new systems that are going in but I haven't built that into this plan. It's just information that I've become aware of.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Oh, yes. The Department of Education also had a significant increase this year over last and the year prior 1998 though was about the same. What is the reason for the major increase this year over the last two?

Mr. Wendel: — The Department of Education is actually down a little bit from the previous year, from 2000. It's being decreased . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training.

Mr. Wendel: — The Department of Post-Secondary, there's an explanatory note on item 3, there's a 3 beside there, if you go to page 46 and we discuss some of that there. So in there we say that our planned costs are going to be more and what's happened is some of the grant programs that were in the Department of Education moved to Post-Secondary Education. You'll see the drop in Education being added to Post-Secondary Education, about \$20,000.

And in 2001, the University of Saskatchewan created two new pensions plans and this increased our cost by about \$30,000 for the coming year. Again, we list those pension plans in another appendix here.

And we also are asking for \$35,000 to advance the dates for the university's financial statements so they can meet their tabling dates because of the new tabling of documents act.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So you need additional resources to complete that in time.

Mr. Wendel: — To bring the work more timely, right.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I have questions but they don't relate to the auditor on some of those things.

On Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming, a major increase there. Do you see that continuing in the near foreseeable future?

Mr. Wendel: — It's difficult to know how fast Liquor and Gaming can move to improve its practices and to improve the practices at Saskatchewan Indian and Gaming Authority. So we're going to be auditing directly with Saskatchewan Indian and Gaming Authority for the next few years till we're satisfied that all of the recommendations we made in our volume 2 report in November have been acted on.

I'm not sure just how fast they'll be able to move. Now the government says they're going to act on all these recommendations. We accept that. And we're working with them as we can.

One of our senior employees has gone over to join the Liquor and Gaming Authority and he'll be . . . one of his key roles will be to help put those recommendations into practice. So we're doing what we can to move that along.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I heard you mention a number of different agencies in the discussion about Liquor and Gaming. Is the First Nations fund included in that for an audit?

Mr. Wendel: — No, the First Nations fund appears under Municipal Government in our list of audits here. Now we've had some access and been promised co-operation. And over the last two weeks we have made some progress. And there seems to be full co-operation there. And we're just beginning our work. I don't know if we've got enough money in our budget to do the work yet, but we have budgeted to do an amount. But it depends what we find when we get in there as well.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. And the only other one I had special questions on was the government-wide sectoral and special issues audit. That has doubled over the last three years. Is that going to be the common practice? Not doubling, but the 500-plus thousand a year for that area. Or will that drop back to the 1998 levels or comparable?

Mr. Wendel: — I think what happened in the 1998 year that caused us to reduce what we did is we had a lot of extra work we had to do at the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. We had to take the money out of here and we spent it trying to do two years worth of audits at the universities.

There was new accounting pronouncements came out on how you have to account at universities. And it meant having to not only audit the current year, we had to go back and audit the prior year's numbers based on the new standards. So it ended up having to do almost two years worth of work in one.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So you were comparing apples to apples.

Mr. Wendel: — Yes. And the result was we weren't able to spend the money on these areas which were also important areas, but that was the decision we had to make. And I would think that the \$500,000 would be around the usual amount we'd be paying. That would have been our spending on those kinds of audits, depending whether we hit other unforeseen problems.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. D'Autremont and Mr. Wendel. Any questions from the other board members?

Mr. Kowalsky: — No question, but just a comment. I think I heard you say in your report that your staff ratio now is approximately 50 per cent or more than 50 per cent women. And I think I recall bringing that up a few years ago. I certainly want to congratulate your office for a major accomplishment there, you know. And it helps us. It's an objective that we're trying to fulfil across the government and it's good to see that you're able to fill that objective.

Mr. Wendel: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Anything else?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, just a comment for the board and for Mr. Wendel's . . . As I review, on page 67, the allocation to the Provincial Auditor over the past, I guess, almost two decades, I think there's been . . . it's fair to say some pretty dramatic changes. If I look through the period of the 1980s, you began with . . . in '83 with an expenditure of 3.6 million and by the year . . . in 1991 you were down to \$3 million which has subsequently been turned around; year 2000 — 4.5 million.

So I think it's quite clear and I want to make it clear that this government is very much committed to allowing the Provincial Auditor to do the work that he and his employees have been hired to do. And that, I want to say as well, has been reflected year after year in the budget allocations that have been granted by the Board of Internal Economy and by the government to the auditor to allow him to do his work.

I know government grows and government will decrease in size depending on the priorities of the people of the province, and it's always our goal as government to attempt to hold the line on expenditures even though the demands of services from the general public continue to grow and grow and grow and grow and grow. And so hopefully, Mr. Wendel, you and your staff will assist this administration in — as much as you can and I know you will — in holding the line as much as you can in our expenditures. All of us are taxpayers as well as the other roles that we fulfill and I don't think there's any secret that people in Saskatchewan are looking for less of a tax burden; and I think it's our responsibility to attempt to accommodate them when we can.

And so I want to just thank you and your employees for your work in the past year and you'll have your challenges next year I'm sure, as every year there seems to be a new surprise. In five and a half billion or six billion dollars worth of expenditures, there's always some things that need a little special attention; and we know that you will dedicate the resources that the board allocates to allow that to happen. So thank you for your work over the past year.

Mr. Wendel: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Lautermilch. Any other questions or comments? If not, I'll be prepared to entertain a motion with respect to the Provincial Auditor's budget. Moved by Mr. Lautermilch. Seconder? Seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the 2001-2002 estimates of the Provincial Auditor be approved in the amount of \$5,136,000.

Is that the figure?

Mr. Wendel: — 5.1 million, yes.

The Chair: — Any further comments or questions? And if not I'll ask, all those in favour? Carried. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Wendel; thank you to your staff. I just echo what the members here have said — we appreciate your efforts. Thank you very much and thank you for your presentation.

Mr. Wendel: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. We certainly appreciate the support the board has given us over the last, now, six years. And thank you again.

The Chair: — Well I appreciate the board's enthusiasm in wanting to carry on. So perhaps we can move on to some decision items. Some of the items, obviously . . . Our Ombudsman is not here and our Children's Advocate is not here to present their budgets.

So I thought perhaps that we might go on to item 12, under item 12, and consider perhaps item 12(b)(3); 12(b)(3), if we could go to that. We have . . . Mr. Greg Putz is here. We can just present these decision items for your consideration and have the presentations put forward here this evening. And then if there is any need to deliberate further, we can discuss them tomorrow and finalize them.

Those item numbers 12(b)(3) and 12(b)(4), the multimedia streaming of Chamber proceedings over the Internet may perhaps be addressed by Mr. Putz as well. Greg, do you want to . . .

Mr. Putz: — Sure.

The Chair: — Well there's some exciting things that are happening in our technology with respect to the facilities or Legislative Assembly, and with the way that we'll be reporting the proceedings of the Assembly as well. And I'd like Mr. Putz here to lead us through what the proposals are with respect to that . . . moving in that direction. Greg.

Mr. Putz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This decision item isn't anything new to the board; it's something we brought forward to the board last year. And the board at that time asked Mr. Speaker to go back and do some further investigation. That had to do specifically with completing the computer-cabling infrastructure that already exists in this building, to assess then whether or not there would be any possibility of extending the infrastructure to accommodate caucus networks.

The background of this decision item is also addressed in your documentation, and I'll just go through the salient points. The caucus has approached the Assembly office in 1999 to discuss how the Assembly might be able to assist the caucuses with various IT (information technology) issues, and one of those was a network infrastructure.

A major issue for the caucuses was the high cost of establishing and maintaining a network infrastructure, and the Assembly of course has experience in this area because it runs its own network, so some of that expertise perhaps could be . . . went to assisting the caucuses in this endeavour.

The basic idea was that perhaps, with the board's blessing, the Assembly could support and maintain the network hardware. And that would include the cabling and network devices such as routers and hubs. The question was put to the board in January of last year and the board asked, as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker to investigate the cost.

We did that, and after further consultation with the three caucuses, have come forward with this decision item.

In the decision item paper we outlined the current state of the computer cabling in the building, so I won't go through that, and the current state of the caucus networks. And I think you're probably all familiar with your own caucuses and the state of the network there, so I don't need to do that; but I'll just get to the bottom line.

The estimate of cost is approximately \$38,000, and this can be broken into three main chunks: the network switch is 28,000; completion of the cabling \$5,000, which is substantially less than what we had envisaged last year at this time; and the various network drops in each of the areas where the caucuses currently reside, about \$5,000. That brings the total hardware to about \$38,000.

One of the things that I like to stress in making the argument for these hardware costs is that most of these will be one-time costs. The future hardware costs will be mainly to replace worn out switches and hubs as that takes place.

The advantage to the caucuses, of the proposal, is that if it's approved, the Assembly will include the hardware maintenance part in our five-year capital expenditure plan each year.

Maintenance, however, does have some implications for the Assembly, and I mentioned some of these the last time we were before the board. The caucus networks will be a new responsibility, and there'll be a further demand on the two staff people in our information systems branch.

At this time, though, we have really no idea what that strain will be; partly it has to do with some of the other initiatives in our main budget as well, so we thought that it would be prudent this year to propose rather than creating a new network support position that we budget some dollars for a co-op student to be hired on a part-time basis and be used as necessary, and we put a figure in the budget for that.

We put in the budget a figure of \$33,000. Now this is something that is based on using a co-op student full-time. We don't envisage having to use a co-op student full-time, but nonetheless we're asking for authority in case it's needed because we don't know. We'll probably use them for one term which is about four months, so you can divide that figure into probably a third of that.

So to summarize, this proposal will, I think, help the caucus and the board in a number of ways. It'll create for the caucuses three separate and secure network infrastructures. In the short- and long-term it will reduce the infrastructure costs to the caucuses, and it offers flexibility to accommodate changes in caucus locations. And we all know that there were a few of those in the past number of years.

And . . . Mr. Speaker's laughing. Furthermore, I think the . . . one of the biggest benefits of this is that it'll provide a foundation for extending the caucus network into the Legislative Chamber if we ever advance with the plan to modernize the Chamber. And this is something that's being actively discussed in the Rules Committee and it has been also discussed in the Communications Committee in the past.

So, in a nutshell, that's the proposal. It's something that we

hope that the board will approve because I think it'll be of benefit to both the Assembly and to the caucuses.

The Chair: — Thank you, Greg. Any questions about that?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, it was suggested that there may be some impact on this budget item by other decisions that may be made as part of the budget. Maybe . . . maybe you could explain that for me . . . or did I misinterpret what was said? I thought that's what I heard.

Mr. Putz: — No, what I was talking about, if some of the other things — like we have another B budget item — I was just discussing that in relation to needing some extra help perhaps in our information systems branch.

Another issue that I want to probably bring to your attention is that in our main budget — and I'll get into this when we discuss the main information budget — is that last year in our five-year capital expenditure plan, our five-year plan, we indicated an amount that we figured we'd need for hardware this year. In order to facilitate getting the budget through for this, we've reduced that amount by a further \$14,000 in the hope that that'll make it a pill that's easier to swallow for the board.

Ms. Ronyk: — If I might add, Mr. Chair, there are a number of other things happening in other branches that will impact on the information services branch including development of the Internet personnel system, a computer-based system for personnel, human resource records in HR (human resources) and admin, that will definitely need support from the info services branch. And in financial services we want to start work on planning sort of an e-commerce component so that members from constituency offices can . . . will eventually be able to submit claims electronically rather than in paper.

So those are new initiatives that will take time of the IT branch.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Just to comment further. You know I think in terms of the cabling and developing the system, it would be prudent to proceed with that certainly. What I'm still, I don't know that I've got a picture in terms of the workload on the . . . We've got two staff in the information systems branch and I mean I don't know if there are any staff within your administration that complements the work done by these people. And I'm not sure if I have a good picture of sort of the expanding role of the whole information systems branch and the pressures that some of the other decisions we make might have on it.

You know, as part of the five-year plan you know I'm understanding that you're reducing that five-year plan from '99-2000 by \$14,000 which partially . . .

Mr. Putz: — No, in total it'll be reduced \$29,900 from what you approved last year.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay but \$14,000 of that attributed to . . .

Mr. Putz: — We're talking an extra . . . We're taking 14,000 more out than what was in our five-year plan last year to help accommodate . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay. So 14,000 of that five-year plan would accommodate some component of this request for 71,000.

Mr. Putz: — Right.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes. I guess, like, what I'm . . . maybe you can explain too the co-op student thing. I don't know that I understand that, 33,000 and how that level of remuneration is arrived at. I'm not sure how that works.

Mr. Putz: — I don't have a clear understanding myself on how that works. What I'm told is that through the University of Regina, and that's the model that we are looking at, they offer a co-op program for a student, in this case a student in the computer sciences field, to get some work experience. They take a term off and those terms are, I think, Guy, what — four months? And I think the students are allowed up to two consecutive terms to work in an environment where they gain practical experience and put their education to use.

So what we'd be doing is, once these things . . . once we start building this network in the building for this, we'd be assessing how much help we'd need and then we would use a student to help us do some of the more mundane things to free up our people with a lot more expertise to handle the more, you know, the architectural type issues.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I know when it comes to costs in these areas, it's very high.

If you go to someone downtown and ask them to provide you with an IT expert to do some work on your computer, you're looking at 50 to \$100 an hour. Even hiring a high school student, which I just did to do some work on one of my computers, it's 30 bucks an hour.

So if you want the expertise, you have to pay for it.

Mr. Putz: — Exactly. I just remind you that last year the board dealt with the decision item to create a permanent head for our branch. And in the two persons there — we've always had two people in that branch — one was on a contract and a consultant.

And the reason we went to a full time position — and Guy's here; he probably doesn't want to hear this — is that it was cheaper for us to have a permanent person here. Because the consultant we had was running us at \$85 an hour, and every hour he was here, we paid. Guy's here tonight. We're not paying him overtime.

The Chair: — I think perhaps, members of the board, if I may, I don't want to interrupt, and the purpose is to examine these various items. Perhaps when we get all the items presented, you'll have a clearer picture tomorrow how it all meshes, how it all comes together, and may give you an opportunity to think about that and then make your decisions when we meet in camera.

But this . . . just to afford you an opportunity in advance to give you some information on the different items.

Mr. D'Autremont: — On the co-op student, are you looking at

having a co-op student on a full-time basis or would it be on a four month . . .

Mr. Putz: — It would be . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — You'd have two or three with four-month segments each? Is that the way it would work?

Mr. Putz: — I think we'd only need one and what we'd do is, as some of these things go ahead, we would assess how much we'd need it. The 33,000 is fully utilizing one student for a full calendar year and we wouldn't necessarily need that. We may only need one term, so you divide that by three and it would be 11,000.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Once this networking is done, Mr. Chairman, and the hardware put in place for the caucuses, what then would be left in the Legislative Building that still wouldn't be accessible to, say, Internet? And it looks to me like what would happen at that stage would be the chambers themselves and the committee rooms.

How far advanced are our plans? Has anybody got a response to that? And is there any, is there any saving in trying to do, you know, in doing a job all at once as opposed to phasing it in? Do we have any kind of information on that at all?

The Chair: — Well the initial was a five-year plan; I'll let Greg address that.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I just would like a review of that.

Mr. Putz: — I don't know if there'd be any benefit; we probably couldn't do it all one . . . in one year anyway.

What we're saying in this document is that if the caucus network idea is adopted, in order to have something in the Chamber for the members to use there needs to be a network somewhere in the building for them to dial into, unless they're going to go to wireless technology and continue using the old networks in their caucuses with their caucus funds.

What's left in the building, you're correct, it would be the Chamber and the committee rooms because all the other areas that the Assembly is responsible for would, as far as we can tell, be covered here, unless the caucuses start residing in areas where they traditionally haven't.

The rest of the building is under the jurisdiction of Executive Council and that's a separate and distinct issue. They have their own networking issues and, of course for security reasons, they would not want to be mixed up with ours. And I'm sure the caucuses wouldn't want to be mixed up with theirs.

Mr. D'Autremont: — This wiring, if it takes place, will it be wired into the Assembly also?

Mr. Putz: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So the Assembly and the committee rooms . . .

Mr. Putz: — No.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Not initially? Okay.

Mr. Putz: — I guess I didn't quite understand what you mean by wired into the Assembly.

Ms. Ronyk: — What we would like to do in the next couple of years is develop a plan to sort of refurbish the Chamber by the anniversary year, 2005. And that will mean, you know, upgrading the carpets and some of the other fittings in the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Green carpet, yes.

We have thought we might have to wait for that to put the wiring in for the computer connections at each member's desk. That is not the case. We can go ahead with the wiring without tearing up the carpet. There's enough room in the conduits that are already there so we can do the computer cabling into the members' desks before we actually do the overall project.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — A few more slices in that carpet.

Ms. Ronyk: — And it would make sense to do it altogether.

Mr. Putz: — One of the issues for the Chamber too is that if the Chamber is going to be wired for accessing networks, then members would likely have power at their desk so they could plug their machines in. And right now that isn't there.

So that would be a fairly expensive proposition, SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) tells us. And I think we'd try to do some negotiation, them being the landlord of the building, to see whether they would pay for that or not, the Assembly.

Ms. Ronyk: — I don't usually have much luck with those.

Mr. Putz: — No.

Mr. D'Autremont: — It comes out of the same office.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Greg, is there any way you can assess what the savings would be to the caucuses collectively, not individual areas? Is there no way to . . . I mean, what you guys are paying and what we're paying.

Mr. Putz: — Yes. That's probably apples and oranges because when we did this . . . We did work with your caucus chiefs of staff — Mr. Fodey, Mr. Brad Farquhar, represented the Saskatchewan Party caucus, and Mr. Robert Ermel for the Liberal caucus. And each of them had different problems, but they were all interested in this from the perspective that the caucuses wouldn't have to invest in the wiring, the CAT5 wiring and building that infrastructure.

And one of the issues was, as caucuses move around, they had to leave that infrastructure behind. So if the Assembly was responsible for that and the network wiring was hard wired into the building, then wherever they go, they would just be plugging in to their own network.

Now the original proposal for this was that the Assembly also run the servers for the caucuses. That was because it was right

after an election and caucuses were having to start thinking about buying equipment, how to serve the members of their caucus. When the board dealt with this, as I mentioned, they asked Mr. Speaker to do some further investigation. In the meantime the caucuses went off and did their own thing as far as purchasing servers. So this proposal doesn't include the servers. Servers run about \$25,000 apiece, and I believe the Saskatchewan Party has one and I believe your caucus has one, although it's not current generation technology.

So in the long run it will save the next time caucuses have to go about building this infrastructure, and perhaps some day the caucuses will want us to also purchase and maintain and upgrade their servers as well.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay.

The Chair: — Anything else on that you want to digest? Then if not, Greg, do you want to proceed with the next item on the multimedia streaming of the Chamber proceedings over the Internet.

Mr. Putz: — Okay, I think what I'll do is invite Guy Barnabe here because he's better equipped to talk about this than I am, because it's more of a technical issue.

What we had planned to do tomorrow — but this is proceeding faster than we originally thought — we were going to give you a little demonstration of what media streaming is. We had selected some clips from the House that included Mr. D'Autremont and Mr. Lautermilch in an exchange in Committee of Finance just to demonstrate what this would look like on the Internet.

The background of this is that you'll recall that a little over a year ago when we had the Committee Of Agriculture established, one of the items in the order of reference for that committee was that it be broadcast to the widest possible audience including via the Assembly's web site on the Internet. That was very well-received and members have indicated a desire to see committee proceedings and House proceedings broadcast on our web site.

We have built that into our five-year plan down the road a little bit, but this proposal, it would be advancing that, and that's why we put it as a B budget item because we do have the capability of doing it today. It would involve buying a server, and we can broadcast the Assembly proceedings and . . . Well that's where the proposal is now.

The committees, it would just be audio because obviously we don't have television broadcasting in the committees yet but I'll invite Guy here to tell you a little bit more about this proposal.

Mr. Barnabe: — Thanks, Greg.

Mr. Putz: — By the way, I'd like to introduce Guy Barnabe, for those who haven't met Guy. Guy is the director of information systems at the Assembly. He joined the Assembly in September. Last year, you'll recall, when we had the proposal before the board for a permanent head for our branch, we indicated we would probably be filling the position after session. We ran a competition in July. Guy came to us from . . .

Mr. Barnabe: — Science Applications International.

Mr. Putz: — Right. He was working on the SHIN (Saskatchewan Health Information Network) project. So he's left them and he's joined us. He joined us in September and I just wanted to introduce you to Guy.

The Chair: — Thanks for being here, Guy.

Mr. Barnabe: — Thank you. What we're proposing to do is to provide a prototype system to start experimenting with video and audio streaming of the Chamber proceedings. And what I thought I'd do first . . . We were hoping to do this, as we planned, tomorrow morning with a demonstration. I think we'll still have that opportunity, I hope.

Basically I thought I'd describe what streaming is first. Streaming is the ability to deliver multimedia content such as we produce through broadcast services and provide that on the Internet and have that arrive at a PC (personal computer) on the Internet and view it as the information arrives at the PC directly instead of what you may have seen in other situations where, if you want to listen to, let's say a music clip, that might be stored in a file. The file gets, you know, a request over the Internet. The whole file is received and placed on your PC and then you play it back.

With streaming the information is played as soon as it's received in the PC and it's not really stored in the PC at all. So there's been a lot of advances in the last few years, especially with Microsoft recognizing that could be a big market, that significant advances are being made. So we'd like to build a prototype system to take what's being produced by broadcast services, convert it to a digital format, and stream it over the Internet which would give us an opportunity to try to understand all the limitations of the technology, what the costs would be in providing maybe a full-blown installation and so forth.

In the demonstration tomorrow I'll speak to four phases, highlight four phases of trying to do this. And one of them, of course, is producing the production of the broadcast which is already done for us by broadcast services.

The second phase would be encoding that signal into a digital format that we can then put on the Internet.

The third phase would be distributing that signal, and the fourth phase would be presenting that on your PC. So we've prepared, using some of our used equipment, we've tried to click together enough to do a little demonstration tomorrow.

There's a lot of issues that surface at the moment with streaming technology in the Internet because it's such an emergent technology. It's, as you see how quickly the newest PC's come out, companies like Microsoft and RealAudio and Apple are moving just as quickly to become the major player in this market. So every other month there seems to be a new version of the software, there's new techniques.

And so we thought we would take the next fiscal year in building this prototype to help us better understand, you know, which one of those four phases are going to be an issue that we

need to address.

I think that's basically what I prepared. And unfortunately, I was hoping to do this with a demonstration so . . .

The Chair: — Any questions of Guy until we see our . . . see it in action tomorrow? Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. I guess my question relates to, is there any difference in the volumes of data necessary to transmit between audio and visual?

Mr. Barnabe: — Yes. In the demonstration tomorrow we prepared three different clips, as I call them. And the reason we do that is, depending on how the home user connects to the Internet to listen in on the Chamber proceedings it affects the quality of the signal.

So of the three that we have ready, one of them is for the basic home user with a regular modem, a regular dial-up modem; a medium user with maybe a higher-scale modem; and then a home user with a cable modem or high-speed Sympatico service. And you'll see distinctly the three different qualities. And with that of course, is the volume of information that goes over the Internet. So we would try to provide for the three different scenarios anticipating that, you know, the bulk of the home users will be the modem and slow-speed modem.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I actually tried, not the visual, but the audio here either this morning or yesterday and picked up an Australian radio station. And it played over my computer just as if I was listening to CKCK or CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) in Regina. There was no difference. It was live, 4 a.m. in Australia. It wasn't very interesting but it was just as if it was a local station.

Mr. Barnabe: — Yes, it's amazing how fast they're moving at that.

Mr. Putz: — What would be a great advantage to the Assembly, if the board chooses to support this proposition at this time, is that we would vastly expand the audience for the broadcast of the legislative proceedings beyond the borders of the province as well as anybody in the world could tune in.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Would it be possible to, because the House sits let's say three hours, four hours a day, to store that for people to access at a future date. You may not necessarily want to store every day of the session permanently but, you know, for at least 24 hours or so?

Mr. Barnabe: — Yes, absolutely. A follow on to this will be looking at the storage requirements for storing some of that information because it can be quite large when you try to keep it. Initially we're just basically streaming the information. Some of the products we've initially looked at have the ability to actually capture and keep those for kind of an on-demand scenario when somebody wants to, you know, dial in at night and call up a certain part of the proceedings. So, yes, we will look at that too.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Would there be any legal implications on this? Right now if I want to get a copy of a speech in the

House and I go to the TV services I have to get permission from the Speaker, I have to if another member is involved, and I get . . . now this wouldn't be any different would it than me taping it at home on my VCR (video cassette recorder)?

Mr. Barnabe: — That's a good question and maybe I'll ask some of the broadcast services folks.

Mr. Putz: — I think we can answer that now. The broadcast rules as they presently exist, it's only the members that have that restriction. The TV stations take whatever they want and broadcast it on the news. And that's been . . . people at home can tape it. That's always been the case with our proceedings. So on the Internet I don't think it would be any different.

And one of the things to stress here is that we're going to need a server in any event, whichever one of these software packages becomes the pre-eminent one. And this would allow us, as we say in the document, to build that foundation and start offering this sooner rather than later and build on that by offering the capture aspects that Guy mentioned as well.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — But the modern reality is that copyright laws aren't a real challenge.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I had lots of good comments came back when we broadcast the agricultural committee from the legislature.

The Chair: — I want to welcome Mr. Hillson to the meeting and apologize for you having to eat leftovers.

A Member: — Well that's what you get when you come late.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — I don't know quite what my dear colleagues are getting at, but anyway, but thank you. I apologize for being late.

The Chair: — Anything else?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I just have one question with respect to this technology and its development. If we were to approve this recommendation, could you look down the road and tell us what you would expect in terms of person-years to do the maintenance, to do the day-to-day operations of this thing?

Like one of the things I think that I worry about, the growth of government happens so easily. It's just, it's almost . . . It seems like it's inevitable. And as we branch into new areas sometimes we're, you know, we're buying something that we maybe don't expect, on down the road. Like would we be looking for a request, say next year or the year after, for people to operate, people to manage? What would this look like in your crystal ball, Greg?

Mr. Putz: — We'll ask our director.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Or in your crystal ball.

Mr. Barnabe: — Crystal ball. I think what would likely happen in this scenario is as more of this technology goes digital, I would see the . . . these would probably be extra offerings that

might come out of our broadcast services crew.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So broadcast services.

Mr. Barnabe: — Right. Because more and more equipment, as that equipment ages and gets replaced, you know, undoubtedly will be replaced with digital-type, -based, equipment which will . . . So a lot of the things we're going to have to do today just to get it from that current system into a digital signal will come naturally out of those devices. And so the whole industry is going to digital broadcasting on the Internet.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So then let me ask you in terms of the commitment, the time commitment, to put this package together as it relates to your branch and the network, hardware maintenance, all of this, what kind of time pressure is this putting on your administration? Or are we already buying if we approve this, a half a person year, a quarter, a third, two-thirds — what?

Mr. Barnabe: — Well I think, as Greg was mentioning, we were hoping that the co-op student would probably help with this endeavour as well, or if not help with the endeavour, then off-load some of our other day-to-day kind of duties.

We do intend on using off-the-shelf products for this where it's not specialized, where you know that can be quite resource intensive. So we'll be using products that Microsoft market, and again, RealAudio and probably something from Apple. So hopefully those products aren't going to be so resource intensive that . . .

Mr. Putz: — We don't envisage any extra staffing issues. This is something that we felt we could absorb at this time. There are some of the other issues. I mean every time you add a server . . . as you know, last year the board approved our proposal because the *Hansard* equipment was old and outdated and it needed replacing. And I mean the only thing to replace it with in this day and age would be with digital. And we did that, but that has added a couple of more servers for our computer people to look after.

So each of these things needs its own device and in some cases, looking after the software. So after a while I'm sure that there'll be a cumulative effect and we will have to ask for some more help. But in the immediate future we don't envisage this to be requiring any additional help that we'd be asking for right now.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Our current television cameras in the House, are they capable of broadcasting digital?

Mr. Putz: — I think it's a process of conversion, as Guy says. The signal would be converted by again another computer or server, and that I imagine would be the process. Unfortunately we don't have Gary Ward here tonight to tell us that, but unless Guy has something to add.

Mr. Barnabe: — It's my understanding that the current infrastructure is all analog and it requires conversion.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Weren't we also looking at some point in time in making some changes to some of those cameras? Or maybe that was discussing one new camera or something. There

was some discussion here a year or so ago.

Mr. Putz: — We did replace those cameras not that long ago.

Ms. Ronyk: — And I think they're digital. But the audio isn't digital; our sound system is not.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So the cameras, you think, would be digital.

Mr. Putz: — What we'd like to do in the near future is that we're still putting these things on the old magnetic tapes for storage in the archives. And the new processes of course are to convert them to digital, put it on a CD-ROM. That would immensely help us, and storage of these things would improve access for people and members to the proceedings. And I think the Saskatchewan Archives Board would appreciate immensely having a whole session on a CD rather than having a wall of tapes that we send over at the end of every session.

It's not something we're asking for in this budget year, so you don't have to worry about that. But in the near future, as our equipment that does that recording is starting to get old as well, and they simply don't make parts for that stuff any more.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Greg, I'd be interested to know how much space we're using in the archive and what the cost savings could be and what the cost of converting.

Mr. Putz: — That's something that Gary Ward is pursuing, looking at now. We weren't ready to come because it would involve his branch buying more equipment . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Right. And we'll be reviewing it and you'll have his budget before you, either later tonight without him or tomorrow. And he has a proposal in there as part of his budget. It's going to cost us a little more now but it will save us quite a bit down the road. So he thought that was enough for the board to bite off this year.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Wouldn't it be also better for posterity; the magnetic tape has a problem of deterioration where the CD-ROMs do not have.

Mr. Putz: — Exactly. Gary Ward thinks that some of those tapes back to 1983 when we started broadcasting, that they probably have one more run through those tapes before they are useless. So he'd like to work with the archives to make sure that last run of those tapes would be to put it into a digital format.

Ms. Ronyk: — Mr. Chair, if I might add, and maybe what I'm going to say will scare you — I don't mean it that way — but I just want to make the point that I think the Saskatchewan Assembly has done computer automation in a very responsible and reasonable way and we've done it centralized from the beginning. We haven't had branches off going and doing their own thing and then later on having to sort of bring it all together into a cohesive plan. And I think we're as advanced or more advanced than many other legislatures.

And just to give you some comparative numbers in terms of the cost of our branch, the Alberta legislature has an IT unit of eight people. The BC (British Columbia) legislature has an IT unit of seven people. Now admittedly we're not, it's not apples . . .

some of it's apples and oranges here. Alberta for example supports all the constituency offices but BC isn't offering much different than what we do. They just came at it a lot later and had to do it all much more quickly and it just cost them more to do it that way.

Mr. Putz: — We do a lot of this in house ourselves, with our two people, whereas a lot of other Assemblies contract out. For instance, our Internet web site was almost exclusively designed and built and managed with the people that we have here.

The Chair: — Anything else on that? For your consideration then, I want to thank Guy and Greg for that good presentation. We'll look forward to the lights, action, camera operation tomorrow morning. Thank you very, very much.

Board members if I might suggest, we have Ms. Marilyn Borowski, our director of finance is here with Gwenn. Perhaps . . . I was going to . . . there are items that kind of roll into one another. I'm looking at item 12(b)(v), the amendments to directive 6 with respect to constituency assistant expenses. And then I was looking at the 12(g)(i), the members' secretaries reclassification to new class plan request. And then 12(g)(ii), the caucus resource amalgamation. This is sort of all tied in and perhaps I thought it might be an opportune time to run those items before the board, again for your consideration, deliberation before we get in in camera tomorrow and talk about them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well certainly, great idea. Thank you. We'll take a five-minute recess.

The board recessed for a period of time.

The Chair: — I'd like to call the meeting back to order, please, and ask Marilyn and Gwenn, as I mentioned, perhaps we can just go through these items that are all related. They're not necessarily in sequence but 12(b)(v) and 12(g)(i) and 12(g)(ii), decision items for the board's consideration. So, Gwenn or Marilyn, whichever . . . okay, please.

Ms. Ronyk: — Board members, item 12(b)(v) is a decision item that relates to a proposed amendment to directive #6 which is the directive that governs constituency assistant expenses. There has been a request for a number of years for us to have a look at whether constituency assistants are actually, sort of paid appropriately for the work that they do. In order to determine that, the job . . . a job description had to be developed and some sort of classification made of those job duties.

To pursue this, a committee was established with representatives from the Assembly and the caucus offices, including a couple of experienced constituency assistants. Members of that committee put together a job description that sort of encompasses all of the kinds of things that a typical constituency assistant does in an operating constituency office today. These things have changed over the years, but I think today we have a much more formal, busy caucus . . . or constituency office operations across the province.

The committee created a job description, a position description, and we sent it off to our classification consultants. They reviewed it and classified it according to the government's in-scope class plan, and they recommended that the probable working level of a main constituency assistant was at . . . what

they call a program support level 6. Previously our . . . or currently our directive is based on a . . . the amount of funding in that directive is based on a linkage to program support level 4, in terms of the funding.

What we're recommending is that the directive #6 be amended to reflect an appropriate linkage to the funding level for a program support level 6 person. So what this really means is that there's a sort of a re-class in the level of funding provided to members for constituency assistants.

Now what this does, it doesn't mean that constituency assistants will get any sort of automatic increase. It means that the funds available to members will be increased and it will be up to individual members as to how they apply . . . how they use those funds, whether you hire more staff or have more hours or pay existing people more — that's totally up to the member to determine.

So all that the amendment here does is raise the maximum of the allowance to give members more flexibility. Some members have two offices and need to staff them both. Some other members share offices and can share staff and then could then hire perhaps a more senior type of a research person. It just gives members a little more flexibility and the funding implications are there on page 2 of the item that provides the allowance to all members across the board for the Assembly. And it requires an approval of the additional funding and the amendment to the directive.

And all that the amendment is, is to delete the maximum amount paid to the program support level 4 position and substituting maximum amount paid to a program support level 6 position. So you're just changing the formula from a 4 to a 6.

And these are statutory dollars. These are in the statutory part of the budget.

The Chair: — Thank you, Gwenn. Any questions? Yes, Ms. Jones.

Ms. Jones: — So the amounts that we see increased from 2000-2001 and the additional funding required, those are maximum global amounts that if every MLA paid to the maximum or used the entire allotment, that it would require that much additional funding in the statutory amount to accommodate the maximum amounts allowable? So it isn't necessarily that that amount would be spent but that amount may be spent. Is that correct?

Ms. Ronyk: — That's correct. It's just a maximum. And members do not necessarily use their full amounts, although this one is not one where members have had much excess because the staff have not been, you know, very well paid under this allowance.

The amount that used to be under this allowance was 2,566 per month. And Linda Kaminski isn't here and she's the one that has the numbers here. And what I don't have is the . . . yes. We can get you the maximum per month for the new support level 6.

Ms. Jones: — That would be helpful.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Perhaps 3,443?

Ms. Borowski: — Is that what it is?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Perhaps. All I did is I took that one number, divided it by 58, then divided it by 12.

Ms. Borowski: — But this is the base.

Ms. Ronyk: — That amount is now . . . the calculation would be based on \$3,114. And on top of that we do provide the holiday pay.

Mr. Bjornerud: — I'm sorry, Gwenn, I missed that.

Ms. Ronyk: — We provide the holiday pay, stat holiday pay, and vacation pay on top of that base rate depending on the individuals that you have hired. It's not there. It's only there if you are using the dollars.

Ms. Jones: — And if I may, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: — Yes. Go ahead.

Ms. Jones: — What further implications may there be in terms of the collective bargaining process that, as I understand, isn't complete?

If this were approved by the board at this stage at a level 6 and the collective bargaining process isn't completed yet, then level 6 stands to be bumped up higher yet through collective bargaining?

Ms. Ronyk: — No. It doesn't in this case because the Assembly and the board is not the employer bargaining with those CAs (constituency assistant) that are in a bargaining unit.

All constituency assistants are not unionized; only the government caucus CAs are unionized. So the board does not do the collective bargaining; that's done between your caucus and your CAs.

And the board I think wishes to treat all the CAs fairly and appropriately and sort of in keeping with how public servants are generally treated. And we've done that. We've improved on that a great deal over the years now that most of the CAs now have access to all of the benefits that the legislative staff have. In terms of the collective bargaining, the board is basically . . . sets an amount that they are prepared to fund in the directive and then it's up to the members themselves to deal with their own CAs. And on the part of the government caucus you will use this amount of money and bargain within that. And there's other ways you can compensate.

Ms. Jones: — I understand that the board, you know, isn't the employer and doesn't participate in collective bargaining, but I think, you know, once wage rates are set they tend to compare notes with each other and follow patterns. And I think it would be unusual to not have some impact on the amount of statutory set aside for wages whether the bargaining process is through one caucus or another.

I just raised it as an interesting point as to whether or not . . . I

mean the whole evaluation process I'm sure came about as an indirect result of that.

Ms. Ronyk: — I think you're right, that there certainly was pressure to more adequately compensate constituency office staff for their duties in comparison with duties, similar duties in government offices and so on.

Ms. Jones: — And I'm not disagreeing with that either. I'm simply asking a question if it could mean that there will be further pressures on that as a result.

Ms. Ronyk: — Well in the Assembly we're not . . . in the Assembly office we're not really involved or nor are we necessarily very aware of what's happening in the collective bargaining. But from our perspective, as far as I'm aware of it at the moment, is that, you know, we've come a long way in responding to the needs and I don't expect that there will any major pressures here in the next little while or year or two anyway.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you for those answers.

The Chair: — Anything else on that item?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, I'll just comment. I guess the evaluation process as was done, quite interesting, involving — as I understand it — constituency assistants from each caucus, folks from your shop, Gwenn, and classification consultants. And so I suppose, just looking at the ranking, the way the recommendation for support level 6 was arrived at would have been very much in keeping with any other arm of government as the assessment of the jobs is done.

It's a fairly substantive increase in the allotments. But I guess if that's the job description and if that's in fact what constituency assistants are doing, then we had better look fairly closely at the amount that we're allowing MLAs to compensate their constituency people for.

The question I think I have though, aside from the costs which have been discussed here, if the directive — so that the board wouldn't have to come back to this again and again and again or come back with a big bump-up a few years from now because this support level 6 position hasn't kept, I guess, kept pace with other arms of government — would this be in any way hinged on agreements that may be negotiated by other arms of government?

What I'm saying is this level 6 support position will change as a new collective agreement within government takes effect or if a COLA (cost-of-living adjustment) is introduced as part of a change in terms of the range.

And the other thing is the level 6 position, is there . . . are there scales within a level 6 beginning year 1, 2, 3, 4? You know, ranges, I guess.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, there are. There is a range that covers about five 4 per cent steps. Members may choose to put people on a range or not as they choose. All that the directive does is set . . . so that the maximum amount available, and then the members may choose within that.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Oh. Okay.

Ms. Ronyk: — So it would make some sense, I think, for when you have a new employee, to start them at the bottom of a range and move them through it over the course of a term. And I know that's what some of the members and some of the constituency assistants are looking for — some recognition that their value has increased as they become more experienced.

Your first question about the linkage and whether there's any automatic change in the amounts. There is, because the directive links the amount to whatever the current . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay.

Ms. Ronyk: — . . . amount being paid to a program level 6 person or classification is. So when there is a COLA as a result of the government's collective bargaining agreement with the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union), there will be an increase to the amount available as the maximum of this allowance.

Now when the program support level 6 isn't an adequate classification — you know, maybe the people are doing more advanced work, maybe they're doing communications, maybe they're doing research, whatever — then there would need to be another review done and a change to the linkage in the directive.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Though if the level 6 was made the base and a person's abilities within the constituency office changed, you still have the provision of paying them though additional funds, do you not, from your other allowances?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes. Yes. That's correct. And I think members do have staff of different levels of ability and they may want to have more of a full-time person and perhaps a part-time, fill-in person for vacations, whatever. And you would want to pay them at a different level and that's why the members need the flexibility to do that.

I know that our HR branch would like to sort of make . . . describe some . . . several positions — maybe a senior office manager person, a senior secretary, and a junior support person — and then members might be able to find an adequate place in those for your staff at various times.

But at this point, the allowance doesn't allow for two or three people on any sort of ongoing basis that it . . . One of the benefits of what they've done so far is that this position description — it's sort of generic chief person in your office — will be really helpful to new members coming in. They will be able to use that position description and list of tasks and duties to help to decide what their own new person needs to do. It'll be good for training. It'll be good for them knowing what kind of a person they need to hire, what qualities . . . or qualifications and skills they need. And it will be . . . I think it'll mean that eventually our staff will be of better quality all along, because members will have some resources to help them do that initial set-up of their offices and hiring.

The Chair: — Mr. Bjornerud had a question.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Comment when Gwenn was talking that I think, under the . . . they were under level 4 before. I don't believe that all of them were at the maximum though at that point either, were they? They're all . . . there's a number of different scale . . . or rates used right now.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes. That's exactly it. No, many members have to hire more than one person. They've got two offices on different ends of their constituencies. They can't use it all for one employee.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, yes. This pay scale doesn't indicate that's what you should pay a constituency assistant. This is simply that this is the maximum amount you have available. And if you wish to pay it to one, you may do so. If you wish to pay it to 10 different constituency assistants, you may do so. And it's up to the individual member. This simply sets out the maximum that you have available to pay any number of constituency assistants.

The Chair: — And at your discretion with respect to the level of competence for your needs and requirements.

Ms. Jones: — In addition to that maximum, in accordance with previous decisions there's also the sick leave that the Assembly has taken responsibility for. So there's 15 days maximum sick pay that would be an amount of money that you don't have to worry about finding a replacement for.

Ms. Ronyk: — That's right.

Ms. Jones: — And then lose that in the shuffle somewhere.

Ms. Ronyk: — And Marilyn tells me that when we add the vacation and sick pay on it's 31.50 per month. That's assuming a 2 per cent increase this year.

The Chair: — Anything else, anyone?

Do you want to make a decision on this now or wait and leave it till we deal with some other . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I think we have to make decisions on those other issues. I think we should just leave those for tomorrow.

The Chair: — Okay. Great.

Now the other that was tied into this was the caucus resource amalgamation which was item 12(g)(ii). We'll do 12(g)(ii) first and then we'll go back to 12(g)(i). How's that? Just to keep you on your toes.

Ms. Ronyk: — Mr. Chairman, the decision item that we're proposing here is taking the three or four or five different directives that are currently in place to provide funding for caucus office operations for different purposes, and we're proposing to roll those over into one authority, one directive. And what the advantages of this are, is that caucuses will be able to figure out what it is they can be expecting each month. It won't be as complex to figure out the various formulas that have been in place in the different directives.

It isn't going to have any monetary impact. It's revenue-neutral if that's the word you want to use. We're taking the existing funds and rolling them into the caucuses in one grant instead of three or four sort of separately calculated ones.

Now there is — I'll come back to that a little bit later — there is an increase in the funding that we're proposing for members' secretaries which in the past have not been part of the caucus grants. Those have been paid by the Legislative Assembly. Part of this proposal is to try to meet the caucuses' needs better than we have in the past by providing them with secretarial assistance at particular set levels. With the changing technology and changing needs of a modern office, you need people with different skills than you did 10 and 15 years ago.

And so what we're proposing is to take the funding that we had in the Legislative Assembly administration for the members' secretaries that came and worked in your caucuses during the session primarily, and then you had a fewer smaller number outside of the session — what we're proposing is to roll the funding that the Assembly had for those members' secretaries into the caucus grants as well. And then the caucuses would decide what staffing they needed, at what level do you need a researcher, do you need a press person, do you need an IT person.

Whatever you'd need, you'd be able to take those resources and use them the way that each caucus sees fit to use them.

The only increase in the funding is with that members' secretary portion. All of the other staff in the Assembly, and now including the constituency assistants, have had their jobs assessed against this new class plan. The members' secretaries had not. They were still based on the old non-existent class plan and we felt that they should be treated the same way as any other legislative employees, and this year the process was gone through to classify the work of the members' secretaries.

Basically the results of classifying them, converting them into the new plan meant an overall increase of \$47,000. And it's proposed that what we would roll into the caucus grants is the existing funding for caucuses and the member secretary funding from the Assembly, including the money to convert them to the new plan. And that's what is in this proposal for the caucus resources amalgamation.

It would simplify our administration. It would simplify the caucuses' administration. We would still propose that we would take the direction of caucus as to who you want to hire and what you want them to do and what you want us to pay them. And the Assembly HR (human resources) unit would still . . . and financial services would still be the paymaster for those. They would process their payrolls which would enable those employees to continue all the Assembly government benefit plans, and the employer's share of those benefit plans would continue to be paid, as they are now, outside of the caucuses.

I don't know if there's any other . . . How we've come up with the appropriate level of funding for the caucuses is to roll together the various amounts that were provided before. If you recall, it was a flat amount for secretarial services for the caucuses. Every caucus got the same amount.

There was an amount for sessional research and general expenses that was based on a certain dollar figure per member of your caucus. There was a research grant that part of which was a flat amount that went to every caucus, and part of it was an amount that depended on the number of members in your caucus.

What we did was quite an extensive lot of calculations where we tried to roll those funds together, create a flat amount that's the basic support that any caucus needs, no matter what its size is. And how we came up with that, was the flat amounts that are already in existing formulas, and then we rolled the other parts into the amount that's based on the number of members in your caucus — the per member amount. So that if you're a big caucus you get more resources because you have more members. If you're a small caucus, you only get the flat amount and the smaller amount based on the number of members.

We feel that what we've come up with is pretty much revenue-neutral. It's giving the caucuses very close to the same amounts that you had before. It's just a simpler version, easier to administer, gives the caucuses more flexibility.

And the other advantage is that we've provided for this in a new directive 7.2, called caucus resources, that comes right after the decision item.

And we feel that we've come some way in providing a direction to caucuses for the spending of their money, the purposes for which the money is provided in partial answer to what the Provincial Auditor has been saying to us for quite a few years — that you need to tell the caucuses what the money is for. The board needs to tell the caucuses what the money's for.

And I think we've tried to do that in the first two sections of the directive. And we have discussed this with caucus, representative caucus staff so that they'd have some time to think about it and see whether it adequately reflects what caucuses use the money for, whether it restricts them or not in the traditional uses of their money. And we've not had any sort of negative feedback on that.

So we think it sort of meets the caucuses' needs for using the funds in a way that they see fit, and yet we think it does go a fair way toward meeting the auditor's concerns that the board is saying to the caucuses what the money is for.

The section 3 of the new directive provides the formula for the calculation for the funding for the caucuses — the base amount and the amount per member. This funding would be indexed so that it will increase with the cost of living from year to year. And of course the size of the caucus will affect the amount of funding.

Again the Speaker, Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the Third Party, and cabinet ministers, are not counted in the calculations as in the past.

Section 7 provides the same sort of guidance as to how the money may be used as is currently in place for the members' constituency services allowance. It is pretty much the very same wording for caucuses. And it is our understanding that caucus has basically been following those guidelines for the last

number of years and that this would be workable for them. We welcome your advice on that.

The Chair: — Thank you, Gwenn. Any questions or comments?

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, this is simply a matter of simplifying the accounting and it's really not in that sense a monetary item. I certainly agree with it.

I was aware that figuring out the various caucus grants required going through several different headings and I think this is definitely an improvement if you can go to . . . to more easily see and calculate what your caucus is entitled to, and I certainly agree with it.

Mr. Kowalsky: — A question with respect to definition of private members and Executive Council. Where does the cabinet secretary come into play? We haven't had any secretaries . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — Legislative secretaries?

Mr. Kowalsky: — . . . legislative secretaries for the last few years, but there have been in the past.

Ms. Ronyk: — They're considered private members.

Mr. Kowalsky: — They're considered private members under this.

Mr. D'Autremont: — . . . that information that you've been reading. I don't know if I lost it some place or . . .

Ms. Jones: — Is it in the attachments? There's an attachment after . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — I don't have the attachment.

Mr. Kowalsky: — The second question being, how much variance would there be using this formula compared to the old system, the existing system, for different permutations and combinations of members? Would it vary a lot if there was a very much more lopsided returns to the Assembly, electoral returns to the Assembly? Or would this system work very similar to what the old system worked like?

Ms. Borowski: — There is a point at which there is a change. But I did try a number of permutations, both opposition and government caucus, and this formula gave you pretty much the same, plus or minus. I think the largest was a thousand dollars, depending on whether the members went up or down. There might have been a thousand dollars difference, either plus or minus, between our old calculation and this one.

Mr. Kowalsky: — A thousand dollars isn't very much then in this. That's very close.

Ms. Borowski: — And that would have been over a year. Like I was looking at an annual calculation.

Ms. Ronyk: — I think the biggest change came where a caucus has almost no private members because you lose all the

per-member funding; you still have the base.

I mean you could have a government caucus with a large cabinet for example, that has a small private member portion.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — We do.

Ms. Ronyk: — But that would have been the case before as well to a great extent in the old formulas.

Ms. Jones: — Point no. 5 on the attachment, one of two. If there is a change mid-year, is the grant adjusted mid-year, either up or down?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, it'll be adjusted at the time that the change happens. Even if it's mid-month, we will make the change.

Ms. Jones: — Okay. Because it refers to an annual funding.

Ms. Ronyk: — It will be adjusted. It's item 5 in the directive draft, 7.2: any change in the number of private members in a caucus will increase or reduce the size of the caucus. Oh yes, you say for the purposes of the annual funding. Well it is done on a monthly basis and we will continue to do it.

Ms. Jones: — It might need to be clarified a little better than that.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, you're right.

Ms. Jones: — And subheading 7, this is something new? None of this directive existed before?

Ms. Ronyk: — That's true. It did not exist in the caucus directives before. It is almost the same wording that's there in the members' constituency services directive that you . . . the guidance you use in your constituency office for your communications spending.

The Chair: — Anything else?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, just on the . . . That was I guess my question, Gwenn, on the list of things that we shouldn't use funds for as part of the caucus funding. What is the difference between the constituency assistant rules that we've drafted and this one here?

Ms. Ronyk: — The constituency services allowance rules and this one?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes.

Ms. Ronyk: — We just had to change the wording of (c). We had to put caucus activities instead of constituency or member activities. Otherwise I don't think there was any change. Those are the wording that is . . . Oh, right, (a), (b), (c), are new.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay.

Ms. Ronyk: — The expenses of a personal nature is in the constituency services directive as well; it's just not quite worded that way.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Would these directives cover off difficulties that we've seen in the past with respect to caucus expenditure, misappropriation of caucus expenditure?

Ms. Ronyk: — I believe they would, yes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay. That's it for me, nothing else, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: — These items that we just dealt with, does the board wish to dispense with them with the motions that we've . . . since it's fresh. I'd leave that up to the board members. We have recommendations.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — I'm prepared to move the recommendations.

The Chair: — Okay. The first recommendation to the item we've been dealing with first of all, with 12(g)(ii) . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I'm sorry, Mr. Kowalsky.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Before we go into this, this item 7, I just kind of want to bring to the members' attention, you know, possible interpretations of this.

When you look at item no. 7(d) there, for election purposes — caucus funding shall not be used for any of the items of election purposes. A lot of that I think depends on what you mean by election purposes.

Because when you look at our system, our parliamentary system, we have a government and we have an opposition. And it's pretty well understood that when you're in opposition, most of, a lot of what you're doing is to try and get elected into government. And when you're in government, you know, you're trying to maintain your staying elected in government.

And so a very . . . you know a definition . . . And what you're doing is trying to put policies in . . . keep policies in place, whether you're in opposition or in government so that you would get elected or re-elected.

And I'm wondering whether we sometimes don't get ourselves into . . . put ourselves under such circumstances that, you know, you can only . . . you can't act at all in any political manner, whether you're in opposition or in government, when you adopt this kind of rule, and may end up inadvertently just compromising oneself or a member's assistant. A member's constituency assistant in caucus, a representative, I would also assume would have sort of the same motivation, would want to see the person that they are hired by . . . re-elect them.

And our parliamentary system, our whole parliamentary system is based on that and I trust . . . I'm a little reluctant in us adopting something that, without . . . I'd like to give it a little more thought before we bring down a rule that, you know, immediately . . . You know, my constituency assistant does a lot of volunteer work, and a lot of it is party work and I'm sure that's the case in many places. I wouldn't want to get, you know, I wouldn't want that to be . . . end up, him or her to end up, them to end in a compromising position.

The Chair: — By leave, just an observation. That item is

already in the members' rules, or guidelines if you wish — directions from the board — and I believe that directly relates to during a writ period for the purposes of using that monies . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I wonder if we wouldn't want to define that because I mean . . . and maybe we should specify that it's during the period of a writ, if that's what it means. Because I guess, like Mr. Kowalsky, I'm not sure what the interpretation is. As it's drafted here, it could be interpreted to mean a lot of things. But I mean if the purpose is not to allow caucus funds to be expended to assist a particular candidate or political party during the period of a writ, then maybe that's what we need to specify.

I don't know. Or maybe there's another interpretation that was thought of when this was put together. And I can't remember when that would have been or what the thought was at the time, Gwenn.

Ms. Ronyk: — I think this maybe highlights the perennial issue that members, and caucuses particularly, have to always be making a judgment about what's actually a party or election-type expenditure, what's a caucus or member-type expenditure. And I think this is a general guideline and it's up to the member and the caucus to make that definition and to decide what is an appropriate use of an expenditure at any particular time.

I guess I would hesitate a bit just to say it's only during the writ period because maybe the government has an advantage. They know when that writ's going to be dropped and they can spend ahead of that, and the opposition doesn't know when a writ's going to be dropped and so they'd lose the opportunity to do some communicating ahead of a writ period and get around the rule. I think it's a judgment call that a caucus would need to make.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Just on that, Gwenn, (e) is pretty explicit if you look at it. Because I mean it precludes expenditure, or it disallows expenditure for attendance of a party or a party constituency association meeting or event, solicitation of party memberships, contributions for a political party.

Ms. Ronyk: — You know, you're right. I think that (d) was added in there from an earlier draft. And then we decided just to put (e) in. That was directly out of the constituency assistant section. And I don't know that we do need both of them in there. I mean (e) is what is in the members' restrictions and it would be quite appropriate to have . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well from my experience in looking at some of the court cases that have taken place, we don't make the determination of "for election purposes" — what that means. If push comes to shove, some judge will make that determination and it may not be anywhere near what we thought it meant sitting around this table. And so I agree. I have a great deal of concern about using that language.

Let's say it's a by-election. Does that mean all caucus functions have to cease? Because there's 57 other constituencies out there that life goes on and they need to be serviced. And yet something that you may do in another constituency could

certainly have an impact on a by-election at some point in time, you know.

Government does something positive; opposition raises something that's negative to the government. All those sort of things are still caucus or constituency activities and could be construed at some point in time as for election purposes.

And I think we do open ourselves up or allow ourselves to be opened up to scrutiny that, while we certainly should have no fear of scrutiny, may not be the interpretation that we intended if we put this in there.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Chairman, I think I've got a suggestion. I mean I see the argument that in a sense one could say everything we do is directed at trying to maintain our political support. But that clearly is not contemplated here and it gives a lot of indications of the specific examples of where one has crossed the line from simply doing one's job as an MLA to direct party or re-election purposes.

And I think maybe (d), what about "for election purposes" — directly for election purposes or for direct election purposes. I mean, I think that makes it clear that to use resources directly in a campaign is not allowed and gets around, I think, the point that other members have identified, that I mean indirectly one could argue that everything we do is with an eye towards the next election. For direct election purposes, I think might get at the issue that has been flagged here.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I think we could eliminate (d) and stick in an (e), so change (e) to (d) and put in for election per following or similar direct election purposes to use the direct.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I can't see, Dan, where (e) wouldn't cover it all. You know maybe we need to give this some thought overnight and come back to this tomorrow. I don't know, Gwenn, you and Marilyn might want to think a little bit about it and let's come at it tomorrow again.

I mean I think we know what the intent is here. And we all understand what the directive is trying to achieve . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well and the thing is it might be wiser to remove that, as you say, Dan, and then just allow (e) to become (d) and it's pretty explicit in there. I mean I don't know that I'd have a hard time to understand . . . well, even me, even I might be able to understand that you can't do certain things during an election campaign, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Well (e) is certainly less open to objective interpretation whereas I guess what we're saying is (d) is clearly open to interpretation and I think the items under (e), I don't think they are.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Well, I'd ask for an interpretation, for example, under 4. Let's say I was in opposition and I put out a pamphlet and . . . or my caucus assistant put together a pamphlet. And the pamphlet read, the government did such and such and such and such and such and such and therefore deserves not to be elected, or deserves to be thrown out . . .

A Member: — Or it's time for a change.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Or it's time for a change.

A Member: — We all do that.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Right. Now is that the . . . That's really a call, a request for a re-election support on the part of the opposition member. And somehow I kind of feel hey, that's fair game, that's the way our political system works. And if we can't say those things and be explicit about them, you undercut the entire political system that we're under.

Mr. D'Autremont: — You have to phrase it, Myron, it's time to throw the bums out, but you don't say vote for me.

Ms. Ronyk: — Your question is also applicable to the members' services allowance because those are the very words that are in it. So you're making those judgments now anyway. And no, I agree that I think that (e) covers what we had sort of envisaged as a reasonable description of what caucus funds were not to be used for and that (d) is too broad, too general, too vague.

The Chair: — Okay. So we'll . . . Just a minute now. What other one were we going to do here?

Ms. Ronyk: — Perhaps you need to notice also following that caucus resource directive, there's a proposed amendment to directive #10 . . . or it's a new directive 10.1 which provides the . . . makes a similar change to the funding for an independent member. Before it was an independent member got the amount that a single member attracted in funding to the caucus. And that's the same case now. It's just the new amount.

And we have now put in all the same rules for the independent member that were in place for caucus before. They really weren't the same sort of restrictions.

What we have also provided in there is that we aren't requiring the independent member to do an audit because it might cost as much as the funding that's provided. But we're asking the independent member to prepare a statement of expenses to file with the Speaker that would be . . . and return surplus funds and fixed assets when a person ceases to be an independent member, so that there's some parallel between that and caucus provisions. Because this is a larger amount now than independent members used to be entitled to.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Gwenn, I'm just wondering in terms of an independent member, would your office be able to assist a member? You know, it might be . . . I mean maybe he's got an accountant friend or he might be a bit of a bookkeeper, him or herself.

Ms. Ronyk: — We have an accountant here that could probably do the audit.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I know. I think an independent member would really appreciate having the Legislative Assembly Office available, available to them. I mean I've never been one.

Ms. Ronyk: — No, that's a . . .

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — May I ask you a question? The 21,000 . . . Now with our caucus accounts, there's also provision for severance and that, and what we have to hold back in the event of dissolution and that sort of thing. Is that built into here or not?

Ms. Ronyk: — The provisions and requirements for severance . . . for caucus obligations is built into directive 23. The funding is the same now as it was before. You're expected to retain sufficient resources from your funding to meet those obligations. There's been no change in the funding provided. Those obligations are still there to meet the . . . whatever arrangements you have with your staff. You need to be able to meet those obligations.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — I guess what I'm getting at here though is . . . I see \$21,000 so that means if an independent member were to be spending that all on an assistant, that's still under 2,000 a month, so it's still not a great salary. But would one also have to have held back three months.

Ms. Ronyk: — There's no provision for any required amount of severance. That's usually something that's arranged . . . that's agreed between the member and the employee. We don't . . . directive 23 doesn't apply to this . . . does it, Marilyn? The independent member . . . Is the independent member subject to those obligations, provisions of directive 23?

Ms. Borowski: — No, right now they're not. But presumably you would want to . . . You're saying if an independent member had to pay severance, your question is if it had to come out of this 21,000.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Okay, but are you saying that this could be gotten around by virtue of the independent saying to his staff, I'm prepared to give you this, this maximum that's allowed, but that means that in the event of dissolution there's nothing there. And if the employee and the member agree, then that covers that. Is that what you're saying.

Ms. Ronyk: — I'm not sure it's sufficient to get around labour standards.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Oh, yes. Okay. Yes, you're right. The minimum will still be labour standards.

Ms. Ronyk: — At dissolution . . . at dissolution we pay. Yes, we pay severance . . . we pay pay in lieu of notice at dissolution. But if you were to cease to be a member at any other time, for any other reason, then the member would be obligated to cover whatever arrangements were expected.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Okay, so it doesn't apply to dissolution, but it would apply to any other cessation.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Okay.

The Chair: — Okay. Anything else on that? We're going to come back to that tomorrow after we think about it. Okay, before we . . . very quickly, members, item no. 13 is strictly a decision item, a consequential amendment to directive 22.

Very quickly, members, item no. 13 is strictly a decision item, consequential amendment to directive 22. And basically what it is, the recommendation directive 22, members' accountability and disclosure be amended by substituting section 1(b), directive #3, "MLA travel expenses" with directive #3.1, "MLA travel and living expenses." Basically a very straightforward . . . (inaudible) . . . Yes.

I'll entertain . . . Mr. Hillson, so moved; seconder, Mr. Bjornerud. Mr. Hillson, Mr. Bjornerud. All those in favour of the motion? Carried. Thank you very much.

Now do you want to still continue on?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — . . . we've sort of talked about it taking longer.

Ms. Jones: — May I just ask a question? I'm okay to continue on.

The Chair: — Yes, okay.

Ms. Jones: — This isn't really on the agenda, although it relates to agenda items.

With the Legislative Assembly asking for an amount of money and taking responsibility for the hard wiring and switches and all of that, of new IT stuff, is there any . . . what would happen if you had suddenly five or more independent members. I mean is there . . . they're not a caucus by virtue of belonging to a political party. Is there any kind of . . . anything that ties us, any obligations that would run out of Legislative Assembly being responsible for the IT and caucus offices?

Perhaps I'm tilting at windmills. I'm just wondering if it can extend to a greater obligation than we ever intended.

The Chair: — You mean, if you're talking about, Ms. Jones, as far as providing services to those independent members individually, in individual offices?

Ms. Jones: — They're not a caucus, but each one of them is an independent member, right?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well from my understanding of the rules that we have in place today, and what we're proposing here, is that they would receive an amount equal to what any other member, whether they were in a caucus virtually or not, so they would receive 21,000 and all their IT expenses would have to come out of that.

But they would not have in the case of the networking of the whole building. Because if they're an independent member, they have no one to network with. There would be none of those costs available to them.

Ms. Ronyk: — We would probably provide them with the Internet access. That would be sort of parallel to what is provided to caucuses.

But you're right, Mr. D'Autremont. That's basically the way it is. The independent members do what they can with an office based on that 21,000 that they'd be entitled to over the course of

the year.

Ms. Jones: — The system. I don't know very much about computers so I'm not using the right word. But, you know, when we talked about the switches and the wiring and . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — They wouldn't need all of those connections. But what we would provide to an independent member is office space, office furniture. We'd probably give that member access to surplus equipment and furniture that's in the MLAs' surplus pool, so they might get an old computer or something without having to be a big charge on their allowance. And we of course provide their telephone, costs in the building, and so on.

So in the past, independent members have for the most . . . Maybe they had to put out a bit for a little photocopier if we didn't have a small one kicking around, although we've even provided photocopiers. I think we do that. But usually they would use the money that they were given for staff.

Mr. D'Autremont: — You have to keep in mind that you still get the same amount of money for your constituency office whether you're an independent member or not, so you could utilize some of those resources.

Ms. Jones: — Oh, for sure. No, I'm strictly talking about the wiring of the legislature and that Internet service.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I mean look, \$21,000 at 70 sitting days, if you're hiring this person as a sessional person, that's a couple of hundred dollars a day. It shouldn't be a problem managing within the 21,000. So I mean I think it's pretty flexible.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I would certainly encourage a number of independent members also at the present time.

The Chair: — Well on that note I want to thank all the board members and I want to thank the staff of Chris and Margaret and Gwenn and Marilyn and Greg for being here this evening. We've done a fair amount of work. We've got a lot to do yet tomorrow. And I would entertain a motion to adjourn and resume again at 9 tomorrow morning.

Ms. Ronyk: — Could I interrupt just one minute to make a request of the board for you to consider overnight?

You heard the auditor speaking in response to his audit observations on the board earlier today and was saying that one thing that hasn't happened yet is for the board to tell caucuses to instruct their auditors to do two things. And that's to report, the auditors to report whether the caucuses have appropriate rules and procedures in place to control and safeguard their fund — make sure it doesn't get stolen or lost or whatever. And secondly, to instruct the auditor, the caucus auditors to report whether the money was used in compliance with board directives.

Now one thing you could consider is an amendment to directive 23 that talks about the caucus audits just stating those two things; requiring caucus office to provide reports from their auditors indicating whether they have the adequate rules in place and a compliance audit.

And that would totally answer the auditor's complaints that he has.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Look, I think the caucuses are doing that internally anyway. And I mean . . . so I don't see a difficulty with it. I think if, you know, that will satisfy a concern that the auditor has, anything that we can do to develop more accountability and transparency within how the caucuses are spending that money, I think we should look at that.

If you have a recommendation for a draft of the directive, I think we should look at that tomorrow and perhaps we could put that issue to bed. Because what I think, I think that is the intent of the caucuses at any rate. So let's have a look at that too.

Ms. Jones: — In terms of reporting again, if the caucus has an auditor who reports to the Provincial Auditor who then includes that information in his report which then goes to Public Accounts Committee, I mean are we creating a chain of committees overlooking committees.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — No, I think the report should come back to the board. I mean it goes . . . I mean the caucuses report to this board, we allocate the funds. The responsibility and the critique that the auditor did was of the board's practices as it relates to the caucus operations. So the report would come back from the caucuses along with their audit report, I would assume, on an annual basis which should deal with it.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes you're right. The caucus auditors do not report to the Provincial Auditor, they report to the board.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — That's right.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So the report would be then (a) the caucuses have proper rules in place to management; and (b) they're in compliance with directive 23 or whatever the number is.

Ms. Ronyk: — It is possible to do . . . it's possible to ask your auditors to do that compliance audit now because the new directive says what you can use it for and what you shouldn't use it for and may just sort of use that as their basis for judging, if you pass the other directive. I think before it was really hard to ask an auditor to do a compliance audit because there wasn't any direction as to what the money was for.

The Chair: — I'll entertain that motion that was offered for consideration some time ago. I can't remember what it was. Oh yes, it was for adjournment — Mr. Bjornerud, until we resume at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The board adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

The board met at 9:15 a.m.

The Chair: — Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to call this meeting to order, once again renew our deliberations. We did a lot of work last evening and it's muchly appreciated.

This morning the first item on our agenda is item no. 10, review of the 2001-2002 budget for the offices of the Provincial Ombudsman and Children's Advocate.

What I'd like to do is welcome the Ombudsman and the Children's Advocate, Ms. Barbara Tomkins and Mr. Murray Knoll. I'd also like to welcome Deborah Parker-Loewen. Thank you for being here again. Glenda Cooney and Bernie Rodier, very much appreciate you being here. Would invite you to sit at the table, at the microphones.

And board members, if you will recall last year, we had both the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman sit at the ... make their presentations simultaneously or to complement one another's presentations because of sharing of accommodation and other aspects of their involvement, their offices' involvement together.

So I welcome you all here and ask you please, Ms. Tomkins, to proceed with an overview of your presentation before we open it up to questions from the board.

Ms. Tomkins: — Thank you. Good morning all. I was saying to Mr. Osika this morning, I only meet with you folks when I'm coming to ask for money and maybe we should have a party or something and just have a fun time some morning. Then we talked about maybe having the party right before the budget submission. I'm kind of intrigued with that prospect.

In any event, I am pleased to see you all and I hope we'll find more occasions to meet over the course of the year.

In terms of the offices, as I think you know, the offices of the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate have been and still are very unique in Canada and in Saskatchewan, in that we were an administratively linked pair of offices with two permanent heads, two separate programs, two separate staffs, and essentially two separate budgets; nonetheless, legislatively and administratively linked.

Amendments to our legislation that were made in the spring session of 2000 changed that so that the administrative link is removed. The substantive administrative link was a provision which said that the Ombudsman, in consultation with the Children's Advocate, was responsible for the administration in effect of both offices.

That section has been removed and we are now each responsible for the administration of our own offices. In fact, for all intents and purposes, that was the way the offices had been run. Certainly we consulted and will continue to consult. We share space. We share equipment. We do work which in some cases overlaps and we have to consult on that. But in terms of the day-to-day operation and the overall administration of the office, we generally have and certainly now do operate as separate entities.

We retain one subvote, and our budget presentations, therefore, will continue to come to you, as far as I know, in the format we have as two submissions in one document relating to one subvote. And I've briefly, we've briefly set that out in the preface to the budget submissions. I don't think there's a lot more about that that I could say.

The Ombudsman's office is charged to receive and investigate complaints from members of the public who believe they've been treated unfairly by the provincial government in the course of its administration and implementation of its programs.

We do this through primarily four mechanisms, all of which are legislated. One is by receiving and investigating public complaints. Another is by commencing and undertaking own motion investigations which are investigations that I undertake on my own motion as a result of public complaints or without there having been public complaints. We also undertake what we call alternative case resolution which is to look at alternative means, non-adversarial means to resolve disputes. And finally we undertake public education and communications work about the office.

Last year our budget allocation was one thousand ... oh I'm sorry, \$1,477,000. This year we're requesting a net increase of \$56,000; allocated \$33,000 to increased personnel costs relating to salary increases and \$23,000 relating to increased rent, and I'll detail that as I go along. The net increase to the budget then is 3.8 per cent.

The increase in personnel costs totalling \$33,000 relates to PSC (Public Service Commission) salary adjustments. We have projected those because the amounts — as far as I know unless it's happened since the submission was printed — have not been finally determined. But we have been advised by PSC that 3 per cent effective July 1, 2001 is an appropriate number to use.

We also have traditionally been allowed or required to assess the performance of our staff, the level of performance, and have been authorized to award in-range increases based on those performance appraisals. And we believe that that will continue in the upcoming year and again effective July 1, 2001. The total increases as a result of those two changes to salaries for our staff is \$33,000 and we're requesting that our budget be increased to absorb that amount.

Last year you may recall we were in a state of uncertainty regarding our accommodations in both Regina and Saskatoon. By the time we made the presentation to this board we were aware that we would have to move our Saskatoon office. Although someone said this morning it seems just yesterday we were here. When I look back on that move which is almost complete, boy it seems a long time that that's been in the works.

But the Saskatoon offices of the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate move is almost complete, and will be within the next week or so, I think. And the new space, as almost always happens with these moves, a lot of trepidation and concerns. And it appears now that we're there and we can see it, that it's quite adequate and certainly more adequate than what we had.

The Regina office, as we had hoped and suggested in our submission last year, our lease expired, space for us was tendered, and we will remain in our current space, meaning therefore that we won't have to move and there'll be no costs associated with that. However our rent has increased for both Regina and Saskatoon. The total annual increase in rental is \$23,000, and we're requesting that our budget be increased by that amount. Those two together make up the \$56,000 increase that we're requesting.

There's an unknown increase — at least unknown to us, perhaps known to you — in that another amendment to our legislation passed last spring was one which changed the manner of calculating the Ombudsman's salary. It also affects the manner of calculating the Children's Advocate salary and Deb, I'm sure, will speak to that.

The legislation had fixed my salary or at least fixed a formula for determining my salary. That provision was repealed and another substituted which said that this board would fix my salary. It said that the board could not reduce my salary, which I liked, and that any increase had to be retroactive to April 1 of this year.

I don't read the legislation as saying however that there must be an increase, simply that if there is it must be retroactive to April 1 of this year. That being the case — and unless there were decisions made last night and I don't think there were — I don't know what my salary increase, effective April 1, 2000, is.

And we therefore included in our submission a request for an allocation and when that decision is made that the amount allocated for the Ombudsman's budget be increased to include the amount of any retroactive increase in salary that I might receive because we have nothing budgeted for that.

And that I will just say briefly is the statutory expenditure and one which I think by convention, if nothing else, generally is awarded by way of increase to overall budget.

I'm going to tell you a little bit about what we've been doing. Our workload continues to grow, although it has stabilized over the last couple of years. I don't know that that's surprising. We've been around for 27 years, and I think the day it stabilizes is probably due.

When we undertake public education initiatives and outreach initiatives we see bumps, and I expect we'll continue to see bumps. We may continue to see rises. I don't know. I can't project the future. But the numbers for the year 2000 were higher than the numbers for '99, although only marginally so. For all intents and purposes they're basically the same.

Total number of complaints to the office in jurisdiction and outside jurisdiction last year was 4,307. Of those, 2,327 were against the provincial government. And I say this every year, but I'll say it again for the record: all of those complaints, even the ones that are outside our jurisdiction, matter to us. They require work by our office. We do not say to people sorry, we don't do this, call somebody else. We will take those complaints to the . . . that are not against government at least to the point of ensuring that we have someone for them to contact — a number, name, some connection to some other agency. So

they aren't simply, generally answering the phone and saying, sorry, it's not us. So those numbers do matter; they're part of our workload.

One thing which I've alluded to in the submissions, where I've been concerned for some time, that I think my office is not reaching residents of northern Saskatchewan. Or if it is, it's not offering a service or offering a service in a way that's seen generally by residents of northern Saskatchewan as useful to them.

And the reason I have wondered about this or been concerned about it was because I know a little bit about northern Saskatchewan. I know that there are numbers of people in northern Saskatchewan who are reliant on provincial government services for various pieces of their lifestyle. And I think the number of complaints we receive from northern residents is disproportionately low.

With that in mind, I happened to be discussing this with the Children's Advocate and subsequently with the Human Rights commissioner and we all shared similar concerns. We decided that we would travel to the North a little bit to tell people who we are and what we do and that we're here, but probably more importantly to hear from them what service assistance they need and to determine if there's a way that we can help to provide it within our legislated mandate as we currently work, or by maybe massaging our normal processes to make them more suitable for northern residents.

We got caught in some municipal elections. Our initial plan was to go to five communities but because of the municipal elections we changed that. We went to two; we went to Beauval and La Loche.

The response was very positive. In Beauval we had a public meeting with probably 20 people, very informal, I think very candid, around a table. In La Loche we were greeted by probably 75 or more people. We were greeted by 30 or 40 people waiting to bring complaints to the Ombudsman's office.

Thank heaven, I had an investigator with me for a different reason, but that fellow spent an entire day in an unlit room about 4 feet by 8 feet talking to complainants. In fact it was curious, the power went out and this room had no window, and the complainant to whom he was speaking just kept talking and he interviewed and took notes through the power outage for about 20 minutes.

But it's clear then to me from that visit that there is an interest in the work that our office does, that people for whatever reasons are not contacting us. Because if there are 40 waiting in La Loche, there weren't 40 from La Loche calling me over the year previous.

I'm telling you all of this sort of as a caution. We intend, over the course of this year and probably next year, to make further trips like the one we made to northern communities. We generally . . . what we did when we went, and we found it quite helpful, was we met with community groups and then we had a public meeting, an open public meeting. I think we'll probably continue a format very much like that.

I think that the more that we do this, I certainly hope the more that we do this, the more we'll find a way to mesh our work with the needs of people in northern communities and our work in those areas will increase. I think if that happens, I'm going to be talking to you again, because it's very expensive to travel in the North. It's much more expensive for us to work in the North than to work in the southern communities.

For now, we can absorb the 40 complaints we got from La Loche. We can manage them. We can manage the costs of the travel that I anticipate doing. But I caution you that if we find that the need is there and a way to meet that need, there may be . . . I may be sitting here in a future year asking for some kind of allocation for that purpose. But I'm not asking for anything this year.

In terms of own motion investigations, the major own motion investigation that we're working on right now is one that was publicly announced, and I think some of you know a little about, and that's our investigation of the conditions of custody in the four main adult correctional facilities in the province.

We undertook this investigation by assigning one investigator, with no additional support, to do the work. I optimistically thought we might be able to do it in a year to 18 months. It became apparent early on that with one person doing it, it wasn't going to be done in a year to 18 months.

It's also apparent to me that what we would benefit from greatly, not just in this area but for many things that we do and I think I've discussed this in other years, is some ability to contract research. We haven't had ever, any ability to do this. I think within our existing allocation I'm going to be able to find some money to support the own motion investigation in that manner and contract some research to assist to expedite having that done.

Our alternative case resolution process continues to evolve. I continue to be satisfied that it was a valuable addition to the office. It continues to attract interest. I gave a presentation about that work at an international conference in San Francisco last June, and curiously there's the international ombudsmen meeting was in Durban in October. I didn't go, but a number of Canadian ombudsmen did, and I guess the subject came up for discussion there. And I received long-distance phone calls and e-mails asking me to send information to Durban about what we're doing.

So while we can have great debates in our office and in Canadian ombudsmen circles about whether I should be doing this, and whether it's novel and whether it's useful, it certainly is attracting attention and continues to attract attention.

Public education, communications, we have no specific or unusual initiatives planned for the coming year. We're continuing to expand materials available about the office, ongoing communications, initiatives, and we're not requesting any additional funding to enable us to do that.

Our office administration, and I'm not going to go into detail here because you've heard this spiel every year I think since I've been here, but we've reached a point where I think we have no choice but to create a position of office administrator in our

office. We're losing the valuable investigative resources that we have through Jonie Sereda and Murray Knoll who's here with me this morning, the two deputy ombudsmen who are probably the most skilled investigators in the office who instead spend their time doing — or far too much of their time — doing office administration.

I think that within our existing allocation we can secure funds to hire somebody at least on a part-time basis to do the more, for want of a better word, mundane work — the personnel work, invoices, acquisition of supplies, those kinds of things. Even some of the work, probably most of the work of the move would have been done by an office administrator.

The Children's Advocate, for example, Bernie Rodier, is an office manager for their office. And Bernie certainly did a massive amount of work when the move in Saskatoon took place. For our office, the deputy Ombudsman and some of our staff basically did the work that was necessary for us to participate in arranging and undertaking the move, but by means of leaving her other duties or supplementing her time to do the regular duties evenings and weekends and so on.

So I'm hoping that this year we're going to find within our existing allocation money to hire, at least part-time, an office administrator. I think the benefits to the office will be far more substantial than the dollars involved would indicate.

I've given you on page 11 of our submission . . . One of the members, I believe it was Mr. Lautermilch, asked last year that we give a better comparison of previous years and a bit of a breakdown of where the allocation is. I hope that chart is the kind of information that the board was looking for. It's a breakdown based on the way the budget codes are arranged. And if you require further information, we'll probably look to Mr. Knoll for that. But I think it's reasonably clear.

And I think that's all I have to say. I don't think the proposal is complicated. The increase requested is not — certainly compared to previous years — particularly large. And I'll be pleased to answer your questions.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Ms. Tomkins. Board members?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you for your presentation. It was very interesting. I guess I have two different areas that I'd like to ask some questions in.

One is on your comments that you believe your complaints to your office are underrepresented by those in the North. I'm just wondering how you quantify that and what you base it on?

Ms. Tomkins: — We are able statistically to create from our computer records lists of each community . . . where complaints come from by community. It's not scientific, I admit that right off. I haven't got and can't create a mathematical calculation of how many people versus how many complaints, because there are so many unknown factors.

People, for example, who receive services from the government that affect their day-to-day life are far more likely to have far more complaints than someone who doesn't. So simple

numbers don't tell the story.

But I know there's a great reliance on public housing in northern communities. I know there's a reliance at least proportionate to the South on social assistance among residents of northern communities. And I don't see from northern communities those kinds of numbers.

I also know that when we do have complaints from northern communities, there's much more difficulty in communication. And unless we are very vigilant, they sometimes fall off . . . there's a danger that they can fall off the table because many of the people we deal with don't have telephones, for example. So if they call and the person they're calling in my office isn't in, they can leave no number or leave a number where they are, but by the time we phone back an hour later they're gone.

We write letters and often are dealing with . . . sometimes we're dealing with people who have difficulty communicating by letter, or for whatever reason don't respond to letters.

So I couldn't say as a fact that complaints from northern communities are underrepresented. I had a concern that they were, given what I knew. And as I say, I think when I walk into La Loche at 9 o'clock in the morning and find 40 people waiting to meet with my investigator, and I haven't had 40 people calling the office before that, I think it gives me some indication I was probably right to be concerned. But I don't know, maybe those were the only 40 and I'll never hear from anyone again.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well we visited the North with one of the committees I was on, and we had a good representation come forward in those particular issues. And to my knowledge, there hadn't been a lot of complaints in those areas previously but because we were there, they had the opportunity to express themselves, and they did.

The feeling then is that because in the North on a percentage population-wise they utilize government services directly more so than the rest of the population, that there would be potentially a greater need for your services.

Ms. Tomkins: — Certainly equivalent to the South. I think the important thing to me is that I think there may be a need for a different way of offering the service. It may be that for example — and I'm not proposing this, it's just an idea — but just as an example, it may be that the best way to offer services to northern residents, if we continue to find there's need for it, is for me to assign one of my staff to go to northern communities once every week or two weeks or a month, and hold an Ombudsman office in that community.

This is not something that we normally do, but if we find that in that manner people can get to us, we can get messages back and forth and information back and forth, it may be that kind of extra effort or change on our part is necessary to provide service in a way that the people in the North can utilize. I think it's going to be more the manner of offering service than the nature of service. But it's still all evolving in terms of learning what's needed there.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The other item I'm interested in is your

own motions. And I'd like to talk to you about that. Not so much in how you're working with it but in how . . . in context of some other things that we're looking at in the legislature — how it works in relationship . . . the relationship you have then with the legislature, with government, with opposition, with the media when you're doing own motion type of investigations.

Ms. Tomkins: — I'm sorry, was that a question?

Mr. D'Autremont: — In another committee we're looking at moving to potentially a committee structure that would have that ability. The committees would have the ability to have their own motions or their own references. And one of the concerns we have is how that committee would interact then with government, with the legislature, with opposition, and what kind of a relationship develops from that.

You're already doing that to a certain extent. I'm just wondering what kind of a relationship you're developing and how you feel it's working in relationship to the legislature, to the government, to the opposition and to the media.

Ms. Tomkins: — That's a difficult question. When I speak of own motion investigations it could be one of any number of things. I'm going to explain this first. Someone could come in and say this is my concern, this is my complaint, but for whatever reason I don't want the agency to know it's me that brought it to you.

In some cases I have to say to them, I'm sorry, I can't investigate unless they know it's you because I'm going to go talk to them about what happened to you last Tuesday when you went in their office. They're going to know it relates to you.

But in some cases their reason is good and their question is actually general. And I will say okay, you have a good reason to require confidentiality. I support that and therefore I'll open that as an own motion investigation.

From that point on though it will look like any other investigation our office does. It's simply there's no complainant's name attached to it. That's not the kind of own motion investigation I think you're referring to.

Another kind of own motion investigation that we do is where we see through, usually through, receiving numbers of complaints about the same thing or same area of a program or the same program. We say okay, we're looking at 30 complaints a year about different bits and pieces of this. Maybe we should stand back and look at it systemically and see what's happening generally and look at it in a systemic manner.

We will do that as an own motion investigation, which is fundamentally what we're doing with the correctional centre review, although for us it's a much larger investigation in terms of the extent of the work involved.

I have provisions regarding — I'm going to go backwards — regarding the media that say that I work in confidence and I disclose what I think is in the public interest to disclose.

I have traditionally disclosed relatively little to the media, certainly far less than many ombudsmen do. I have been

convinced this is the right thing to do if our primary purpose is to promote fair practices by government, that we will be more successful at doing that if we limit the amount of media exposure and give government a genuine opportunity to fix what's broken without humiliating them in the process.

With the own motion investigation on corrections, for example, however, I did announce that we were doing it, which even that is unusual for us. I thought it was in the public interest that people know this is going on. I also knew it was going to become public in any event because (a) so many people were involved; and (b) people would be calling the office with complaints about which I would then say we're already looking at that. In the course of this it's going to become public, and if it's going to become public, I thought it was in the public interest that I announce it.

In terms of working with government, we have, I think, a unique relationship with government because we have legislated powers; and I don't know about the committee you're referring to, whether they would.

We have legislative provisions which allow us access to all government personnel and all government offices. Theoretically I can walk into a government office, open the filing cabinet, take files out, and photocopy them. It's an extraordinary power. We rarely do it that way. We usually phone and say we're coming; they pull out the file and photocopy it for us a lot of times. But I can. I can subpoena people.

In addition I can do the same thing with any resident of this province. I can't enter your home; I don't have the power to do that. But I have the power to subpoena any resident of this province and to subpoena any records any resident of this province holds, including companies, private individuals, and so on.

The result of this, if it's used properly — at least in my view, which I mean as being not heavy-handed; we have twice, I think, ever subpoenaed anybody in 27 years — is that because people know you can subpoena them, they give you what you request. Because they might as well; if they don't, you'll get it anyway.

And what I think we've cultivated over many years is a pretty positive relationship with government and a basically trusting relationship with government. I don't think it's totally trusting in either direction but it is certainly fundamentally trusting. There is the odd government employee who doesn't trust us at all. And frankly, there's the odd government employee that we don't trust a whole bunch either, or at least that we will double-check some of the things that they tell us.

But what we have that I don't know that your committee has, is (a) those statutory provisions which give us some weight when we come to talk. And what we also have is 27 years of experience doing what could be adversarial work in a way which I hope is not viewed as adversarial and is instead viewed as co-operative.

In the course of the corrections review, we've done something that I don't think the office has ever done before, and that is we are involving other agencies in a consultation capacity.

As we work through issues and are considering recommendations or changes, or even considering whether things are or aren't issues, consulting with others who have expertise in the area, I don't know if the community you are referring to can do that. But if you can, I think we found it to be a very valuable addition to our work.

For us it's very complicated and probably would be for you too in terms of confidentiality stuff. And you have to be very careful how you consult and who you are consulting with. But it's been very valuable and well worth the concern that it raises.

I don't know if that answers any of your questions.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well it does, and thank you. We don't have a committee yet. We're looking at that possibility.

Ms. Tomkins: — If it's something that interests you, and it obviously is, I'd certainly be happy to come. And when you've got a more concrete picture of what this looks like, then it might be easier for us to talk about where there are similarities and where there are differences.

And the last thing I'd mentioned in relation to this, which I didn't mention when I talked about the things our office can do, the other thing that we can do, or more properly that you can do, is there are provisions whereby members of the Legislative Assembly can refer matters to our office for an investigation.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well it's something that perhaps the Rules and Procedures Committee can look at and perhaps invite you to come and make a presentation to. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes. Just, I guess, a couple of observations and comments. I first of all want to thank you for including this year the expenditure comparisons. Those are quite helpful for me in determining where we've been on this budget process and sort of where we're heading. It gives us a little bit of a road map, and so I do appreciate that breakdown.

I think I want to make some comments with respect to your work in the North and in the correction centres, and I think sort of the priorities and what I think the general public is expecting from the Ombudsman.

We've been working I think really diligently as a government in terms of opening up access to programs and improving the lot of people in northern Saskatchewan I guess for so many years, and still now we have a long way to go in terms of providing just the basic services in some of these communities. Adequate water and sewer, housing, and all of these things are really major challenges and have been for successive governments.

And when I look at the budget allocation, the North is certainly attracting much attention from many of us and I think we're becoming much more aware of the needs. And hopefully we can address some of the living conditions, you know, deficiencies in their quality of life. And so I really do appreciate your focus on the North because I think it's an area that we need to become much more aware of and we need to be a little more diligent on.

The caseload as well is something that interested me. When I

looked at your comparisons from '96 through to 2000, I think it would appear that there's sort of a flattening, to me, of your caseload, and that's a good sign.

First of all, you're focusing on public awareness and creating awareness of your role and the work that you can do and the assistance that you can give. We need to continue that. And as we do that, we can continue to flatten this caseload or even decrease it. I guess that is sort of a reflection on the kind of a job that industry is doing and government as well. So it's something that I appreciate.

And as I said, the goal's got to be decreased, the number of caseloads, which I think brings me to another observation. I understand that you have some work that you've been doing within the correctional centres and I think that's important.

But just a comment that I would like to make. I know that you have budgetary pressures and I know the work that you're doing in there is taking you a little longer than what I think you would like to see. But I think my observation would be that if there needs to be and has to be a trade-off between say people from the North, the general public would much I think appreciate a focus on northern people as opposed to work within the correctional centres.

And it may not be the right . . . it may not be appropriate, it may not be right, but I think that would be the general public's attitude towards priorities if we have to make and do priorities. And so I just wanted to share that with you.

And I also, in terms of the creation of an office administrator, would that . . . can you tell me, would that then be freeing people to deal with, say, outreach to the northern part of the province, or different parts of the province, some of the workers that are now doing administrative work? Is that what I'm understanding here?

Ms. Tomkins: — I don't know that it would result directly in northern outreach but it probably would indirectly, in this sense. The two people that are now doing the vast majority of the administrative work are Mr. Knoll beside me, and his counterpart in Saskatoon, the deputy Ombudsman, Joni Sereda. Murray and Joni became deputy ombudsmen each after being investigators in our office for many years, showing themselves to be extremely skilled investigators.

Their primary duties now therefore is they supervise the investigators, the complaints analysts, and the ACR (alternative case resolution) people. And they do all this administrative work.

What they used to be able to do was supervise — when there was much less administrative work and fewer investigators — was supervise the investigators, do the little bit of administrative work, and do investigations. And it was those senior investigators with their special skills that we could turn to for very complicated investigations, for very sensitive investigations, for urgent investigations.

Because the others were carrying routine caseloads, we could say to Murray and Joni, you don't have a caseload this large because of their more varied duties, you know, can you take this

priority thing and do it now?

If we're able to hire an office administrator and relieve Murray and Joni from doing those things, then they will have time freed up to do some investigative work. But the other thing — and now this is going to sound self-serving — but the other thing I would like to do and it certainly wouldn't be all of it, but I would reallocate some of the work between myself, the general counsel, and the two deputies, in any event.

I don't know if I should explain this but I will. Until last May I commuted from Estevan. My family lived in Estevan and I worked in Regina. Other than carrying constant guilt about this, it gives you tremendous luxury. I came to Regina on Sunday night and I was here. I didn't have to drive anyone to dancing lessons or hockey or anything else. I worked probably — and I'm not feeling sorry for myself; it's wonderful work — probably most nights until 10 or 11 at night.

Last May we moved to Regina; I can't do that any more. But over the six years that I did it, I was able to say I'll do that, I'll do that, I'll do that. I can't do it any more. There was no point in us reuniting ourselves if I'm going to spend five nights a week at the office until 10 or 11. I'll still be there some nights but I won't be there every night.

So that's part of where the additional time that Murray and Joni would have free would go, would be into reallocating some of the work at the back end or the front end, depending on how you describe it, of the office.

But all of it works down the line. We would have more resources available for investigative work and for work generally, which then means someone else has some time for you to do something else and could have more time to spend in the North. I certainly agree with you that the North should be a priority. I hope I don't have to decide between the North and other issues.

I agree with you that the public is probably not generally sympathetic to issues in correctional centres. I also know that we have hundreds of people living in correctional centres and hundreds working in correctional centres. And if we can assist the department to find ways to operate the correctional centres in manners that are more dignified, more respectful, more productive, more rehabilitative, we all benefit whether we're interested or not. And I have, as the office has — for want of a better word — a personal interest as well because we receive a huge proportion of the complaints that we receive from inmates in correctional centres.

If by looking at correctional centres and their administration broadly, and looking at principles by which they can be administered, we reduce those numbers of complaints because the issues have already been addressed and dealt with, that's more time we have to deal with people in the North and that's more time we have to deal with other issues. Plus we have the benefit of the correctional centre staff and inmates working and living in an environment which is more beneficial to all of them.

So I am genuinely convinced that the corrections' review is beneficial to corrections, to us, and to the population generally.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I just have one other question in terms of the number of complaints or the number of cases that you intake. And if you don't have the numbers today, if you could just send them along, I'd appreciate that.

But I'd like to know of the contacts that you've had, how many of those have actually gone through an investigation and a conclusion has been reached? Or how many have been dismissed because the, I guess, the complaint would appear to be or seem to be invalid by whoever is intaking the case or whoever is dealing with the case?

Ms. Tomkins: — You're asking then of the complaints that come, in a nutshell, what proportion of them are substantiated, what proportion of them have merit versus what proportion don't?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Right. And I'd also like a breakdown in terms of the numbers that come from the correctional institutes versus other areas.

Ms. Tomkins: — Okay. That information is in our annual report. I can get you that.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — The reason I'm asking is I come from a penal community, as you will know, and my phone is generally pretty busy at Christmastime, holidays. And I understand that. I mean, you know, it's just that it's a natural thing that someone who's incarcerated will try to reach out and try and gain contact with the family. But I'm just really curious to know what percentage of your caseload would come from the correctional centres.

Ms. Tomkins: — Okay. I have those numbers in the annual report. Do you want me to read them to you now or do you want me to . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — No. I think if you just send it along for me, it would be fine.

Ms. Tomkins: — I could put something more coherent together and send it along to you. I'll do that. I'll put something more organized together and send it along to you.

But I'd like to make one last comment about the interrelationship between the northern issues and the inmate issues. One of the big issues in the correctional centre is just the number of people from northern communities who are serving in Regina correctional centres where they are not familiar with the community, know no people, don't know the resources.

There's a huge relationship in certain respects between the northern issues and the corrections issue . . . or not huge, but large.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And I think it's . . .

Ms. Tomkins: — There's a connection there. They're related.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You know the level of poverty in the North and the lack of services and the living conditions are in no small way resulted in the number of people who are in these correctional centres. So the goal — in terms of what

you're doing and what we are doing as a government — has to be to eliminate poverty, to I guess create a better quality of life for a lot of northern people and others. There's inner-city problems as well. And to be able to move on those issues, I think would have a major impact over a period of time in terms of the number of people who are incarcerated.

Ms. Tomkins: — Maybe as we get further into this travelling in the North and getting a better sense of what's waiting for us up there, it may be that there will be an opportunity for our office and some government offices to work collaboratively in some respects — obviously for different purposes, but the same goals.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Can I ask you if you interact with Mr. Goulet's department, the Northern Affairs portfolio? Is there any interaction in terms of what you're finding, you know, or with other government departments?

Ms. Tomkins: — Not yet. We went . . . it was the first week of November we went north. We being myself, the Children's Advocate, and the Human Rights commissioner. We advised the minister and other interested ministers, members from northern communities, that we were doing this.

We haven't met with Mr. Belanger, for example, since we've been back. But I certainly do expect that as we develop more familiarity with the kinds of issues and difficulties there are there, that there will be that kind of consultation, especially because for us this is what . . . again what I was referring to when I talked about the way we . . . the service we offer and the way we offer it.

In a really narrow sense — and I'm being very narrow — you phone, you say, I'm not happy, I was refused participation in this program. We look at it and say: gee it looks to us like you should have been eligible and we recommend that they reconsider and make the person eligible and the department does. That's a very narrow sense of what we do.

When we look at northern issues, we're looking at much broader things. As you've alluded, we're talking about housing and sewers and so on. It generally isn't something I'm going to . . . It's a waste of my breath to write a letter saying I recommend you build more houses in the North; I mean everybody knows this.

So what I will likely do is try and find something more creative to do than recommend that you build more houses in the North, which probably would involve sitting down with people from the department and maybe from the minister's office and talk about what can be done.

And more of — as an Ombudsman I have to use this word very carefully because there are differences here — but more of an almost advocacy kind of role, which isn't something ombudsmen traditionally do. And when we do that, we will have to be involved with government departments and ministers.

And we have . . . You may be familiar with occasions when we've done things like that on other issues.

A Member: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. Anything else? Well I thank you for that.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Chairman, Ms. Tomkins. I just want to follow up on some of the comments that were made by Mr. Lautermilch.

Because while I believe that the role of the Ombudsman is very important because you have the . . . any member of the public should have sort of a right of final recourse as a sense because . . . something where you wouldn't want to necessarily take things to courts or an individual might not want to take it to courts; an individual has already gone to the departments involved and maybe gone to the politicians that he or she knows and has been referred to. So it's an important . . . important to have that, this role of Ombudsman, ombudsperson.

But the objective for anybody that's in administration of government would be to reduce the number of . . . you, know, to act in a fashion to be able to reduce the number of complaints. So I think Mr. Lautermilch's question about, you know, how many of the complaints are substantive, is there any trend line there in terms of reducing the number of substantive complaints, and is significant?

And also I want to find out whether you're able to identify sort of systemic things that . . . where you get repeated complaints. And whether in these cases, you know, are you able to say that as a result of your investigations and as a result of your comments, that there has been response on the part of either individuals or policy that has worked so that these complaints in the future were reduced. Or is there something that maybe we should be doing so that we can effect really a reduction in the number of systemic complaints — I'm using that word systemic just to sort of define that area — recurring complaints in an area that maybe you feel, hey, there's something here that has not been taken care of.

Ms. Tomkins: — I'll try and take these in order. I haven't done the calculations for this year yet, but I will shortly. We are just putting together our year 2000 stats and they're not done yet. But traditionally when you look at Ombudsman's reports from anywhere in the world, any Ombudsman, there is almost always, almost complete consistency in the number of complaints substantiated and not substantiated. That's quite surprising to me.

Almost always what you'll find is about 75 to 80 per cent not substantiated; 20 to 25 per cent substantiated. I have little reason to think that I will find anything different in our numbers. And I have little reason to think that I ever will because it's all I've ever seen. It's what all ombudsmen find for some reason, and maybe the mathematicians have some theory on why that is.

In terms of trends. When I said . . . I qualify it when I say I don't expect to see any change. I actually won't be surprised if I find over time, and I think over relatively long time, that we see more substantiated complaints than we have in the past. And I'll tell you why. Because one of the things that we are doing, we have like any office sort of a flow of the way, what happens from when you come in the door. And there are a number of junctures where you could go down this road or you could go

down that road.

We have, as part of trying to manage better with less during those years and just trying to manage efficiently, been more selective in the complaints we take on and the complaints we decline. I'll give you a simple example.

Somebody phones — we were talking about corrections before, so I'll do a corrections one — somebody phones and says, I've been refused participation in some conditional release program and I think it's unfair. And we say, why do you think it's unfair? And they say, because they say I shouldn't go because I escaped twice — I'm obviously exaggerating — but I escaped twice last week, I breached my last early release program, and I've had seven disciplinary charges while I was in the centre for the last six months. And we say to him, is that true? And he says yes, all that information is true.

Even three, four, or five years ago we would have said, this fellow has a complaint and we have an obligation to investigate it. Now we say — and we've always had legislative discretion to do this — we say, even on your own complaint they haven't treated you unfairly, and we will decline to investigate that complaint.

So what we're doing is weeding out at the front end the things that are obviously unsubstantiated. And so the net result of that could be that we're going to have a higher number of substantiated complaints, but we're not spending time investigating complaints that we know when we start have no merit. And we used to do that.

The Chair: — Excuse me, board members, and ladies and gentlemen, we had . . . I hate to interrupt at this point, but we did have a scheduled break at 10 in order that members could attend some special meetings of call. So I beg your indulgence, Ms. Loewen, Ms. Deborah Parker-Loewen, to bear with us as we resume at 11 o'clock. If that is okay with everybody, I would recess until 11 o'clock. And during that time, as well, there'll be an opportunity for members to deliberate your presentation, Ms. Tomkins, as well.

So I thank you for that, and we'll probably have an opportunity for more questions later, and for your presentation, Ms. Deborah Parker-Loewen. Thank you.

The board recessed for a period of time.

The Chair: — . . . once again, kindly submit the proposal, an overview of the budget, and allow the board members to ask any questions they may have.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Thank you and good morning. It's a pleasure to see you all here, and to be here again. Our budget request was circulated so I'm not going to take a lot of time to go into the detail of it.

The Children's Advocate as you know, has duties defined in legislation, and in the submission that we provided to you, the five areas of our major activity are outlined.

We are very engaged in public education activities. In particular we've now established a provincial youth delegation of 25

young people from throughout the province who work with us to promote youth participation and public education and other activities.

We continue to be involved in individual and group advocacy work as a part of our legislated authority to receive, review, try to resolve, and investigate matters that come to our attention concerning children who receive services from provincial government departments or agencies.

And as a part of that individual advocacy work, we're also engaged in reviewing the deaths of children who have been receiving services from the Department of Social Services, either at the time of their death or in the 12 months preceding their death.

We also have in the legislation the authority to make recommendations to government related to the interests and well-being of children. And in that regard we undertake various systemic advocacy activities.

We also . . . the Act provides that the Children's Advocate has the ability to undertake research.

And clearly we also have administrative responsibilities in order to continue to operate. The organizational structure of our office is provided for you on page 16.

I just thought I'd maybe mention some of the highlights of the last year before I went into the detailed budget request. We did conclude the *Children and Youth in Care Review* during the year 2000, which was a major initiative funded in our budget.

As Ms. Tomkins has already discussed, the ombudsman and children's Act . . . The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act was amended. One amendment that affected our programming was the extension to the definition of age. The definition of age was extended to 21 for young people who are either permanent or long-term wards of the government. And this has some impact on our programming because it's an extension of the group of young people that we would be available to provide services to.

We also completed two major investigations at Kilburn Hall, and recommendations arising from those investigations have resulted in some changes to policies regarding fair and respectful treatment of youth in young offender facilities.

We hosted a round table meeting of First Nations agencies who provide child welfare services on-reserve through an agreement with the Minister of Social Services. And we're expanding our relationship with First Nations Indian child and family services agencies through those mechanisms. Our legislated authority extends to the services provided by those Indian child and family services agencies due to the nature of the relationship agreement that those First Nations agencies have with the province.

We've made presentations in the past year to various committees such as the task force on the role of public schools, the Special Committee To Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade, and others.

We hosted a Mind the Gap conference which was a gathering of 98 youth and a few adults in conjunction with the children's council, the youth delegation that I mentioned earlier, and the Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children steering committee.

And then subsequent to that we hosted a full day where these 98 young people met with — or partial day really — met with a group of adults who were in decision-making positions to discuss what young people think would improve the lives of young people in Saskatchewan. And we're in the process now of preparing a final report with some recommendations coming out of that initiative.

We've also been an active participant in a federal-provincial-territorial working group on child death reviews, which is a group of chief coroners, chief medical examiners, and children's advocates from across Canada who are examining best practices with regards to the review of child mortality.

And as Ms. Tomkins mentioned, I also travelled to northern communities with Human Rights Commissioner and the Ombudsman where you've already heard that process in detail.

In terms of our budget request for this year, we are requesting a total of \$1,118,377. This represents a 3.3 per cent increase over last year's annualized allotment or approved allotment. Thirty thousand of that increased . . . that 3.3 per cent increase is for the personnel costs which are the salary adjustments, as Ms. Tomkins also mentioned to you, as a result of applying the Public Service Commission requirements and settlements, along with the other annualized increases for our staff. And an additional \$6,000 for the expanded office space rental in Saskatoon.

Also as Ms. Tomkins mentioned, I haven't put forward a specific request with regards to any statutory expenditure that may be related to a salary change for the Children's Advocate. I mean at this point we're uncertain as to what to do with that item so we've left it.

Clearly it's the decision of this board. And then if in the event that you do decide to proceed with an increase, we would request that that either be dealt with through an amendment to this request, or if there is a budget pressure, that we may need to request it as a special warrant request.

We have some program areas that we intend to fund within our existing allocation for the year 2000 . . . 2001-2002 budget, and I've detailed those for you in the budget submission.

We have been extending the work of the advocate assistant in our office. This is a person who does primarily all of the front calls to the office, and for the past two years we have gradually been increasing the services of that person. And what we're wanting to do is consolidate that into a regularized half-time position which we could then count on that person being in our office on a regular routine.

The new files to our office — we haven't totally completed the 2000 — but the new files we opened in 2000 were 1,031 compared to 968 in '99, 898 in '98. And so we're . . . there's a continued, very gradual increase. But our view is that the new

files in our office are reasonably stable. There's a small increase each year in the last two or three years, but it hasn't been a huge jump in new files, which is a positive step, in our view.

We're also continuing to be challenged with the child death review work, and we are wanting to and intending to allocate some of our existing resources into that. We now have concluded the child death reviews from 1997 and '98 and we'll be publicly releasing a report on that in the next while. But we haven't really start . . . we've just started on the 1999 deaths, which means we're already two years behind on those death reviews.

Right now, we have one person full time allocated to that work. We have, as we are able, we've been utilizing existing funds to bring in some additional support to that work, but it's detailed work and it's quite time-consuming, as I'm sure you can speculate.

We're also planning to continue to expand our work in the North, and I continue to be alarmed by the conditions under which children are growing up and developing in northern Saskatchewan. This is an ongoing concern of our office. And as I continue to travel in the North, with the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Commissioner, but also we have travelled extensively in the North as a result of other work.

I continue to see concerns. I was just advised on Saturday . . . I was at a youth gathering and a man was there from Ile-a-la-Crosse who said they'd just done a review of the numbers of children in their health district on the west side, and 53 per cent of the population in that particular health district that this person came from are under the age of 20.

So you know it's a phenomenal growth area that's challenging our office to figure out ways, with northern people, to provide advocacy services for children and families in the North.

We also have — and we've been doing this and will continue to do this — expanded the role of the provincial youth delegation coordinator. Right now she's working about 12 hours a week in our office. And last summer we were able to use some of our existing funds to have her work close to full time for the months that she wasn't attending school in our . . . And what we think would be reasonable is that we annualize that in some systematic way so that during the time that these young people are off school, we're able to offer them reasonable employment.

And there's lots to do and a significant amount of different activities that that young person can engage in. And one of her current interests is in expanding the web site development which we presented to you last year. And I haven't put it forward as a budget item because we're hoping to do that with our existing allocation and in conjunction with these young people who would help us get a web site up and running that was user-friendly in terms of children and young people.

So with that, as Ms. Tompkins also mentioned, we've also included the budgetary expenditure comparison from the previous two years and the request that we're making this year. And in summary, we're requesting an increase of \$36,000 over the 2000-2001 approved budget, which represents a 3.3 per cent increase overall.

And I welcome your questions.

The Chair: — I thank you very much for that. Board members, the opportunity to ask questions of Ms. Deborah Parker-Loewen. Yes, Mr. Hillson.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Deborah, and I'm certainly very pleased with everything I think I hear coming out of your office. May I ask you — you told us that a lot of your work has been in the North and with the Aboriginal community — do you have any Aboriginal staff?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We have two staff right now that are self-identified as Aboriginal-Metis people. We have one person on leave who's a First Nations person and we're actively recruiting a First Nations person right now. We had an exemption from the Human Rights Commission, we've advertised, and we're just in the middle of concluding that competition at this point. And it's certainly a concern for us and we're actively working on that.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — So you've certainly identified the issue then.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Absolutely. When you consider that close to 70 per cent of children in foster care, and at least that number of children in young offender facilities are members of a First Nation or other Aboriginal persons, our office needs to clearly reflect that in some way and be respectful of that. So we're working on that in a very active way.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Deb.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Thank you for coming here today. I recognize that you're seeking your budget, so obviously there is a reason to be here. But I'd like to thank you for coming forward anyway to answer any questions that we have.

You're also I believe, and correct me if I'm wrong on this, have the ability to do your own investigations as the Ombudsman termed it, own motion investigations or research, as the case may be.

I'm just wondering, if you do that, and I believe you do, how you feel that relationship works with the Assembly, with government opposition, and with the media. The same question I asked the Ombudsman.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — The provision in the Act is somewhat different for the Ombudsman and the Children's Advocate with regards to own motion. However, under the Children's Advocate portion of the legislation, I do have the ability to investigate concerns regarding services provided to children. So we wouldn't necessarily have to have a specific individual complaint in order to investigate a matter.

So yes, we do have the ability to do what Ms. Tompkins would describe as an own motion investigation. We probably wouldn't use that terminology but it would in essence be the same function.

How do we feel that works? I would define, for example, the child youth and care review that we just concluded. Although

the request came from the Minister of Social Services for that review to be conducted, I would define that activity as something that we undertook on our own motion, if you will.

And I think at times there's a bit of, in terms of the Legislative Assembly, what's the responsibility of an independent office to the government. Because the Act is very clear that when we make findings that are adverse in interest to any party, which could include the government or the citizen, that they have the right to make representations to us, to me, prior to any final recommendations being made.

And so then when you take on a large project such as that one, it becomes a question of how you provide the fairness. So that's been a challenge for me, I think, in terms of providing fairness, while taking on a large process like that where we have actively sought participation from stakeholders.

The challenge also for me is with regards to the media, is similar to what Ms. Tomkins said. We're charged with the responsibility of maintaining confidentiality and respecting that as much as possible, and we need to do that in order to have people feel comfortable and safe bringing forward their issues.

At the same time, we're charged with a responsibility of being accountable to the Assembly and to the public in general around things that need to be changed to make the world fairer and safer and more . . . I guess I'll use fair again. So there's a balance there. It's challenging.

I don't know if that answers your question, because I think it's a thoughtful question and there isn't a really straightforward answer. We discuss those kinds of issues repeatedly because when you take on a systemic investigation or a large scale issue, not the individual ones where we're just maintaining the confidentiality of the individual, but a larger issue, there are many, many things to balance there.

And a lot of it, the legislation as I understand it, is left to the determination of the incumbent, the advocate or the Ombudsman because we share that legislation, to determine how we're going to proceed with putting that forward to the public.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. At times when you're doing an investigation such as that or some other that isn't specific to a complaint but rather a more systemic generic type of question, how do you make an evaluation as to what would be in the public's interest to know and where and what wouldn't be in the public's interest?

You know, obviously you have to maintain any privacy concerns that would be involved. You can't have anything going out that would indicate, you know, this is the individual we're talking about here.

So how do you make that evaluation, or is there any question even of making an evaluation — maybe there isn't any, I don't know — about what you would make public and what you wouldn't make public?

You know, would you go to . . . in the case of the report that you did, would you go to the government and say here's the

problem, now can you fix it or, you know, it doesn't need the light of public exposure on it. Or do you make a determination that, you know, this doesn't affect an individual in the sense of privacy, therefore the public has a right to know?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Well in principle I would think that sharing information publicly where we can would be important. So the most transparent we could be, while also respecting the privacy of individuals, would be the principle under which I think I would want our office to operate, and I hope that we do.

Would we go to the government first and say here's the problem, you fix it? Yes, we would. And I would believe that that's my responsibility to do that. And then to report on that as well; that we've made this recommendation, the government's response was such and such, that it was satisfactory or it wasn't satisfactory for these reasons.

In my last year's annual report I did that. I have had for several years grave concerns about standards of care for young people in young offender facilities. And we've had numerous correspondence, meetings, activities related to the need to have standards of care introduced in a different kind of way. And I wasn't satisfied with the response and so I summarized all of that in my annual report last year, and therefore made it very public.

At what point would I make it public? I think I would want to be as fair as possible to government and give them as many opportunities as possible to correct whatever the issue is because that's their responsibility to do that. At some point though, you know, it is a judgment.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Oh I wasn't asking it in a critical manner because we deal with the same issues, same things. You know, somebody comes forward to you with a problem; you contact the government and say here's a problem, can you fix it?

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — You're always worried about being fair to the government.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Absolutely, always, you know. Or if the government for some reason can't fix it, then it becomes a public issue, you know, and you have to make those determinations.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — I would want the process to be as transparent as possible, that anyone in the public could understand what we do, and that it was explainable and understandable and open. I have no interest in the process that we use to not be open in anyway at all. And we do a lot of work in our office that we may not report on simply because of the volume. However I think where it's important, we make every effort to report on it in some way either through our annual report or through other methods.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you and thank you for your presentation. I'm wondering if you can help me a little bit through the . . . In the budgetary expenditure comparison there's a note that says funds being reallocated from contractual services and capital

assets into personnel expenditures, see section F. And when I go to section F, I note that you want to increase the — to full-time — the provincial youth delegation coordinator position. And the rest of what I see that talks about additional resources being directed or redirected all refers to programming — northern programming, various research projects.

Are you planning on increasing the personnel of the Children's Advocate office or are you planning on using contracting again as it states, like in 2001 under 2 — research, in 2001-2002 funds will be used to conduct or contract various research projects?

So I'm wondering, I mean in this reallocation I know it's the same dollars, but I'm wondering if it's the intent of the office to increase your staff complement other than by increasing the part-time to the full-time youth coordinator position. And if not, why move it from contractual to personnel? That would be a beginning point of my question.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — The first question: are we planning to increase our personnel? The advocate assistant that we have, we have one advocate assistant right now who's a permanent, full-time employee. And we have another person who works with us on a part-time basis, on a casual basis right now and so she is technically on our staff. However we would want to convert that person's role from casual to part-time.

So yes, we're wanting to increase the personnel in that way; however, it would be an extension of what we're currently doing. It would be adding additional hours in a more regularized way. It may not actually increase her hours of work because of the way she's been working on an on-call basis to some extent up until now.

In terms of the research, the Act, The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act says that we may, the Children's Advocate may conduct or contract research and we have on occasion conducted the research with our existing staff, or hired people on temporary or part-time basis into our staff complement, and we've also contracted with specific researchers from time to time on a specific issue or topic. The child, youth, and care review is an example. We contracted with a researcher to do the data analysis on that project.

With regards to the northern development project, at this time I think we're not certain what we're going to do with that. If we're able to hire a First Nation advocate to work with our office, we may reallocate our work in some way, and then fill some of the other advocacy demands with other part-time or temporary employees. So it's a bit fluid around that piece.

The child death work, though, is one piece where we do need some additional assistance and at this time I think we're proposing to hire a part-time advocate to work with us in dealing with some of the backlog that's developed around those child death files.

What we would do in a long-term sense I think will depend on how well we're able to deal with the backlog; and whether over time we're going to require that, or whether once we get more caught up, our existing staff will be able to handle that.

So it's a bit . . . We're trying to juggle, with those staffing dollars, a variety of different activities.

The second part of your question, I think, was why are we moving the contractual funds from code 2 into code 1. Is that . . . Am I interpreting the question properly?

Ms. Jones: — Contractual funds to personnel funds.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Right. The contractual services to personnel services. A bulk of those contractual services from last year's dollars went towards the renovation and move that we just concluded, and so we would be moving those more into programming dollars, rather than into those other contractual services dollars.

Ms. Jones: — And programming dollars come out of your personnel services code or category in your budget.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Well in an office . . .

Ms. Jones: — It's just a little . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Yes. In an office like ours, most of the work is — and the bulk of the dollars — are in personnel because it's people that do that work. And we don't have a lot of other programming dollars that we would engage in. Contractual services in '99-2000, a bulk of that had to do with the child and youth in care review which we primarily contracted to do that work. And so what we're looking at is there would continue to be contractual services. I think I can do a bit of a breakdown of that for what we're proposing.

In 2000-2001 there were still contractual services for the child and youth in care review and for the renovations, as I mentioned. Plus we had a transfer of accommodation funding from the Ombudsman's budget of \$30,000 which . . . We discussed that at last year's board meeting, that we were going to do that fund transfer. So that's how some of that piece was accounted for.

I'm not sure I'm answering your question.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — On that point, do you sometimes receive assistance and support services from departments of government? Say Social Services or Justice?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — No.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — You don't.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We would maintain our independence with regards to that. We have had some assistance from various departments from time to time. Like when we did the child and youth in care review, two individuals from the Department of Justice mediation services assisted us in facilitating our initial panel meetings. We had people from a variety of sectors with sort of competing interests come together and we were seeking the services of skilled mediators. And Justice has persons to do that work.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — . . . Social Services would clearly have information and data and statistics.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — They would provide that to us on request but we wouldn't transfer funds, if that's what you mean.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — No, no, I didn't mean that. I just meant that you can access services of departments where . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Yes, and they're very helpful if we're needing various pieces of information that come from them. They would provide that to us. However we would take their information and information from other sources, and then we would deal with that in a way that we thought needed to be dealt with, with regards to whatever the issue was at hand.

Am I answering your question?

Ms. Jones: — I think really all I was trying to get at is if we're going to be increasing the full-time or permanent personnel of the office, and budget funds have been moved from this department to that department to accommodate that increase, then the new budgets begin to be calculated, you know, based on the old budget for personnel. So your increasing costs have built-in automatic factors as a result of public service things and that type of thing.

So I was really trying to determine if reallocating it from contractual services which are not automatically increased from one year over the next, was going to have a built-in effect on future budgets. That's basically the gist of my questioning was to find out if now this new figure of 808,741 would have a built-in escalator every time you come.

And I think that's a concern because certainly when things are allocated to personnel, there becomes an expectation that they will index in accordance with other factors.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — The 30,000 in personnel costs that we're requesting this year that is related to the Public Service Commission recommended increases is based on the permanent positions in our office, with the exception of \$1,400 for casual staff. So there is some . . . there is \$1,400 built in which would be linked to what you're referring to based on the casual employee that we have who would also be entitled to increments based on the amount of time that she's worked in the office.

Ms. Jones: — So this personnel cost then isn't anticipated to be a new permanent personnel cost. It's just being reallocated at this point.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — That's right.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you.

The Chair: — Anything else from the board members? If not, I'd like to make a suggestion here that in order for the board to have an opportunity to have some in camera discussions with respect to the two presentations, we would do that for a period of time; and maybe at the same time ask the board members, the lunch is here, and invite those guests that are here with us today as well to participate with us upon the return after the deliberations, if you'd care to do that. Unless there are some other suggestions that anyone may have.

It was just brought to my attention that there has not been any question raised with respect to the special warrants that have been requested. Are there any questions about that?

I might point out — and this might be an opportune time to point out — that the task force that was gathered to review the matter of salaries has not completed their report or their inquiry. And that report will likely not be submitted until later on and perhaps even during session. So it may need to be discussed at a future board meeting.

So there may not be any need for any further discussion at this time unless Ms. Tomkins or yourself, Ms. Parker-Loewen, wish to make any comments in that regard.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Well I would just say that the special warrant request that I submitted included \$18,000 request for relocation expenses and we would not . . . we now know for sure that we will not be hiring a person in this fiscal year who would require relocation.

At the time that the special warrants were requested, we were uncertain about that and so we decided to make that request in the event that we needed to relocate someone. But we know now that we don't require that, so that request . . . I would submit that that request could be withdrawn.

The Chair: — Okay, that's the 18,000 then? The \$18,000 amount?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Yes.

The Chair: — It's rescinded. Okay.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Ms. Parker-Loewen, does your request for budget in the budget request for the coming fiscal year, does it include room for wage increases for all your staff, including yourself?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Not including myself, no.

Mr. Kowalsky: — So if we were to indicate . . . If you were to get a raise of some sort in the next year, it would be over and above or would you be able to take it out of that budget part — out of your existing budget request?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We didn't include it in this budget request because we weren't certain what we should do with that. Neither of us — I don't want to speak for Ms. Tomkins — but neither of us did.

Ms. Tomkins: — We also have included nothing in the projected budget for salary increase in my position. My staff's projected salary increases are all included in the budget proposal.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — So you're opposed to a salary increase, the two of you.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — It's your decision.

Ms. Tomkins: — That's your call, not ours.

And I would say I don't know that we need to speak to it. I think the special warrant requests from both of us in that regard are clear. The thing is I hope somebody, when you do deliberate it, if there is an increase awarded, I hope somebody will remember to nudge someone and change that number for us because we have allocated nothing for that salary increase if there is one.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, I apologize. I was interrupted and I missed your response to the reallocation funds, the 18,000. What were those for?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We thought we might be able to recruit to the vacancy we have permanently. We have persons against that vacancy right now, but we thought we might be able to recruit permanently. It looked like we might need to relocate someone and there's an entitlement around relocation and we wouldn't have had those funds.

But we now know for sure that the individuals that we're considering, neither of them would be available before April 1.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So that item then is not . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We no longer would require it in this fiscal year.

The Chair: — So that's withdrawn. Okay. All right. Then if it's okay we'll go in camera for some deliberation, fast lunch, and then . . . you ladies and gentlemen are welcome to come back and join us for lunch afterwards.

The board continued in camera.

The Chair: — Thank you, I'll call the meeting back to order. We have discussed the presentations, budget presentations, by both the Ombudsman and the Children's Advocate. Unless there are any other questions from board members, I will entertain motions to accept the budgets as proposed.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Just with respect to the budgets, the allocations, the incremental allocations are for the most part due to the collective bargaining process and space allocation, and so I have no difficulty with the requests on both of the budgets.

But with respect to the special warrants, as the issues are still outstanding and we're waiting for a report from the committee, I would make a suggestion that — or in motion form — that we stand those requests at this time and deal with them at such time as we know what the requirements will be.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you. No other comments? I will then . . . Are you saying then that you're going to move the motion with respect to the budget for the Ombudsman and the Children's Advocate?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes.

The Chair: — I need a seconder. Mr. D'Autremont. The motion will read, moved by Mr. Lautermilch and seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the 2001-2002 estimates of the Provincial

Ombudsman be approved in the amount of \$1,533,000 and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

All those in favour?

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Well I think it should just be clear though that the additional, the additional requests are deferred rather than rejected.

A Member: — That's a separate motion?

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — That's a separate motion.

The Chair: — That'll be subject to a separate motion.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Very good; okay, pardon me.

The Chair: — Okay. All those in favour of the motion? Carried. Thank you.

The next motion, moved by Mr. Lautermilch and seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the 2001-2002 estimates of the Children's Advocate be approved in the amount of \$1,118,377, and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Any discussion? All those in favour? Carried.

Now I'll entertain the motion to stand the request for the special warrants.

Ms. Ronyk: — I'll just make a comment before you do that. Marilyn isn't here or I would check the issue with her. But my understanding — oh, there she is — my understanding is that because of accrual accounting, if the board does in due time approve the retro salary change back to April 1 of 2000, that has to be charged to the old fiscal year.

We were sort of not assuming that the board would meet again until the House sits, and then it will be too late to do a special warrant for the old fiscal year because that has to be ready to go into the estimates to the House along with the new fiscal year's estimates. So that's why we had recommended to those two offices to submit some number to cover any potential retro salary for this old fiscal year.

If it isn't, if the board doesn't approve . . . if it isn't recommended or the board doesn't approve a salary increase, the funds just lapse and go back to their General Revenue Fund. They're only as a precaution.

If the board wishes to hold on that, then I would ask the task force to try to be ready to report sooner, and perhaps we would need to have a quick board meeting then.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You know, and it may be, Mr. Chairman, that the board would ask the increase to be absorbed within your existing budget. I don't know that. But I think we could deal with that at the appropriate time. But I would be a little hesitant to vote on a number . . . to presume a number not

knowing what that might be. I would be much more comfortable dealing with that at some point down the road when we have an idea of what that amount might be.

Mr. D'Autremont: — If the task force can report in a timely manner prior to the end of the fiscal year, there should be no reason why we can't have a meeting prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Thank you for that.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Chair, do we have permission to meet by telephone conference or not?

The Chair: — I don't think it's been done in the past.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I don't think we've ever done it. We aren't . . . there's no legislation that would . . .

The Chair: — I believe we could on an issue that's been previously discussed and merely awaiting a recommendation. I guess it has been done at least once in the past.

Ms. Ronyk: — I'm also informed that if the board doesn't make the decision until the new fiscal year, then it can be paid out of the new fiscal year. It just may require a special warrant consideration down the road if it can't be absorbed.

The Chair: — Okay, so we still require a motion to stand this request until the task force has had an opportunity to respond on their findings with respect to the remuneration.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I move that.

The Chair: — Okay. Seconded by Mr. D'Autremont. Okay. Any further discussion on that? If not, all those in favour? Carried.

I want to thank the ladies and gentlemen from the Ombudsman's office, the Ombudsman, and the Children's Advocate office for being here with us and being patient with us. I hope you enjoyed lunch. We enjoyed having lunch with you. Thank you.

Our next agenda item is the review of the budget 2001-2002 for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. And I would like to sincerely welcome here, Ms. Jan Baker, our CEO (chief executive officer) and ask Ms. Baker to make a presentation, an overview of her budget request, her budget submission, and then allow the members of the board to perhaps obtain some clarification.

Ms. Baker: — Good afternoon. I'll say thank you for having me join you for lunch. I'm pleased to be here today on behalf of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. The direct . . . as the office's budget submission was previously submitted, I will take this opportunity to provide you a brief overview of Elections Saskatchewan, its mandate and background as to the office's 2001-2002 expenditure estimates.

The direction of Election Saskatchewan is guided by the desire

to advance the democratic process through the effective and efficient administration of elections. The principal mandate of the office is to inform and enable qualified electors and candidates to exercise their democratic right and ensure their constitutional entitlement as entrenched in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The office enables eligible electors to vote by ensuring fairness, impartiality, and compliance with the Act and by ensuring that the voting process is familiar to all voters. Assistance is given to political parties, candidates, chief official agents, and business managers to aid in complying with the Act, both in relation to electoral conduct as well as the annual financial reporting.

The environment within which the Chief Electoral Officer is accountable is complex and unique due to the uncertainty as to election timing, decentralized election administration, and the interaction between political parties, candidates, and members of the provincial electorate. The integration of this decentralized function rests with the office of centralized managerial direction and fair and impartial application of the province's electoral statutes.

The Chief Electoral office is responsible for maintaining a state of election readiness at all times. In this regard, the office appoints provincial constituency returning officers and other election clerks necessary to ensure readiness throughout the government of the day's mandate.

Also the office prepares electoral guides and conducts workshops throughout the province with both registered political parties and candidates and election officials to ensure effective execution of electoral events and compliance under the Act.

The office is also responsible for assessment and, where applicable, reimbursement of all election expenses paid from the province's Consolidated Fund. In this regard, the office has established a system of financial review to certify public reimbursement of election expenses through the review of disclosure and expense returns of political parties and candidates.

The office has developed and disseminated financial reporting guidelines to political parties and candidates which outline transparency and disclosure requirements prescribed under the Act. To promote transparency, the reports are published to ensure accountability through accurate and thorough reporting, ensuring compliance with the Act's heightened financial disclosure requirements.

The Chief Electoral Officer is also responsible for determining what constitutes an offence under the Act. While the Act is regulatory rather than criminal, the role of the office is to inspect, investigate, and inquire, as deemed necessary by the Chief Electoral Officer where potential contravention of the Act is suspected.

This consideration, which is primarily complaint based, is by its nature a matter of considerable discretion of the office. It is incumbent upon the office to carefully consider cases to determine whether specific facts abrogate the overall purpose,

policy, rationale, and intent of the province's electoral legislation.

The office also maintains a public relations program to ensure political parties and the public are aware of important aspects of the Act by producing and distributing information, materials, answering public inquiries, and liaising with the political parties, candidates, and their officials.

Finally, the Chief Electoral Officer, commencing January 1, 2001, is responsible for administering the province's political contribution tax credit disclosure regime under the provincial tax credit Act.

As with previous budget submissions, the expenditure estimates are presented in accordance with the office's function in base year and non-base-year format. Specifically, the base year estimates comprise expenditure forecasts associated with the office's annual operational activities, including proposed new initiatives and implementation and maintenance of the political tax credit system.

The non-base-year estimates include potential, annual, electoral related activities specific to a general election, constituency by-election, non-writ period enumeration, referendum or plebiscite, or time vote.

If in fact the province were to experience one or more of the non-base-year electoral activities, their associated expenditures would have to be included with the office's base-year estimates in order to achieve an accurate expenditure picture for 2001-02 fiscal period.

In addition to the office's 2001-02 budgetary estimates, the office is pleased to provide the committee with detailed estimate and actual expenditure figures for the fiscal year 1999-2000. Specific itemization includes operational, general election, and three constituency by-elections.

That said, I'd be pleased to answer any specific questions regarding the related expenditure figures before you today. Thank you.

The Chair: — Well, thank you very much for that, Ms. Baker.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Yes. The federal government has switched to the permanent voters list and I want to know if we have done any preliminary work on the issue of whether we ought to be linking up with the permanent voters' list as opposed to doing an enumeration. And I also understand that this would involve adopting the poll boundaries of the federal government. And our poll boundaries are different. I think that one uses the back alley and one uses the street, isn't it, to decide where to divide the polls?

But in any event, I should like to know from you, if you are looking at the issue of linking up with the federal voting list as opposed to enumeration for each election.

Ms. Baker: — As you may or may not be familiar, The Election Act, 1996 makes provision for electronic capture and sharing initiatives. However, at present, it also identifies that the province continue to do hard enumerations, with the one

exception that the enumerations — with the notion of establishing a database of voter information — that enumerations be conducted outside of the writ period or of any given writ period.

Certainly there has not been any steps taken towards adopting the national registry. I think there are some issues that I am aware of, and there may be others, that would certainly have to be taken into consideration.

I believe there's a need to assess, from Saskatchewan's perspective, and that would necessarily . . . primarily focus on legislative concerns, our voter data collected using postal code and, as Elections Canada is land base, where you collect your mail is not necessarily where your ordinary residence is located.

Criteria for establishing constituencies differs, as you had mentioned. Certainly community of interest when establishing the polling divisions to accommodate the electorate, is not normally identified as maxing out at 250 to 300 electors. In a lot of communities in Saskatchewan, due to population, we have polls as low as 90 to 100 people.

Elections Canada, on the other hand, their polls are pretty much standard at 400, which, from a Saskatchewan perspective, we're looking at electors travelling 35 to 40 miles to get to a polling location.

The other . . . there is positives particular to adoption of a registry. We would certainly, given . . . over time, I believe it could be cost-effective.

However I think initial consideration has to be harmonizing federal requirements. Our voting requirements differ from that of the federal electoral statute. We have a six-month residency requirement in Saskatchewan.

At the present time, in addition to, one has to give consideration to the maintenance schedule for the permanent registry and it may not knit particularly well with the Saskatchewan electoral events.

And as I said, I think that cost-effective here is something when electronic endeavours, sharing initiatives are undertaken, we may never accomplish.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Well I would like to say that I'm sure it's not as simple as at first blush it might seem. Nonetheless if we're moving to permanent voters' lists in this country, I just refuse to believe that the problems are insurmountable. And of course, Ontario's done it. That's my understanding; you know, they have harmonized.

And to have two permanent . . . to end up with two permanent voters' lists in this province strikes me as pretty antiquarian. And I just can't see that the problems are insuperable. And I do hope that we keep our minds and eyes open to that possibility, as apparently, you know, our system is moving away from enumeration in preparation for an election to a permanent registry, a permanent voters' list.

I just can't . . . I don't think most taxpayers would understand why we have to do it twice rather than once.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any other questions?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. I was interested also in Mr. Hillson's comments because one of my notes was, you know, are we working with the federal enumeration at all.

I guess the thing in Ontario was they have basically the same number of federal ridings as they have provincial ridings, so they can easily have co-terminous boundaries. And I don't know if that's the case or not but, you know, it would be possible for them to do that. Whereas we're certainly a lot different than that.

I don't think anybody in the province is too interested in having 14 MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) other than perhaps some of the taxpayers, and they would receive the same kind of representation as they receive federally under that circumstance where you would never, ever see your politician. And some people may like that.

But there were a number of problems during the 1999 enumeration. And I'm wondering what you have been able to do since that time to deal with some of those problems so that they would not reoccur in the next election.

Ms. Baker: — Could you elaborate?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well there was communities where the enumerations were not done properly. Situations where buildings, entire apartment buildings were missed — that type of thing. Have you looked at some manner or means by which to correct those situations to try and ensure that it doesn't happen the next time?

Ms. Baker: — At this point, certainly immediately post-election considerations, we do an evaluation. At this point I had not done, across the province, an evaluation of the enumeration. My data had been shared with Elections Canada for purposes of updating in preparation of a federal election and the feedback was relatively positive.

However I believe, particular to the concerns that you have, that the emphasis needs to be put on my office's ability to inform, work with the constituency returning officers who in turn hire the 10,000 election officials, 3,000 of which are enumerators who reach out to the electorate to ensure that they're not disenfranchised.

So certainly on a going forward basis, the office's intent is to put more emphasis on training to our constituency returning officers.

Mr. D'Autremont: — What access do the enumerators have to previous voters lists? Do they have those to be consulted or are they operating more or less in the cold on these issues?

Ms. Baker: — Our preference is that our enumerators do not rely at all on previous voter data, particular towards the notion of a permanent voter registry. The emphasis has been put on a door-to-door enumeration to ensure that we have the province covered.

Previously under the old electoral law, many of our

constituencies, our rural constituencies, were relying on lists from municipal offices, etc. We have suggested that those endeavours not be undertaken, that indeed whether it be a rural or urban constituency, that we knock on every door and get every electorate . . . elector that we possibly can.

There is a provision in the electoral law that if an individual is not enumerated they are not disenfranchised in Saskatchewan nor do they have to provide pieces of identification upon entering a polling station. They are only required to complete a declaration that they are indeed an eligible elector of the polling division and constituency in which they have attended, and they are given the opportunity to vote.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I know in one particular case in my own constituency I think the enumerator relied on the municipal records, which was not the right thing to do because obviously you have renters — they're not property owners so they're not listed — and the renters in buildings or people had passed away, etc., or new people had moved in and they were simply not counted. Because the only effort made by that particular enumerator was to go to the municipal lists which was inappropriate.

Ms. Baker: — And that certainly is a concern, particular to again going back to the notion of establishing a permanent voter registry. Since 1991 — so it would be '91, '95, and '99 — we have encouraged our constituency returning officers to encourage the enumerators and have provided enhanced remuneration for these individuals to go door to door in the rural communities.

However you are also aware that a writ of election in Saskatchewan is maximum 34 days, minimum 28. The first 10 days of a writ period is enumeration. The election administration doesn't activate until a writ of election is issued.

Usually — and there are preparations taking place prior to a writ being issued — but usually the first two days of that 10-day enumeration period is used in training enumerators and getting them on the street. So oftentimes we have individuals who are hurried to complete the list in order to provide them to the political organizations for purposes of campaigning.

So a short writ is indeed a handicap when you are doing a hard enumeration door to door in a province that has approximately 34 of 58 constituencies rural.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, recognizing the difficulties, certainly.

On page 5 of your report, I see you report at the bottom of the page under political contributions, tax credits, a request for \$10,000. What has . . . what have your office done in that direction up till this date?

Ms. Baker: — To date the proposed political tax credit Act . . . what has been identified to the office is that the office would be responsible for administration and maintenance, that being the annual reporting requirements of the political organizations and the design and presentation of form. The official receipts that would be issued by the organizations, political parties, would be provided and the costs would be absorbed by my office.

In addition, as I said, in addition to guidelines, official receipts, reporting forms, to date I do not have enough information particular to this proposed legislation to provide you any more in-depth information. But because it is potentially going to be retroactive to January 1, 2001, the office felt it necessary to put a minimum of \$10,000 in to accommodate whatever expense there be to accommodate the political organizations.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you. Like my esteemed colleague, Mr. Hillson, I too have an interest in seeing a more permanent enumeration list available.

What has your office been doing to put the voters' lists on electronic data and making that available to the various constituencies? Is there any work in that direction?

Ms. Baker: — Well certainly under the electoral law, voter data is available to the political parties and anyone who is participating in an electoral campaign. In 1999 the office did not have the ability to establish a voter program which would provide candidates in the constituencies at the time of election what we refer to as a comma delimited file of information.

What was implemented to get electronic capture off the ground was a word processing application. It was distributed to the candidates across the province. Those who had software to manipulate the data were able to use it extensively. Those who did not had to rely again on another election on hard copy.

Following the election, all of the voter data was brought into the province and a firm was hired to clean the data and prepare the data by constituency in comma delimited format. It was distributed to the political organizations and to . . . on request to any sitting MLA.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Those were my questions.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any other questions? If not, I will entertain a motion by the board with respect to the budget submitted by the Chief Electoral Officer, unless the board wishes to have further discussion in camera. No.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Moved.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont, that the 2001-2002 estimates of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer be approved in the amount of . . . is that the 709,000? Is that the base here that you were talking about? Yes, okay — \$709,279. And that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair. No? Pardon me.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — 729.

The Chair: — 729. Did I say 49? I'm sorry.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You said 279.

The Chair: — 709,279?

Ms. Baker: — 709,729.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — That's right.

Ms. Baker: — It's 709,279.

The Chair: — The one with the star beside it.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — May I just offer the observation, Mr. Chairman, that all expenditures are obviously at the mercy of unforeseen developments but probably yours more than anybody else's.

The Chair: — Board members, you have heard the motion. All those in favour? Carried. Thank you.

Okay. Thank you very much, Ms. Baker. Oh, okay. We may have to make an adjustment to what we just talked about.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Maybe we should give this office the power to decide when there will be by-elections and general elections and that way there will be more certainty in the budgeting process.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — My number with the new initiatives is 709,729.

The Chair: — Okay. I think we have the correct number.

Ms. Baker: — It would be I believe that the total expenditure estimates bolded at 709,279 is inaccurate. That the total is 709,729 as depicted in the estimate. I apologize. I didn't realize that there was a discrepancy.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Let the record show I was right.

The Chair: — Is it the wishes of the board that the previous motion be struck off the records? Absolutely.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well I was moving, actually 709,729 and I stick by that.

The Chair: — And I apologize for not paying more closer attention to the mover. I will reread the motion.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And I will listen in here.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Lautermilch and seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the 2001-2002 estimates of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer be approved in the amount of \$709,729, and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

All those in favour? Carried. Thank you.

Ms. Jones: — And not a penny more.

The Chair: — Thank you, very much, Ms. Baker.

Board members, what I'd like to do at this point in time, we had anticipated perhaps having a demonstration last evening for our multimedia streaming of Chamber proceedings over the Internet.

And I'd like to invite our guests, that will be making a

presentation here in just a little while, to sit in and watch something that's new and innovative that we will be implementing hopefully within the Legislative Chambers. And I would like to invite Greg Putz and Guy Barnabe and Jeremy Phillips, our key technology people, and Mr. Gary Ward, from broadcast services who's here as well.

I see all this equipment that's here and I'm not sure which technician you need to operate it, so I thought I'd introduce all the technicians that are here. And Kerry Bond as well, who's here as a support person as well.

So if you'd bear with us, we'll just go through a little demonstration on what all this new process is all about.

Mr. Putz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What they're going to do is, as we discussed last evening, give you a demonstration of what we can do now in the B-budget proposal that were deliberated on last evening. And they're going to show it to you in the three formats.

What won't be in this demonstration is just the plain audio which, if this is approved, we'll also be offering so that somebody can listen like they would on a radio to just the audio of the legislative proceedings.

If the board would like to take a couple of extra minutes they could also demonstrate, just very briefly for you, a sampling of the digital audio. That was the project the board approved last year for our *Hansard*.

We're using digital audio for last week's Rules Committee and the board meeting this week to do our transcription. And if the board would like to take a couple of extra moments we can give you a demonstration of how that sounds and how that works. With that I'll turn it over to Guy.

Mr. Barnabe: — Thanks, Greg. What we have here is a prototype web site that we put together to try to give you an idea what this could look like. And we have a typical Internet user, Jeremy Phillips, who's come home after a long day at work and it's June 12, last summer, and he understands there is some discussion of surface rights going on in the Chamber and he'd like to hear what that's all about.

So he's logged into the Internet and he's presented with this web page that has a choice of three options to view the proceedings in the Chamber. And the reason there is three is that depending on the speed at which he is connected to the Internet dictates how much information we can send down that connection to him.

So the low quality would be the typical home modem where you dial into some Internet provider; the medium quality would be if you had a higher speed, slightly higher speed, maybe more expensive modem; and, of course, a cable or high-speed Sympatico service would be, of course, the ultimate.

So we'll go through a demonstration of each one here. And you'll see the differences in qualities of the transmission. These are all about 30 seconds in length.

Now we'll move onto the medium quality and you'll see, I

think, an automatic improvement in both the size of the image and the quality of the sound. And of course, if you happen to have a cable or high-speed modem at home . . . And that's it.

In each of these cases you have the choice of when you're viewing — perhaps, Jeremy, if you want to bring up the medium quality — when you're viewing that streaming production, you can actually make this bigger. You can actually . . . Jeremy, if you want to try increasing it 200 per cent. You know, and that's all done locally on your PC (personal computer) so you have the choice of making that larger. Okay.

The other thing to note is this is all software that comes with Windows, so whoever wants to participate, they don't need to buy anything in terms of the software. So this is all out-of-the-box type stuff.

Once we have our prototype in place we're going to need to understand just how much of the bandwidth this is going to consume on our current Internet connection. These are some of the reasons we want to try this out this next year to find out. So any questions?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Maybe you should explain what bandwidth is?

Mr. Barnabe: — A bandwidth is basically the capacity of the connection we have to the Internet, and whatever it takes to transmit this across that particular connection consumes some of that bandwidth. Very much akin to comparing a single-lane gravel road to a nice divided highway, interstate highway. So of course the larger the highway, the more cars you can get down it. And so we need to understand how that's going to work into our system.

The Chair: — Thank you, Guy. Any questions?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well it certainly shows the difference between high speed and low quality and what kind of service you can get out of it. The high quality, the high-speed connection was almost like television. Not quite — there was still some hesitation there. But the low-speed modem, certainly I think a person would get tired of watching that quickly.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — I guess I didn't . . . I wanted to ask about the, you know, what if any . . . are the financial implications to us? But I mean I agree with Mr. D'Autremont that the first one especially, frankly, hurt my ears. I can't possibly imagine staying tuned to that very . . . But of course there's always the dollar issue.

Mr. Barnabe: — Yes, and as well we will endeavour to provide just audio only. Now if we offer audio only using the same amount of bandwidth as the audio and video, then you can listen to a higher quality audio-type playback.

Mr. Putz: — Mr. Hillson, I'm not sure you were here last night when the board discussed the B-budget item. This is not part of our main budget proposal; it's a B-budget item. It is something that we had in our five-year capital expenditure plan for a few years down the road.

We're just proposing to the board, if they so wish, to advance

that and we could begin with it this next coming session. And the cost of that is \$25,000 to buy the server to do the encoding to provide this to the public through our web site.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — I realize that this is not a request for right now but could you give me an idea though that whether . . . Is it a big difference between which degree of quality we went for?

Mr. Putz: — We would be offering all three. And as Guy . . .

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Okay, so it's nothing to do with us?

Mr. Putz: — No. Those three choices there are so that the person can pick what they have in their house. Some people have the basic 56 whatever it is — K modem — that would give them that low quality. And then up to the cable modem which gives them the better. Some people have subscribed to the higher, high-speed Internet services.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Okay, so it's nothing to do with us at all. It's strictly dependent on the quality of the receiving instruments.

Mr. Putz: — Right. We just wanted to offer a broader range in the service so that everybody should be capable of watching it in one format or the other.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And you may have noticed on the low quality one, while the picture itself was hesitant all the time, the audio wasn't. It carried on in a normal conversation, and the picture got lost in comparison to the timing of the words.

Mr. Barnabe: — That's correct. We can . . . in the different products that we can actually fine-tune to say make the audio sound really, really good at the expense of video, or you can say well the video to be really, really good at the expense of audio. So we thought, of course, audio is what it's all about. But these are all things we need to understand when we're, you know, when we acquire this.

Kerry wanted me to add that all these were captured from VHS (Video Home System) tape which is already degraded from the actual production. So we'll be capturing this directly from broadcast services, so hopefully it'll be even a little clearer.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Is Kerry coming today to talk to us? Okay.

The Chair: — Okay. Anything else? If not, I want to thank you very much, Guy, you and your capable staff of technicians, for putting all this together for us. Jeremy.

Mr. Putz: — Would the board want to hear a sample of our digital audio?

The Chair: — Let's do it.

Mr. Barnabe: — Yes, we just finished the installation of our digital audio system that was approved last . . . for the last . . . well the current fiscal year I guess, from the last board meeting from a year ago, and we captured this last evening's audio. And Jeremy is going to retrieve one of the takes, as we call them. If you go down to 40, that's the one where I spoke last night and I

got to listen to myself.

All these are divided into three-minute segments and they're numbered 1 to . . . I think there's about 70 here from last evening. *Hansard* has decided to put them in three minutes. Each transcriber retrieves one of the takes, transcribes it to a file on the system and tags it that it's been transcribed, and then another person will edit it, and then proof it. And I think if you go to today's . . . Have they started transcribing today's, Donelda, do you know?

The different colours mean different things, based on what stage they're at. So the system has worked quite well here; so we're very happy with the clarity of the sound.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And that's the quality you could put out on the Internet also.

Mr. Barnabe: — It would be nice, would be nice. Again we probably offer a range of qualities depending, again, on how fast you're connected to the Internet. That's it.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you again.

Well we now come to an item that I'm excited about, because it's the item that deals with the presentation of our own budget — the Legislative Assembly budget.

And it also . . . I welcome this opportunity because it gives me, once again, the chance to introduce you to and recognize those very special and very important people that I think a great deal of — the support people in this Legislative Assembly through whose dedication and commitment make life easier for all elected members and everybody that's involved with ensuring that governance of this province of ours is attended to as it should be.

I'd like to introduce to you: of course, you know Gwenn Ronyk; Margaret Kleisinger, who's been sitting with me at the board; Linda Spence, very capable and competent secretary in my office; Meta Woods; Lorraine deMontigny, who looks after our visitor services; Marilyn Borowski, of course, director of financial services, a very important person — these are all very important people — Marian Powell in our Legislative Library; Viktor Kaczowski — I think Viktor left; he was here earlier but you heard from Viktor or you saw him yesterday; Pat Shaw, our Sergeant-at-Arms.

And I want to thank also the people at *Hansard* and Donelda for being here with us.

Ken Ring, our legal counsel. Can't miss out on our legal counsel. Sometimes they do play a very important role in offering advice and counsel.

So having said that, ladies and gentlemen and board members, this budget has got to be of special interest to members because it impacts directly on the Assembly's ability to serve the caucuses, the constituency offices, and all our elected members.

The budget format that was handed out to you follows the same style that was adopted last year in that line-by-line consideration; is replaced by more global highlights and the

mandates for the various branches while still providing some comparative numbers and percentage increases now.

And any further questions that you may have on specific issues or from any of the legislative branches in the Assembly, that information will be provided to you in order that informed decisions may be made.

Before turning the presentation over to our staff on some of those very important issues, and to our guest presenters who are here today, I want to point out of the budget document, just very briefly, first of all, the statutory and non-statutory components to the budget, page 5. And then on page 8, you will see the highlights of the 2001-2002 budget estimates.

On page 29 and 30, that's where the estimate summary is provided and it gives you a little more detail on the subvotes and individual increases or decreases from the current budget. The total increases for both budgetary and statutory are listed in the bottom right corners, 9.15 and 5.48 respectively, for the total increase requested of 6.8 per cent overall.

You will have all seen these numbers already so that should come as no surprise to you. And again, there are some exciting innovations, and some exciting innovations we're looking forward to in the future that will be of distinct and direct benefit to the Assembly, to all the members.

Page 29 deals with the budgetary side of the Assembly budget, the A-budget, if you refer to it as such. In addition to the A-budget, there are a number of B-budget items that are listed as items 12(b). Seven budget items in total, and we covered most of those last evening.

These items are new initiatives which we are asking you to consider individually, as possible additions to the activities and procedures of the Legislative Assembly. As I mentioned, some new innovations and some new directions.

The B-budget items are listed on page 10, along with the additional expense and percentage effect they would have to the A-budget. Now there are some items of interest here to members of the Legislative Assembly.

First of all, the broadcast services people, Gary and his folks, have been testing a new transmission system which has potential for increasing broadcasting and perhaps rebroadcasting of the Assembly proceedings. This one-time expenditure pays for itself in less than two years. And if you need Gary to elaborate on that, he's here and would be happy to do so.

There are proposals as well, and we talked about those last night, for the amalgamation of caucus allowances. And at the same time, we suggest that we determine exactly what this allowance is to be used for, unlike the more ambiguous wording that the current directives use. And that again, the board had an opportunity to kick around a little bit last night.

There is a proposal for a caucus computer network, which would be provided and supported by Legislative Assembly staff.

We also propose to provide equal hospitality for all school groups that visit the legislature. This is a minimal expense but it will greatly simplify life for those who coordinate such visits, as there will be a standard order and no need to contact every member in advance every time a school group visits the legislature as to whether or not they wish to supply a drink to the school children. Now, and quite frankly between you and I, I'm not sure why this wasn't thought of earlier, but nevertheless.

I want to take a moment again at this point in time to thank all the members of the Legislative Assembly for their hospitality when I visited their constituencies and talked to their schools and the students in their schools about parliamentary democracy.

The educational outreach visits are very popular. My secretary, Linda, cannot keep up with all the requests, and by the end of this month I will have visited 60 classrooms and talked to approximately 2,600 students in the province of Saskatchewan . . . throughout the province.

And I want to thank members from all caucuses, not just those here today, being part of that initiative. It's just so great. The students appreciate it. The teachers are beside themselves when they see the MLAs come to their schools to participate with the students, interact with the students.

As well, I want to thank the members and the caucus staff for their co-operation and support of the SSTI (Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers Institute on Parliamentary Democracy). By the way, the third annual teachers institute will be held in the Legislative Assembly here from April 28 until May 2, 2001.

The teachers that I've talked to and the feedback we have received, those that have attended have just been overwhelmed by the fact that MLAs take the time to meet with the teachers and brief them on topics such as the role of the House Leader or whip or cabinet minister.

The recurring comment has been that they might have been somewhat cynical about politics and democracy and legislative proceedings before they attended, but their outlook changed drastically when they met with individual members at work and had a chance to listen to them and observe the long days here at the legislature that include far more than just our question period.

I believe that all the Board of Internal Economy members have either conducted briefings or attended events at the SSTI in the past two years, and I want to thank you for that very much. I sincerely mean that and hope that you will sign up again for this coming year's event.

The educational programs that work with students and teachers seem to be a logical place at this point to end my remarks as the first presenters here will discuss a new proposal again, a new initiative, an exciting one — the legislative internship program.

The proposal suggests a new initiative that will be conducted by the Speaker's office in coordination with the universities and the caucuses. This item is 12(b)(i) and is listed on page 10 of

the estimates book.

Now you'll note the amount listed for this first intake which would not begin until January 2002. Therefore the amount is half of what would be the ongoing amount as future budget years would include the remainder or the balance of the internship term, which would be from January to July.

You may recall that this proposal was discussed with former Speaker Hagel following the first SSTI in 1999. It was not brought forward to the board at that time as the caucuses did not seem to think that the idea was workable.

The Ontario legislature has an internship program and their interns, if you will recall, did come here to visit last year. They met with me in the interests of encouraging us to set up a similar program.

Mr. Gordon Barnhart and Mr. Phillip Hansen are here this afternoon to present for your consideration, on behalf of our budget, their internship program proposal. So, gentlemen, if you'd be kind enough to join us at the table and offer us your proposal, an overview of what the intents are, Mr. Barnhart. And thank you.

Mr. Barnhart: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and members of the board. I must say first off I feel very comfortable in being here. It feels just like old times. So thank you for inviting us. And I'd like to say as well that it's a pleasure to have a spirit of co-operation between the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, as well as with you, Mr. Speaker, and with members of the Legislative Assembly.

The proposal that we are outlining for your consideration and hopefully for your approval is a concept that has been used in five other legislatures across Canada. The House of Commons has had it for many, many years, as well as four of the provinces.

And as Mr. Speaker has pointed out, the interns from Ontario were here about six months ago and about a year ago there were interns here from Manitoba. And if you've had a chance to meet any of the interns, I'm sure you would agree they are a bright, enthusiastic group of young people who are particularly interested in the political system as well as in the legislative and governmental systems that we have in Canada.

The proposal in specific that we would have for you this afternoon would be to start out with a group of four interns. That could always be subject to adjustment in years to come, but we felt that that would be a modest and a good, useful start. The candidates would be either senior students from university or recent graduates. It could be people who have been in political studies or history or law, people who . . . or journalism — those types of disciplines that would be particularly interested in this type of study.

When we first looked at this, we thought of possibly having it from September through to the end of June or into July. And in discussions with various members, some of them on the board here, it was felt that we would be better to start from January through to July because the legislature has not tended to be

sitting in the fall. So the idea would then be to start from . . . in January and, as Mr. Speaker has pointed out, a year from now really would be . . . if the program was approved.

The organization of how this would work, it would be under the auspices of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly as the patron and there would be the creation of a position called the academic director. This would be someone coming from either one of the two universities and I'll talk about this in a moment.

There would be, it's proposed, a legislative internship advisory committee that would be made up of representatives from the university, the Speaker, a private member from each caucus, as well as the Clerk. And, in subsequent years, once we have graduates of this program, then you would have one of the former interns also sit on that committee to offer advice for the ongoing program.

In terms of recruitment and selection of these young people — and I don't know that it would be specifically restricted to Saskatchewan, but I think that that would be certainly the hope and the goal — it would be then the director of the program, a professor from each of the universities, someone from the Speaker's office or the Clerk's office, and two former members of the Legislative Assembly. So you can see, in both the administrative committee and in the selection committee, there is very much the need and the will to have representation from all of the caucuses so that it's not viewed to be nor is it partisan for one side or the other.

Why are the universities involved with this? We feel very strongly that it's important for our young people to have exposure, to have the academic possibilities as well as the practical capability and experience, to be working with members of the legislature, seeing what they do both in the legislature and in their constituencies.

The academic director, himself or herself, would be chosen for a three-year period, it's proposed, and this would rotate back and forth between the two universities and this would be a choice by the Speaker in consultation with each caucus. So again, each caucus would have a veto if there was someone suggested as the academic director. It's likely someone who would be a professor, who would be teaching classes and would be given some extra time from their university to be able to help lead this. The director would then have the confidence of caucuses from both sides of the House and the director would be working directly with the interns.

The role of the Speaker and with the Clerk's office would be the support services here on the ground. And supposing there was the academic director from the University of Saskatchewan, thus it's a two and a half hour drive, you can appreciate, so they couldn't be with the students all the time. Nor would the one be from the University of Regina. So that the day-to-day administration would fall within the Speaker or the Clerk's office, but that the academic director would be there at least on a weekly basis to work with the students, with the interns.

The program itself for the interns would be there'd be a short period of orientation at the beginning of January. Each member of the legislature who wished to have an intern — they're not

going to be forced to have an intern of course, but if a member wanted to have an intern, they would apply. There would be then a selection process, a matching up. And the interns themselves would also have some input in terms of what types of study they would particularly like to have and they would like to work with, a particular member that has a speciality in child welfare or justice or agriculture or whatever the topics may be. So there'd be a matching of the interests of members, as well as the interests of the students.

I should reassure you as well that the proposal would be to have the interns work for approximately a three-month period of time. Supposing the intern was assigned to an opposition member for the first three months, they would then rotate and work for a government private member for the next three months.

And obviously the first thing that would come to a person's mind, member's mind, might be, well would there be a leak of confidential material or would they be exposing what's been happening on one side to the other? And we've done an informal survey, but in all of the years that the five programs have been going in Canada, I'm not aware of one instance where an intern spilled the beans in terms of . . . They take this very seriously. They take it as a learning opportunity to be able to work with members. And they don't take that and give it to others when they change from one side to the other.

The interns would work on such duties as working directly with the member on research, speech writing, preparing for committee work, as well as doing constituency work. It's not anticipated they would be involved, say, if there was a general election, that they would be doing the direct campaigning. Although some of the provinces have had their interns do this with no ill effect. But that may be something that the administrative and advisory committees would look at in the future.

At the present time the proposal is to keep it non-partisan, neutral, but doing some very valuable service for the member. And in the process, being able to pick up some valuable experience in terms of what members do.

At the end of their program they would write a research paper. And I might say, that the collection of research papers from other provinces has really formed quite a body of knowledge and experience in terms of the legislative intern's view and suggestions on how the whole process could be improved or what their experiences were.

And we've been talking in terms of the universities, and we feel quite confident that the universities would be able to grant credit. In other words, credits towards a degree as part of this program. We don't have any commitment from either university yet, but it would likely be in the range of six credits would be offered for a student if they were going through this program.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, and members of the board, I think this program is very, very important for three aspects. First, it's a continuation of the outreach program that the legislature has had on other aspects. So it's the contact between the legislature and the public. It forms as a service to members; I think an important and a valuable service. And it is a valuable

service as well, to the young people of our province who'd have the opportunity.

And with that, we'd be delighted to try and answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Barnhart.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Barnhart. Is there, in your experience or in any research that you may have done, is there a need for an off-ramp? Suppose you get started on a program like this and we get four interns and there's something that happens that there's a . . . that one of the interns just isn't . . . something is not working. What do we do in a case like that?

Mr. Barnhart: — My feeling on that would be that if at any time, either the intern or the member . . . and that can happen, it could be that it's a bad match and there's a personality clash. Or it might be that the intern is not working out, that it was a poor selection. Then that internship would stop at that point. Or they could be reassigned to a different member. So there'd be that . . . I would hope that that wouldn't happen because hopefully, through the selection process, there would be a good match made. But it can happen.

In talking with the Ontario interns, I think they had one example where an intern . . . it wasn't working with whoever the member was. And no one's fault — either the member nor the intern — it was just a personality thing. And they did a switch.

Mr. Kowalsky: — So there would be provisions so that could be . . . Because I personally like the whole idea and the concept that you presented here. It's just a matter of making sure that in the event that human nature sometimes takes over, they have ways of dealing with it.

Mr. Barnhart: — There'd be nothing worse than having you and the experience of having an intern and it's just not working.

Mr. Hansen: — And also remind you that there will be in place or proposed to be in place a legislative internship advisory committee which is a general policy-setting body with extensive membership to monitor the actual conducted program; and clearly that sort of a problem would be of tremendous concern for the committee, which would take steps to ensure that the policies governing the operation of the program were sufficiently precise to take such developments into account.

But as I think Gordon properly indicated, and based on our experience and our knowledge of other programs, we anticipate that such problems are very unlikely to arise but that they can in fact be handled should they do so.

The Chair: — Thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Yes, I think we are all aware throughout the western world there is a serious decline in young people engaging in the political process. And we also know that throughout the western world as the World War II generation leaves the scene, we are seeing a quite serious decline in voter

participation. Voter turnout rates are falling in this province and indeed I think it's fair to say in general everywhere.

And so we have not, we have not engaged the young people of our society, and I think that all of us take that as a very serious responsibility . . . Of those of us, those of us who are in the process in terms of the legislature and in terms of our party, one of our responsibilities to the province, to the legislature, and to our respective parties is to make sure that there are good, young people coming along who will, in due course, take our place.

So I think that this seems to me to be a modest investment for us to do something in that regard. But I do have to ask the question in regard to what I see, as I say, frankly a small budget figure. And I'm not encouraging the proponents here to up that figure but I have to ask the question: are we getting in for a small figure and then finding out that in fact the program would be, would be considerably more than that to run; or is this the figure for the program that over the course of years would be more or less static, barring obviously the normal inflationary figures.

As I say, I'm actually surprised that the figure we have here, in my view, is a small one and so I have to ask, is it a realistic one; is it one that is sustainable and ongoing, barring the normal cost-of-living adjustments?

Mr. Barnhart: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I'm glad you've asked that. And I can say in all honesty that it is not a lowball figure. It's not a purposeful low figure now and then say, oh well you can build in later.

The costs would go up if the legislature decided at some point to enhance the program by either adding more interns or you may add more travel to have them visit other legislatures. That would be another cost. There is a modest amount of money now put in the budget for interns to travel. But those would really — or if you lengthened the period of time; if you went from September through to June or July — those would really be the only three factors that I would anticipate could change the budget. And those would be conscious decisions by the Board of Internal Economy.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — But within the framework, within the parameters you have set out, you're telling us that 41,000 is realistic.

Mr. Barnhart: — That's for the half year, and then it would be 80 for each year thereafter, because that would be for the full year. But yes, to the best of our knowledge.

And the biggest factor in that is the payment to the students themselves for sustenance, \$1,800 a month. So as long as that stays static, that's the virtual program right there.

The Chair: — Thank you. I could perhaps draw your attention to the item and some background information. The fact that the \$80,000 would be the . . . that's on page 5 for the notes on item 12(b)(i).

Mr. D'Autremont: — This is an interesting program proposal and I know that it has been used in other areas and we've been in communication about this. Do any of the other programs that

are in place not alternate their interns between caucuses?

Mr. Hansen: — Yes, Manitoba does not.

Mr. D'Autremont: — That's the one area that my caucus is concerned about is the confidentiality, particularly with the interns being in one caucus for approximately three months and then switching over to the next caucus. The intern may not even do it consciously but start to make comments — well, you know, this is what happens or this is what happened — without trying to be malicious at all, just simply by accidentally saying something.

And so that is one of the areas that we do have a great deal of concern, is maintaining that confidentiality. And if the interns didn't rotate, you know, then there would be no difficulties in that area because they are in one caucus for the entire internship program. It's the fact that they are alternating back and forth that causes some concerns.

Mr. Hansen: — If I could just respond to that, Mr. D'Autremont. As we've tried to indicate, we are concerned that the program be not only seen as, but function effectively as, non-partisan. And we view the rotation component of it as very fundamental to that.

As we indicated earlier, as far as we know, and both of us have inquired into this matter, there have been no violations of any kind that anyone can recall, of confidentiality provisions or confidentiality requirements during the conduct of any of these internship programs, several of which have been in existence for a considerable period of time, have involved the participation of a large number of interns.

It is an issue everywhere, as you can well imagine. And it's one about which other programs, and those who have established and coordinated them, have given considerable thought. We are quite confident because of the kind of program that it is and because of what we hope it will accomplish, that those who participate will respect scrupulously, even to the point of guarding against "unintentional revelations of confidential material", the requirements of confidentiality.

The second point has to do with again the fact that this program is intended to be an educative experience for the interns, which involves in a sense two dimensions that are, I'll grant you, sometimes difficult to reconcile but seem to have been reconciled elsewhere.

One of them is an appreciation that partisanship is a component of any legislative body. Any parliamentary body is divided between the government and the opposition. That's the way of the world according to partisan considerations, and especially in a parliamentary context according to the requirements of parliamentary discipline.

Appreciating that component from the point of view of an academic participant observer, we believe, is an indispensable component of the educational task the interns should carry out. And for that to work effectively, we believe it to be very important, very helpful for an intern to be on both sides to see that partisanship isn't just partisanship, but part of an ongoing pattern of debate and deliberation where conflicting views can

be heard and sounded out and ultimately resolved in the public arena, be that in the legislature itself or ultimately in the electoral arena too.

And secondly and in a related way but in perhaps a slightly conflicting way, even as students come to appreciate, or interns come to appreciate the significance of partisanship, our hope — and again this is a hope we believe reinforced by experiences elsewhere — is that those who participate will both acquire a working knowledge of the full range of activities and operations of the legislative body, including its partisan character but not restricted to that. But just as importantly that they can provide to members an important kind of service, as Gordon was indicating, of the sort not normally received, however important this information is and we acknowledge its importance, from partisan researchers and those whom caucuses necessarily recruit to aid them in the political task before them.

Great care was taken, for example, in spelling out the kinds of duties we envisage the interns to undertake. And as you know from your proposal, we have very carefully indicated there are certain activities in which we believe it appropriate for interns to engage in order that their activities be consistent with the requirements of the program and others we would discourage.

So for those reasons, Mr. D'Autremont, I believe that while we certainly appreciate the concerns that members on each side of the House would have about confidentiality and whether or not switching would in any way compromise that, we're confident that allowing interns to serve both sides of the House would allow them both a fuller understanding of the legislative process including its inherently partisan character, and would nonetheless, at the same time, ensure still that the requirements of confidentiality were preserved.

The Chair: — Would the caucuses flip to see who gets them first?

Mr. Barnhart: — Actually, Mr. Speaker, it would be two and two.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I can certainly understand from the educational point of view that it would be beneficial to have the opportunity on both sides of the House. And I think that works equally well for MLAs, and I look forward for my opportunity to sit on the other side.

Although you mentioned in some jurisdictions they allow the interns to participate with candidates or MLAs at election time or election-type functions, I can see that would cause some great difficulties.

Let's say a writ happens to be dropped in March. An intern is working with a particular MLA, and I happen to be the candidate against that MLA. After the election, that intern now comes to sit in my caucus — let's say I was successful. I may have some difficulties with that particular point of view.

Mr. Hansen: — Personally I would not be in favour of that myself. It is maybe done in other programs but — I don't know of Gordon's view on this — personally, I would not encourage that.

Mr. Barnhart: — I wouldn't either. No.

Mr. D'Autremont: — One recommendation that I might make in that area, if during an intern's program a writ happens to be dropped, they might be able to be used at the electoral office, which would give them another picture on the electoral process. Or because caucuses still continue to exist during a writ period, there are still constituency concerns coming forward during a writ period, they could still remain within the caucus while not being attached to an individual MLA.

Mr. Barnhart: — If I could just add to that, Mr. D'Autremont. I certainly don't recommend it myself to have them involved during an election period. But there are other things too that the . . . if there was a period of time when the legislature wasn't sitting and the members . . . like an election. There are lots of other things that they could study during that period of time like the Provincial Auditor, the Ombudsman, have an attachment to say the Treasury Board budget bureau process so that they're learning some of the nuts and bolts of government as well.

So there would be lots of things for them to study and to work on, yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well on behalf of our caucus I can say that we're prepared to participate, but if it becomes a difficulty and confidentiality becomes a difficulty, we're also prepared to withdraw.

Mr. Barnhart: — Yes, yes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, I want to thank you gentlemen very much for the presentation.

It's kind of interesting. You know, the Speaker, just earlier talked about the interaction that members of the legislature have had with teachers and explaining what we do and why we do what we do and how this place functions — if anybody understands it. And I'm not sure anybody understands it completely, but we try.

But I just think the point that Mr. Hillson made as well is very pertinent. To create an understanding of this problem that we govern ourselves with is, I think, not to go beyond the vehicles and the tools we've been using to educate young people and to educate the general public, as a matter of fact.

I think many of us didn't understand how it worked or why it worked when we first came here. And I can say personally I've been very much in appreciation for the system, even with all its warts and all of its encumbrances and all the difficulties, and people's perception that it might be, I guess, not an efficient way to do business and to govern.

And there might be some inefficiencies, but I've gained an appreciation that it's a fair way, that it's a reasonable way to us to govern ourselves. And if we can expand that to some people who will be entering the workforce, entering business, and have a better understanding of how this system works, I think we'd be doing the province a favour, doing our country a favour. I think it's something that we just don't do enough of.

You know, I understand Mr. D'Autremont's concerns with

respect to confidentiality. And I think it's something that caucuses and politicians are always somewhat concerned about. And so I understand what you're saying.

I think it can work. And I think if the screening process and the indoctrination process is adequate and addresses the concerns that the caucus members and cabinet will have, that that can be worked through. It's not a large amount of money. And, you know, I guess you can liken it to a summer student program that we have through the Crowns and the different agencies of government. It's an assistance and a benefit made to a lot of young people, those who are taking their post-secondary learning opportunity.

So I kind of think it's going to be interesting to see how it would work to match a member of the legislature up with a university student. That will be some, some interesting. And in a way it's almost like travelling with a ministerial assistant when you first come to a cabinet job. For the most part they're young, aggressive people that come with limited experience and many of us come with limited experience to our jobs. But you gain and you learn as you go. And I just think it would be somewhat akin to that.

And I'd think it would be a good experience for opposition MLAs who have maybe never experienced the government side or a cabinet . . .

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Who may never.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And who probably will never, Mr. Hillson. So I don't often vote for or support B-budget items. And, Gordon, you will remember how this budgetary process works. They don't get passed often. But I think this is one that's got a lot of merit. I like it.

Mr. Hansen: — If I can respond, Mr. Lautermilch, to a couple of your fine points. Thank you very much. First of all, Gordon and I as academics also have a self-interest in this. We are excited about the idea of enhancing our own capacity to produce and generate and transmit knowledge about the legislative process, and indeed the political process generally, through the academic component of this plan.

And I want to stress that the interns are expected to meet substantial academic standards, ultimately resulting in the preparation of research material in the form of a paper which we hope would be, as Gordon had earlier indicated, a component of an expanding body of knowledge and research accessible both to students and to members, not just currently but subsequently. That seems to have been the experience elsewhere.

Secondly, I think it might be useful for comparative purposes to relate our program — and there have been a number of programs — to the one in Manitoba which has been successfully in place since 1985, continuously. Manitoba of course is about the same size as we are. It has the same questions of partisanship too.

The issues which you, Mr. D'Autremont, raised were very much important in the initial stages of, or in the construction of the program there, and it has operated extremely successfully in

a comparable province of the same size. And that's a Legislative Assembly of a comparable size, as well.

And I'm sure Gordon is as well, impressed by the success that program has had and continues to enjoy with the support from universities throughout the province, and with no shortage of applicants for the internships yearly, when those are advertised and recruits are sought.

So I think it's a program with a kind of proven track record, one recognized as I'm sure you're all aware, in 1992, by a special committee of this House, which in principle, approved the idea of a legislative internship program. This matter has appeared before, and I'm grateful for your questions and interest in the proposal that we have brought before you today.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Just, Mr. Speaker, one more question, and that is with respect to follow-up, the alumni. In some of the programs that have been operating for a while, is there any organized attempt to engage former interns in the school system or, you know, in the K to 12 system, or in the universities in some of the different programs to sort of share some of their experiences? I'm not suggesting that it's all going to be positive that they'll come out of here with; they might come out with a negative idea of what we do.

Mr. Barnhart: — Well I think there can be. And in other provinces . . . and we can even just follow some of the people. You can look through the who's who of people in the House of Commons and some of the provincial legislatures. You can look at some of the key journalists.

Jeffrey Simpson, for example was a legislative intern, I think in Ottawa. Paul Thomas, who's quite a well-known political scientist, was an intern. So there are . . . so to follow the who's who, you can see where these people have ended up.

And they don't all go into politics. They'll often end up in journalism, or in teaching, either in schools or in universities.

I would like to propose to you that possibly through the Speaker's office there could be an alumni set up so that you can keep track of them, and maybe call on them, like the Speaker's outreach program, things of that sort, through CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) maybe, to keep in touch.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — That's really where I was headed. Because I really think that the work that the former speaker, Mr. Hagel, and now Mr. Osika, are doing, sort of their outreach programs, I think are really excellent and we need to continue those.

I think sometimes, even though the Speaker has more credibility than the rest of us politicians, as the Speaker will attest to, I think to have some of the alumni, over a period of time, working say with the Speaker on some of this program, would be just a heck of an idea. Good stuff.

Mr. Hansen: — I would add, of course, as . . . (inaudible) . . . earlier and as you read in the proposal, that our hope is that the legislative internship advisory committee we propose to establish would down the road include a former intern who

would provide a kind of continuity, be able to utilize his or her experience to aid in the ongoing successful conduct of the program and generate, just as is generated in the House itself, a kind of culture of internship, a set of traditions and practices which could be over time built up and communicated to those who come after the original interns.

I believe something comparable to that has occurred, certainly in Ottawa where the federal legislative internship program has been in place for over 30 years now, and I believe in Manitoba as well.

So, you know, all these possibilities that you've identified, Mr. Lautermilch, I think are very realistic ones and ones we would certainly love to see come to fruition.

The Chair: — Excellent.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The other programs that you have looked at, the interns that make application to be a part of the program, what's their background in general? Where do they come from? Have they demonstrated an interest in politics? And if so, then it's generally a partisan interest. Has that been the case, or have they been coming to the universities without any preconceived notions of what their politics are?

Mr. Barnhart: — I think there would be a small proportion that would be involved, as many university students are, involved with politics and the whole gamut in terms of political parties. But my experience has been, in talking with interns, is that most of them have come with the question of the pure science of studying politics and studying the legislature without a background in partisan politics.

And I think many of them would leave with that same feeling of not wanting the partisan politics necessarily, but the study of the system and what do members do and how does the system work. So it's a . . . I would say the vast majority of them are non-partisan even to begin with.

But they would come from various disciplines like law, history, political studies, journalism, the humanities. I doubt that you'd find a chemist or someone like that that would even be interested.

Mr. D'Autremont: — . . . Saskatchewan where it's a small political world.

Mr. Hansen: — Yes, yes. On the other hand, as no doubt all members around the table are, while you're certainly members of parties and partisan, you're more than that. I mean presumably we all have an interest in public service. We have our partisan identifications, but beyond that, we believe in the system and in the process and wish to contribute to it.

And I believe most of the interns about whom I have read or with whom I'm familiar are animated above all by an interest in the process and a desire to contribute to it. Some of them, as Gordon suggests, probably do have partisan ties. It would be unrealistic to expect that people would always come to an interest in politics without that.

On the other hand, this is a different kind of program than that

which might be associated with more overtly partisan activity. And I believe the success of this program in other jurisdictions reflects the reality that the lion's share of those who participate do so as scientific students of politics, but also as people who are deeply committed to the process as such and want to make it work more effectively and contribute to its further development and strengthening.

Mr. D'Autremont: — What I'm thinking of is that if, let's say, a president of a youth wing of a provincial party was to put their name forward, that would certainly send up flags for the other political parties.

Mr. Barnhart: — I would likely . . . I don't want to prejudge, but it would likely not be the type of person that would be recruited within the program. And they have their other opportunities to participate in any case.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Yes. I'd just like to reinforce that one of my senses of young people today is that while we easily accepted the basic point that participation in the system necessarily involves political partisan identification, I don't sense that young people accept that nearly so readily today. And that young people are far more likely to join a particular interest group that advances particular issues or interests which they have a special interest, as opposed to joining a political party.

So while I accept the points that Mr. D'Autremont has made, my reading of young people is that they have an interest in public policy that is not nearly as easily identified with a political party as in previous years. And indeed I don't think the problem will be what Mr. D'Autremont has identified at all.

The problem will be that . . . my sense of young people today is that they do not easily accept the message that if you want to be directly involved in public decision making, that necessarily entails a partisan membership. And so I don't actually think that that's going to be found to be a problem at all.

Mr. Hansen: — And we expect . . . we do emphasize the avowed neutrality and non-partisanship of the program itself, that those who might be considered rabid partisans wouldn't be attracted to it. As I think Gordon's pointed out, such individuals have other opportunities to participate and would probably prefer other opportunities to participate.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — But I say, on the other side of it though, as you correctly said, our process is a partisan process. And I can see many young people today I talk to in political science programs who would be offended or rebel against the message that the reality is one does not get to be a political leader in our system without a partisan identification. I don't think that's a message they generally take too positively.

The Chair: — Thank you for that, Mr. Barnhart, Mr. Hansen. I truly appreciated your presentation very much. I've been very much encouraged. I appreciate the comments from Mr. Hillson and Mr. Lautermilch as well, and Mr. D'Autremont I think, in recognizing that perhaps in some small way the outreach education program initiated by former Speaker Hagel, which I fully support, will instill again in young people the interest to pursue more knowledge about, and understand that yes, in fact, public service is an honourable profession.

And that perhaps, as Mr. Hillson said, we can create again some interest from young people getting involved at an earlier stage — or at least getting involved. So I thank you very much for that and I . . .

Mr. Hansen: — Thank you very much for your attention to this matter and I wish to especially extend a thanks to you, Mr. Speaker, for the support that you've shown during the last year since we met last year, or when the Ontario interns were here. Much appreciated, and thank you.

Mr. Barnhart: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — If the board is prepared to deal with the motion on that decision item, I would entertain a mover. Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the Board of Internal Economy approve a budget request of \$40,600 for the 2001-2002 fiscal year to establish the Saskatchewan legislative internship program to begin effective January, 2002.

All those in favour? Carried. Thank you very much.

Okay we'll move on to our next item, item 12(b)(ii). And that's the proposal for the Legislative Assembly gift boutique proposal. And I would ask Meta Woods from our Clerk's office and Lorraine deMontigny, who's our director of visitor services, to please make a presentation and respond to any questions board members may have, please.

I beg your indulgence for a couple of moments. Why don't we recess for about five minutes.

The board recessed for a period of time.

The Chair: — Okay, I'd like to call the meeting back to order and we can proceed with the agenda. And we left off before our brief recess at item no. 12(b)(ii) and that is the item on the Legislative Assembly gift and boutique proposal for our new entrance and in the building.

Ms. Meta Woods, please, Meta, if you would lead us off.

Ms. Woods: — All right. I guess to begin with, the idea of having a gift shop here at the Assembly has been bounced around for a number of years and it culminated two years ago in a request to the board to have a business plan prepared, and that's what was distributed to you.

In the business plan what we hoped to have achieved was to address some of the considerations that would have to be looked at if the Assembly goes ahead with the gift shop, as well as raising some of the potential problems or difficulties that might have to be addressed in one way or another.

The Legislative Assembly's boutique will be a new venture and it will be established to offer unique gifts and items of a legislative or Saskatchewan theme for sale to the general public, to MLAs, to government departments, and civil servants.

It's expected that this venture would be successful if categorized as a service provided by the Assembly. There are a

number of factors that come into play with a gift shop within a Legislative Assembly environment that would perhaps raise some difficulties if you're going to look at it simply as a commercial entity.

The visitor services branch, under the direction of Lorraine deMontigny as the director of visitor services, will manage and operate the boutique.

The funding requirements that are before you would include the initial start-up cost and the opening inventory.

I do want to note that there are other branches of government that have covered the cost of things such as the leasehold improvement and the preparation of a possible boutique space in the new entrance. And Lorraine and I had a chance to quickly look through there this morning. The display cabinets are finished and they do look very impressive, and I think at this point we would want to thank SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) and the other branches for the work that they have done in that regard.

In regards to the staffing for a gift shop, in the first year of operation, will be borne by the existing visitor services' personnel. We do intend at the end of the first year of operation, if the gift shop does go ahead, to look at things such as the staffing, the resources that are provided, to see if they are adequate for the needs of such a venture.

I guess in summary we do want to say that after having looked at this and done some research, there does seem to be a lot of support for a gift shop here at the Assembly. Lorraine can possibly attest to better than I that when the general public come through the Assembly they would like to take a memento or some kind of souvenir of their visit, and I suspect also the staff would like to have something to look to use for themselves as a memory of their work here in the building.

I don't intend to go into any further detail about the business plan because it is before you. I do want to draw your attention specifically to just one area, and that's the area of finance.

We did consult with the financial management branch of the Provincial Comptroller's Office as how best to structure a gift shop. It was their advice that the boutique operation should be handled through the General Revenue Fund with the revenues deposited in the GRF (General Revenue Fund), and expenses paid through the appropriation of the Legislative Assembly Office. It was their further advice that The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act should be amended to ensure that it contains the legislative authority for the associated revenues and expenses.

It is anticipated that the starting influx of capital that we are asking for is in the range of 40 to \$50,000. This would be needed to cover the start-up cost and to obtain sufficient inventory to carry the boutique through its first season of operation.

Because the boutique will not be able to access revenue from sales to apply against operating expenses or to purchase inventory, it would be necessary for the Assembly to authorize an appropriation that will cover all the costs anticipated for the

coming year. The actual figure will depend in large part on the direction that the board chooses to go in, and in regards to their initial wishes for the size of the gift shop.

The proposal that was before you asked for \$45,000. We have broken this down into \$15,000 for start-up capital. And that would include the purchase of a point of sale system which would in effect be the cash register and an inventory control system. The remainder of the \$15,000 would be spent on things like signage, packaging, boxes, bags, and so on. The remaining \$30,000 would be used for purchasing the opening inventory.

And on that point, I'm going to turn it over to Lorraine. She prepared a proposal of what you would be able to buy for about \$30,000 and that was distributed to you just today. And perhaps I'll just turn it over to her to go through that.

Ms. deMontigny: — Thank you, Meta.

I think that likely the document in front of you is fairly self-explanatory, but I'll just go over it briefly. I want to make it clear that these are not necessarily the items we would have in the boutique if this proposal were to go through, but that this simply gives you an idea of the numbers of things we might have and the price range we might have. Because we have to remember that our visitors are anywhere from school students to dignitaries, so we have to have something in everyone's price range.

The proposal you see before you, on the second page, the first item is the clothing item. And you'll notice that essentially there are two qualities there. I've given you wholesale prices. So if a fleece or a golf shirt wholesaled at \$40, it would retail — it depends what our markup is — but quite a lot more than that. It would be a fairly expensive shirt. And so it would be a good quality. It would be something that if it were being purchased by a Member of the Legislative Assembly, the member might be able to wear that when travelling to conferences and that type of thing. So there would be that type of a parallel.

The fleeces that we have identified here — the vests are fleeced — they too are a nice quality.

Having said that, then we would move into T-shirts that might wholesale for \$15, and we might have many that would wholesale for much less than that. I'm sure we could get T-shirts that would almost retail for \$15. This doesn't give you any information about clothing for children, but that would be another thing that we would have to look at.

So those are just some numbers for what it would cost for us to have 288 shirts or vests in our boutique for the first year.

With respect to giftware, we're looking at categories of office, artifact, artwork, so that's what you're seeing here. Some of you may be familiar with this legislative building in pewter — they're framed. I have photographs with me if anyone would care to see them. And that's an item that would retail in the boutique for about \$50. I just stuck a watch in as a thought. That's something employees and public servants might be interested in. So that's one option.

With respect to the mid-range giftware, variety is the word. I

have a stack of catalogues in my office. There are so many things to choose from — lots of nice things that can be personalized with our Legislative Building or our Saskatchewan theme for a very reasonable price.

And then of course the part that we may not like quite so much but that we know we would have to have, is the much lower-end souvenir. We know we would need something for children — things like pens. The pen that I hold would be a pen that would wholesale for about \$5, and a plastic pen might be the \$1 type. So that's the kinds of variety where we would be looking at having something for every age.

Now there's nothing here to cover the costs of buying a piece of artwork from a local Saskatchewan artist or something like that, that we might want to carry in the boutique. That would have to be, you know, factored in. Also you do not see a budget here for film or stamps or postcards, but we know that those are popular items as well and things that you have to have if your boutique is a service because tourists travelling by bus are looking for those kinds of things.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you very much, Meta and Lorraine. Any questions from the board?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you for your proposal, and it's a very interesting one. I think there is probably a need for this type of service in the Assembly. Certainly we do have quite a number of bus tours during the summer season; school groups coming through during the fall and the spring. But I guess my question is: have you looked at providing the space and tendering it out to a private contractor?

Ms. Woods: — We did look at that approach. The difficulty with that is that many of the private individuals that might want to run something like this want to have control over all aspects of it. And because it would operate within the Legislative Assembly building that's not always possible.

We did speak with one consultant and something such as the location of the gift shop was something that he was concerned with. And the reason for that is usually when you have something like a gift shop you want it to be very visible. You want it to be in a location where people are directed through it, whether consciously or unconsciously. Where the gift shop is going to be located, if it goes ahead, is somewhat tucked around in a corner.

I think someone coming from the outside would want to be able to have some control over like, where he puts it, how he displays things. Just because we're in a building that is a heritage site, sometimes they're not that willing to work within those constraints.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Whenever there is this kind of an establishment in a building though the building operator gets to designate where they're situated, and if that is the location that it's to be then the contractor would have to accept that. Same with . . . I'm sure that you could put into the contract, if a contract was let, what kinds or qualities of items that you could sell through that location.

Obviously there are certain items that you wouldn't want to

have available, you know — certain magazines, let's say, that you wouldn't want to be selling through the legislature. And I think those kind of terms could be put into a contract. And so I think it would . . . If we're going to have this type of a service, and I think it's a good idea, it's perhaps an area where the legislature could get . . . generate some revenue by leasing out the space that's available for a contractor.

Ms. Woods: — Another difficulty — I'll just mention it while I think of it — another difficulty with getting someone from the outside to come in is just the size of the gift shop that we're contemplating. It's very small when you compare it to what's available out on main street. They would like to have something larger, almost on par with what you would see at let's say at the Wascana gift shop or the gift shop at the airport. I think what we're looking at for here is smaller than that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'm sure that a contractor would like to have the largest available and the premier space, but I think it's possible that they may be willing to operate it with what's available. It's a question of making it known that it would be available and seeing what kind of responses you get. Obviously, if nobody's interested then you have to look at other avenues to provide the service. But I think it would be of value to at least find out if the market is interested.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, and thank you for your presentation.

I too think that it's an interesting idea and a service that I think many people are interested in. Unlike Mr. D'Autremont though, I would be opposed to the idea of contracting it out for many of the reasons that you've said — the building, the space. I think that there's probably an equal amount of money to be made on markup of merchandise as there would be in leasing a small amount of space in our building.

I'm opposed in general to the idea of contracting out. And I think too that we would want to control the quality of merchandise because it will be associated with the province of Saskatchewan and with the government of the day.

So I think we want good quality merchandise, something that reflects the integrity. And I think that you can't do that when you let the control out of the Legislative Assembly and entrust it to a contracted person.

So although I thank you for your proposal and in all likelihood will support it, I certainly would like it to remain in-house and under direct control of the Legislative Assembly.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any other comments?

Mr. D'Autremont: — The other boutiques that are in other legislatures, how are they operated?

Ms. Woods: — Well we did do a survey when we were preparing this. Not all the other legislatures have a gift shop to begin with. There are some such as PEI (Prince Edward Island) which is somewhat unique in that that gift shop is run by Parks Canada because their building is a national heritage site. The operation in Nova Scotia is very small. Quebec City, Ottawa, Toronto, and Edmonton have larger operations. Those are run in-house.

The one that we base this model on is the Alberta model and that is run by the Assembly directly.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And the other locations are run by the Assemblies, are they?

Ms. Woods: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Just because they do it in Alberta doesn't mean it's good.

Ms. deMontigny: — If I may. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to add, Mr. D'Autremont, that that's quite right.

With respect to a private operator, a private businessman managing a boutique within the Legislative Building, we did have one local businessman express an interest in just that. There were two obstacles, I think. One was the size of the operation. The individual would have wanted considerably more space.

And the other was the fact that, as we see it, we have a mandate to produce a lot of new items, items that have a legislative theme. And those are non-existent in other gift shops in Regina, or for the most part. I shouldn't say that — there are some items out there. But we would like to develop a number of new things and have the boutique carry pretty much exclusively things that would carry that theme or the prairie theme.

So those were factors.

Mr. D'Autremont: — See, I think that it will be possible to do that and still do it with a private contractor.

Ms. Ronyk: — If I might mention, Mr. Speaker, in your kit there is a computer-generated picture of the space. You can see that the gift shop is part of the new gallery. It's at one end of the new gallery space and doesn't isolate it. It's not separate.

So we would have some concern about it being a highly commercialized-looking zone, I guess, when it's part of a public gallery where the displaying of artwork and travelling exhibits and so on will occur.

Also I think we would like to see the gift shop open the hours the building is open, and really that couldn't be done by a business and make any money because it's . . . We would like to see it open weekends when we have tours on, as well as the evenings in the summer and that kind of thing. And we can do that, we think, because we're using our visitor services staff to run it. But I don't think a private contractor would be able to afford to staff it those hours, and it would likely not be open those hours.

Mr. Kowalsky: — My concern, Mr. Speaker, would be as to whether the shop here would be operating at an advantage as when compared to anybody else that would be in retail. Can we have assurances, for example, that this would not require an ongoing subsidy, that, you know, it would be able to sort of run itself? Or that we would not be subject to criticism say from somebody in the Chamber or the . . . basically a subsidized business venture, which private people can get into? How can we establish a level of confidence on that?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You know — yes. You know, I kind of like the concept of having sort of a Saskatchewan legislature, kind of a unique kind of an inventory that, I guess, isn't around. And I'm wondering why it isn't around. The thing over at Wascana — we've got the powerhouse little thing over there. And I don't know why that isn't around.

A Member: — The museum.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, the museum maybe. I mean . . . And I think it would be something to help Regina promote itself. I don't know why it's not there or, you know, why those kinds of articles aren't around.

You can't make a business case for this thing, I don't think. You're looking at what? Just from Alberta's experience, maybe a 30 per cent markup on the outside. On let's say \$30,000 worth of inventory, you're going to have to do a heck of a lot of turns to pay for the space and a half of a person here. And I don't think you'd ever get to . . . well I don't think it'll pay for itself. I mean we'll have to understand then that we're subsidizing the thing for perpetuity.

But my concern is it won't be a half-year person year that we'll be subsidizing, because my guess would be in a year or two we'll be back. And I mean, shouldn't take offence, that's just how it is, because people will be busy doing other things and you'll want a full-time staff person there.

And then you're going to want it open the hours that the building is open, which are pretty extended hours. And then we'll have a staff person there, and there'll be down cycles when people don't come to the building, and so we'll have a person sitting there doing little, I would assume, for a while. And I can just see it. And that part of it worries me. And that's probably why you couldn't get a private sector individual to come in and establish a boutique here.

So what I would like to see is maybe there's another way. Maybe there's a real innovative way without increasing or making a commitment with respect to expanded person-years. Maybe there's something we could do with the existing staff where we could have available . . . And I mean \$30,000 isn't a lot of inventory to buy, you know, and I mean you'll be turning it over I would assume — not a big investment I see there.

But if there was another way to have this available through some entity, or I don't know, maybe through the cafeteria somehow — I'm just thinking. And we went through this — what year was that?

Ms. deMontigny: — Well we tried the cafeteria thing, 1987.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — '87, okay. Maybe that's what happened back in '87 — I can't remember. But I would be really hesitant to commit to half a person-year because I just . . . I'd like to see the service provided, but I just don't know that . . . I don't know that this thing would fly without growing and without just costing us more money over a period of time. I think that's what would happen.

But I'd sure like to see some of these things available. I mean I'd personally buy a lot of this for visitors that I meet in my

office — people that come from other provinces, other ministers, other MLAs. I think these are the kinds of things that we could make available for delegations that come to Saskatchewan, which we buy anyway. Maybe not these specific items but other items.

So I'd like to see another way of doing this, if there's some ideas on that.

Ms. Woods: — If I could just address some of your concerns. First of all with regard to the Alberta model, a lot of their sales are to MLAs. I would say the majority of their revenue comes from sales to MLAs. That being said, their directives are different in that they are able to buy items out of their allowances to do that.

With regard to the staffing of the boutique, what we're proposing at this point is to use existing staff; we're not going to ask for additional people. And that is partly because we're not sure the demand that would be needed to staff the gift shop. And also because with the new entrance coming in there, that will be staffed, and what we hope to do is to be able to cover off the gift shop with the new person that would be at the new entrance.

As well as using new procedures such as when the tours come through the building, they'll be brought back and the tours will finish at the gallery space. And the guide that is with them at that time would be able to serve them if they wanted to purchase something.

We don't anticipate having to staff the gift shop permanently. We're not proposing that. Instead what we would do in those hours where we don't anticipate a lot of people coming through, we would have some mechanism for someone to be contacted. If, for example, someone came down and wanted to make a purchase, there would be a buzzer or a phone that they could contact someone from visitor services to come down and assist them.

The Chair: — Thank you, Meta.

Ms. Ronyk: — If I might note, in addition to actually having staff available to sell stuff from the shop, there is a tremendous amount of work to handle the inventory, do the accounting. Visitor services and financial services will have a lot of extra work to make sure this is operated in an accountable and appropriate way. The auditor will be watching very closely. And we're planning to absorb all of that. At least that's our hope.

We would like to see, as you do, Mr. Kowalsky, that the revenues eventually could be put back into the gift shop towards inventory. Because if we can't convince Finance that we need a mechanism to allow us to do that, then every year we're going to be coming to you and saying, we need more money for inventory. And the revenues will, as Mr. D'Autremont said earlier, it all comes out of the same pocket. Well in this case, it'll all go back into the same pocket but it'll be the General Revenue Fund, not the Assembly's budget.

And we would like to get the shop up and running, just see what level of activity we can generate, and maybe once it expands a

little bit then we want to go forward with a request to provide some authority in our Act to operate it either as a revolving fund or with a regular refund vote provision that would allow the revenue to come back to our budget.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I just have one more question. Is there any way to deal with this without opening The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act? I'm not at all keen on that.

Ms. Ronyk: — We don't need to do that at the moment. We do . . . we can get the shop up and running as a part of our appropriation. And we may have to in the next year if we want to find a way to retain the revenues. But for now we don't feel that's necessary in this upcoming session.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you. I would like to express my opinion and hope that it receives support, that in the event that this goes ahead, that we focus . . . I would like to see focus exclusively on Made in Canada and Made in Saskatchewan items for sale. I think it's always in bad taste I think to go and purchase a Legislative Assembly memento that's made in Japan or some other offshore country.

That's my opinion; I hope it receives support. I don't think it requires any motions, or should, but I think we need to focus on Canadian and Saskatchewan products.

The Chair: — Thank you for those comments and questions.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The idea of the funds, the sale funds being able to be retained by the boutique is certainly a worthwhile idea. Unfortunately other departments don't have that opportunity either.

I think of the bull program in Agriculture where they're purchased, utilized in the community pastures and sold, and the sale money goes back to the General Revenue Fund, so the bull program always shows a deficit. Even though they may turn around and sell those bulls for the same amount they purchased or even a better price, it doesn't reflect. And I think unless you change the entire operation of government, it's not apt to change.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you very much for all the comments and questions. I was going to suggest to the board that if you wish to contemplate this issue we can go on to the next item and consider it further.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, if I could make a recommendation. I think there's a divergence of opinion here, first of all with respect to ownership, whether it be in-house or whether there be an option for a private sector individual. So that's one issue, I think.

The second issue is one of opening up at some point in time The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act and whether we want to introduce changes to the legislation as it relates to the boutique. It may be some other changes in that Act that require change as well. And I think I would want to consult with the officials . . . (inaudible) . . . and the minister responsible for that Act to determine whether or not there's any intention to open it in the next little while, or if this could be

part of some changes that might take place in that Act.

And so I think it might be prudent for us to defer this discussion to another day where we can maybe sort out some differences of opinion, if there are any, with respect to ownership.

But in the interim it might be interesting to speak to some of the existing outlets that we spoke of a little earlier to see if they would be interested in good quality articles that depict the legislature and, you know, that would perhaps be sold in here. It might be interesting to pursue that to see if there's any interest in us perhaps procuring the inventory and see if they'd be interested to sell it.

We might be able to refer a client base from here to them, which certainly I wouldn't think would have a negative impact on their businesses. And it might be that we want to put it there on a consignment basis. I don't know. But I think these are all some questions that I'd like to pursue before we make a decision on this.

The Chair: — Thank you for that. Is that the wishes of the board? Okay. That item be stood until a later time. Meta and Lorraine, thank you very much.

All right. We'll go on to . . . the board has already heard from our technicians on the caucus computer network infrastructure proposal. You've also heard about the multimedia streaming of Chamber proceedings of the Internet and the amendments to directive 6, constituency assistant expenses. And we'll go now to no. 6, which is school tours hospitality. And if I may ask Ms. deMontigny to address that item for the board.

Ms. deMontigny: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to this item, as members will know, so often most times when students come to visit the legislature, the MLA is contacted by visitor services to inquire as to whether or not the member would like to buy drinks or order pictures or anything for that visiting group. I would say that 90 per cent of the time we do order refreshments for students on behalf of members, but it does require that Marianne has to get a hold of the members, and wait for a response before she can place her orders and carry on with the agendas.

It also poses another problem in that so many of our schools call in and say hi, we'd like to book a tour and we'd like pictures and we'd like a drink. And they don't realize that the drink is only ordered for him on behalf of the MLA if the MLA indicates to us that they would like us to place that order.

So what we are proposing is that visitor services automatically order refreshments for any visiting group, and that in that way all schools would be treated equitably and the process would be much easier too, administratively.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I moved it.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Thank you, Lorraine.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Oh yes, with the caveat that the Speaker would be responsible for all expenses incurred. Well maybe not.

The Chair: — Okay. So the money will be added to the Speaker's budget for drinks, is that it? For the school visitors of course, yes. And that'll create a little more parity for all the members. Everybody, everybody then chips in for . . . all right. Thank you very much.

I have the motion here that's moved by Mr. Lautermilch and seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That effective April 1, 2001, \$7,000 be authorized to provide refreshments for school groups and official delegations touring the legislature.

All those in favour? All those in favour? I'll ask again in case that was. . . Any opposed? Carried.

A Member: — That's a lot of chocolate milk.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Thanks, Lorraine, and thanks, Meta, again.

Okay. We've come to the next decision item and then from there forward. And I just want to point out for this coming fiscal year — if I may, board members, with all due respect — one of our main goals for this new fiscal year is to begin implementation of the Saskatchewan accountability framework. And this is a project to work with the Board of Internal Economy to establish a strategic plan, performance management, and reporting system for the Legislative Assembly office. And once again directed at to respond to again some of the observations made by the Provincial Auditor. So I just mention that in advance of moving to our next item, financial services branch conversion non-permanent to permanent, full-time position request.

I'll ask Gwenn to address . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we are doing now is moving on to the A-budget. This is where the real money is. And so now you can maybe leave your decision items for a time and go to the actual budget document — this one that was given out with the budget information.

And I'll begin with just a bit of an overview and some highlights and then . . . The document is organized as it was last year with the first section highlighting the changes and the analysis of the changes — the decreases and increases over last year.

The second part of the book is again the details subvote by subvote, and the appendices at the end would give more branch overviews and mandates and goals and objectives. And what we'll focus more on is the front part, the highlights.

And I'd like you to turn first of all to page 8. And pages 8, 9, and 10 are the summary for the new year. And before we look at our proposals for the upcoming year, I do just want to take this moment to thank the Legislative Assembly staff and the caucus staff and the members of the Legislative Assembly for working together for all the accomplishments that we did I think achieve in the last year, in the year 2000.

I think successfully we worked together to meet the demands of

a first session of a new term. That session brings a lot of challenges, both to new members, and I think we met those, and we'll continue to provide the services that members need and the committees needed and the House needed to launch into a new term of the legislature.

Within the Legislative Assembly service, we did a variety of things last year, including establishing the information services branch. We recruited a director of information services. We established an intranet within the Legislative Assembly to improve our internal communications and access to information without having to pester other employees and therefore save their time.

We had a joint effort between *Hansard*, information systems, broadcast services, and the Deputy Clerk to implement our new digital audio transcription system that you saw demonstrated a little earlier today. That's a big job to do and they've worked with SPMC in the tendering and whatnot, and now with the company that's implementing it and have done an excellent job. And I think they have a system that is working and will work well for the legislature.

One of the big things that we've dealt with this year is committees, legislative committees, in providing the support necessary for some very heavy committee work. Members are well aware of that, because of course it's the members who make the committees . . . are the composition of the committees and are necessary to doing the tasks that the legislature has asked those committees to do.

We had two investigative and travelling committees holding public hearings across the province — Tobacco Control, and the Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade.

We had substantial work in the Public Accounts Committee, and a plan to revive the work of the Regulations Committee, in addition to the usual sessional committee work. In that regard, my office was very pleased to receive the assistance of a new support person that the board approved last year, as well as a new committee Clerk whom you've met at various times during these last few days.

Other things that were accomplished, our CPA Branch was very active, seeing a higher level of activity and the necessary work to support that. In our HR (human resources) admin area, there was an extension of . . . a substantial extension of benefit plans that were implemented this year — sick leave and employee family assistance plan to constituency assistants, extended health to MLAs, enhanced dental benefits to all. A very successful trial of a strategic planning process at the branch level. Substantial progress on our asset management system for the Assembly and constituency offices. This is again in response to the auditor's expectations for accountability.

Development of significant changes in the constituency assistant program, and there were secretaries' program.

Other changes you'll have noticed around the building are our security enhancements that ensure safety and security of staff and visitors to the building. We've also been involved in the preparations for the new barrier-free entrance. We've done

substantial work on the gift shop business plan.

We have, as you all . . . members and your caucuses have been quite aware of the rehabilitation project going on in the building. And just to report, phase 2 of the rehabilitation project that is being done by SPMC is almost complete. Phase 2 included the life safety and accessibility provisions. They included fire sprinklers, smoke alarms, a new entry for barrier-free access, a beautiful new foyer, and a new gallery that will be opening within the next month or so.

In addition, the Speaker mentioned earlier his office's work on outreach, renewal of the outreach program, and continuation of the SSTI.

So I think it's been a very busy year for the legislative service, as it has for MLAs and for the legislature and committees. And we're also very . . . again very pleased to work with the members and the House and committees, and helping, doing our job in enabling you to do your jobs.

To go now to the highlight section of the budget, pages 8, 9, and 10, and there you will see on page 8, the estimate basis. Our predictions are on the same basis as they have been in previous years in certain matters, and that is that we are estimating based on an average of 76 sitting days in a fiscal year.

The estimates reflect the basic personnel policy that is similar to that in existence in government. We are assuming a sort of similar cost-of-living adjustments that is in place in government estimates. Our estimates reflect the adoption last year of the in-scope classification plan and the pay equity adjustments and reclassifications that came along with that. And those again are maintaining parity between the legislative and executive public servants.

Our estimates assume a 1.9 per cent cost-of-living adjustment where there's a COLA in, particularly in the statutory part of our budget, in allowances and salaries to members. Now with the cost-of-living rate that it was last month, that may not be an accurate estimate over the year. Whatever the actual is for the January to December fiscal . . . calendar last year, will be what is applied April 1 of 2001. And it may not be the 1.9; this was our prediction at the time we drafted the budget documents.

And then on page 9, you'll see the listing of the decreases and increases in both the budgetary side of our budget and the statutory side of our budget, with references to the pages where a little more detail is provided. And those numbers there, with the budgetary and statutory totals, are for the A-budget that we are presenting to you now.

On page 10 is the summary of the B-budget items that you have heard about. You've had those presentations earlier last night and today. And this page also shows the percentage affect of approving any one or all of those B-budget items.

And now I think we'll go ahead and look into the analysis of the budget changes. And if you want to start with pages 10, 11, and 12, those are the description of the impact of personnel services on our budget. I'll note that 64 per cent of the total expenditures within the Assembly's budgetary side are personnel. So when there's an increase in a cost-of-living adjustment for example or

a new classification system as is the case last year, it has a big impact on our budget. Page 11 puts a summary of the three personnel areas that impact. Then we start with a little more detail on page 12.

The first element within personnel are the personnel policy impacts and those are the decisions. These numbers reflect the decisions that the board has made in past years as to what our personnel policy will be. The impact of those policies is the number that you see there and it's due to the class plan alignments, conversions to the new class plan, and just sort of the normal number of reclasses that occur in any living organization over the course of a year.

Page 13, I want to draw your attention to the top item, the pay equity adjustments because this really sort of hit us. And it took me a bit by surprise although I shouldn't have been. But you'll note that when the collective bargaining agreement was settled last year that part of the collective bargaining was a pay equity provision to bring lower-paid and female-dominated positions up to a comparable level that was achieved, what was determined when they actually did reclassing of all the positions on equal factors.

Now what . . . You can see the little chart there, the little schedule that shows the pay equity payments that were not paid all at once, they were spread out over a four-year period. But you'll notice the April 1, 2001, is large. It's 8.6 per cent for any employees that were eligible for pay equity and had not received the top . . . had not already gotten to the top of their range; on April 1, 2001, they get to the top of their range. And because so many of our employees were in that lower-paid, female-dominated category, we had a lot of employees that were still eligible for pay equity at this last level.

And you see in the note it's 41 of our employees will receive the final 8.6 per cent pay equity adjustment. And that takes them to range maximum. Of course that's the good news, is that 79 per cent of our in-scope employees will now be at range maximum as of April 1. So next year our budget shouldn't be hit so hard.

The other items then in our normal personnel policy issues are applying cost-of-living increases the same as across government. Whenever there's a collective bargaining agreement reached that will be applied, in expectations of that, we have applied . . . assumed a 2 per cent and 3 per cent increase — 2 per cent for out of scope, 3 per cent for in scope, somewhat similar to what government has done.

Now in the next section is the additional FTEs (full-time equivalents) requests that are the result of our ongoing programs and continuing increases in workload. Now what I'm going to do is . . . what I want to do here, I think, is go through the ones that are more self-explanatory here. And then I'll call on Linda Kaminski from our HR (human resource) and admin branch to present the strategic plan that that unit has developed and the request for some additional resources there to not only maintain the existing support levels but to improve the services.

The first new request for FTEs is in financial services. And there all we're doing is converting a non-permanent position to a permanent position and extending it from its three-quarter

time current level to a full time. We actually have been staffing it at full time and the workload is there. And we would like to have the position converted to that. And that's an additional \$5,400.

I'm going to skip human resource and admin for now and go on to visitor services, Sergeant-at-Arms. This \$81,000 is, I think, it's sort of a non-discretionary increase in our view. A new barrier-free access has been added to the building. We had no real choice in that. It's government policy to respond to the needs for barrier-free access to public buildings. It has long been needed and is now a reality and I think is going to be a great improvement to the building.

But what it means to our services is that we have another public, regularly open, door to staff. And that's an impact for security and it's an impact for visitor services.

In our view the new barrier-free entrance should be equal to the other main entrance in the building so that people who need the barrier-free access will be treated equally and have the same access that they would if they were able to go up the main stairs and in the front door. And also we need that barrier-free door open sort of the similar hours that the front door is open. And in order to have a reception there from a guide from visitor services and the security people that we need, we will be asking for one and a half FTEs in each of security and visitor services, and that's the total of \$81,000.

Legislative Library, we have a little more detailed presentation that we'll come to from Marian after that.

The other smaller items, Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk for \$3,000. And what this does is provide a small, additional funding to allow some skilled proofreaders to come and assist in ensuring that the statutes in their final form are at the most accurate state they can be from our perspective. And this proofreading happens while these items are still Bills and it enables the . . . it frees the Law Clerk to be doing the more important legal things — the drafting and assisting of caucuses and their corporate services to the Assembly — and allows the editors to do this reading and checking of the Bills before they proceed to their final stage. So we're requesting a small, additional amount of funding there.

Now I would like to call on Linda Kaminski — Linda, if you want to sit down at that end — and then Marian Powell as well to present their arguments for the main increases in the FTEs that we're proposing.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, if I could ask Gwenn, while you're doing that and while we're hearing these reports, I'd like to have some kind of a picture in terms of say — and I understand the workloads change and the Sergeant-of-Arms and all the changes we've made here in the last while — but I'd be really interested to know what changes have happened with respect to the full-time equivalents and the part-time people that we've employed in the Legislative Assembly Office say over the last five years?

And I'd like to sort of have a breakdown along the lines of I guess pressures from members, and directives that we have changed as members. How much is attributed to that and

administration through that, both in your office and as it relates to the library and the pressures on the library?

Because I'd really like to have some kind of an idea where we're going. Maybe I've been doing this for too many years, Gwenn. And it's sort of a perennial thing because I keep asking. We will approve part-time positions and I can't recall one being ever deleted. Invariably we end up approving. And maybe it's because of the growth of the work, and I'm sure it is, but I'd just like to be satisfied in my mind and understand how this is happening and what kind of growth there is there. So if I could have, say during even the last five years or whatever . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — What we could do is take five years ago and take today and show you the difference and account for why . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes. And if we could just see sort of how that's progressed say in the five years, that would be . . . I don't know how much work that would be, but . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — We wouldn't be able to do it for you today, but we can certainly do it.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, because I really would like to see that. It's just my curious mind.

Ms. Ronyk: — Well we certainly feel that our workload has increased tremendously. But I think all the services have also increased and that's what we're here to do. And we will . . . It will be a good exercise for us to pull that together.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Because you know, I mean, the Legislative Assembly Office serving members, and I know our jobs are changing, and they've been changing. And when we go through the budgets in the different arms of government we're always trying to hold the limit on the size of the civil service and the people who are serving the people of Saskatchewan.

And, you know, I think this office is certainly no different. And sometimes maybe members are more demanding and maybe a little more of a timeline between when a request is made and when you can deliver. Maybe some of that would make sense; I don't know. But I think we all want to sort of hold the line on the size of our employee base whenever we can. But anyway, I'll leave that with you then.

The Chair: — Our director of human resources, Linda Kaminski. Linda, thank you for being here and please proceed with your presentation.

Ms. Kaminski: — Thank you very much. What I will do is I'll draw your attention . . . I actually have a decision item entitled human resource and administrative services branch. And that would be decision item 12(d). It's a very brief decision item. Attached to that decision item should also be another document, strategic plan and reorganization. And it's actually this other document that provides all the detail to support the summary or the recommendations in the actual decision item. So I trust that you have those documents in front of you.

I think certainly I will express to you some of the changes that have occurred, particularly in the human resource and admin branch, and that factual information is here, but we'll get to that

in just a minute.

I think before I actually get started on the actual detail, I just want to set the framework a little bit. And I just want to talk in terms of context — why we went through the process we did, how did we get from where we were to where we want to go now in terms of some future direction.

And I think first of all I want to speak to the actual new project within government, the accountability framework. And I know the Speaker referred to it very briefly a little bit earlier.

And Saskatchewan has developed a new accountability framework, and in that accountability framework there are actually three components. And the components are (1) strategic planning; (2) performance management; and (3) reporting.

In terms of the strategic plan, I think we know what that means but in essence it simply defines what the organization wants to achieve and how it is going to accomplish that. How is it going to get to the ultimate vision of those ultimate goals.

A vision is established for the future. You set goals and objectives on how are we actually going to get to that visionary state.

Then in terms of that strategic policy, you also then have to obviously look at your policies, your programs, and as part of that you need to look at your financial resources, your human resources, your IT (information technology) technology, and your communications.

The second component then is performance management. And in that component you're actually trying to look at what have we accomplished, what have we actually done, what are our results; and compare that against what have we outlined in the strategic plan. What are we actually trying to do. So the performance measurements actually then tell us how did we perform, what were we able to accomplish.

And the final component of that accountability framework is the reporting component. And that component not only reports on our achievements and our results, it also continues to report on our future plans. Because we're not living in a static state, things continue to evolve and to change and therefore our strategic plan and our future direction needs to continue to be moulded and melded along route.

The human resource and admin branch had an opportunity to explore that framework this past summer and we really liked what we saw. And we could see then that it made sense to us. It was logical, it was rational, and it looked at the future direction and also was part of your future direction. You're actually developing your budgets and context with your strategic plan and your future direction, and that makes some sense.

So what we did is we consulted with the Public Service Commission, the management development centre, who was integral in the actual development of the accountability framework and they assisted us in the project that we commenced.

I want to first of all just again let you know in a summary what is it that we do. In the human resource and admin branch we are not only responsible for human resource services, we also have a component of administrative services as well.

In regards to the human resource services that we provide, we provide services to not only the Assembly, the internal branches of the Assembly, but also to the caucus offices, constituency offices, and other legislative officers. And again, I'll get into the detail of the document shortly.

When we examined the situation of where have we been, we did discover that in fact we have been very reactionary and very transactionally focused, because that's what we had to do. We had to get the job done.

Three years ago my branch was only staffed by two and a half FTEs. It was myself and a secretary and a relief secretary. So that was three years ago — two and a half FTEs.

Over the last four years there has been significant growth not only in the changes and the types of services that are now provided, the additional benefits that we provide, there's also been a significant increase in the client numbers, the numbers of clients that we actually have to serve, as well as the increased accountability that's required.

So even though we have made some progress and we have seen some increases in our staff resources over the last short term, unfortunately because of the exponential growth in again the client services and benefits, those increases in resources have not allowed us to continue to maintain an acceptable level of service. We've been unable to complete required, necessary work, we've not met the service requirements of our clients, and we have had insufficient time. As a result we have produced inferior products and services, and to me that's unacceptable. I'm not happy with that end product.

So because of where we were, we then looked at the accountability framework. We used that as a basis and we developed a branch plan. So our branch plan includes not only a strategic plan — so there's two components to it — it contains a strategic plan as well as a proposal for reorganization.

And I want to comment on the process that we went through. We consulted our staff. The staff worked with me. With my leadership we . . . they worked with me in terms of designing a branch that would be functional, would be efficient, and would also meet some of the new challenges my employees were looking for. So I wanted to make that point. That this concept was not designed in isolation of the staff; in fact they were a part of the process all along.

And I also have to comment that it was really through their good ideas about changes to the reorganization in terms of how could we be more effective and more efficient in the services that we are delivering to our various client bases.

So in terms of the reorganization, we recognized that indeed we could accomplish some new efficiencies by better utilizing our current human resources. We can improve and have improved some of our work processes. We have already increased the utilization of computerization and want to do more of that.

However what we also recognized is that there are new, growing demands and that's where the strategic plan really comes into play. That it is long since overdue that we shift our focus to not one of being transactional and crisis management to one of actually being more proactive and doing the strategic human resource work that should be done in any good human resource branch.

So in terms of the actual request that you see before you — and I do want to spend some time going through some substantiation of the request — but in terms of the request, we are asking for additional staff resources so that we can move forward with the strategic direction that again we have presented in the document that's attached. And we want to start implementing a competency-based human resource management framework that currently is not there.

So I'm not going to take very long to actually go through this document. I just want to point out a few highlights. I'm not going to take too much of your time.

On the bottom of page 1 of the reorganization document it goes through our client base and I think that's important to note.

Internally the clients that we serve in terms of Legislative Assembly employees proper, there are approximately 116 employees, permanent and non-permanent employees. But that represents only 31 per cent of our client base so a very, very small component of our entire client base. I'm on page 1, the bottom of the strategic plan reorganization document.

What is also represented there is a listing of our external clients. Our external clients represent 69 per cent of our total clients. And that's where we've seen the greatest significant growth in the past.

I want to draw your attention to the bottom of page 3. And the bottom of page 3, top of page 4, actually goes through the major factors that have influenced our branch over the course of the last number of years.

The first bullet point indicates that we've seen a 99 per cent increase in our client numbers from 1990 through to 2000. So we were sitting approximately 200 employees or client base; now we're sitting at approximately 400 employees or client base. And there are some charts at the back that I want to draw your attention to that will show that really it's been a slow, gradual increase but there's also been some significant increases on the client numbers in the last couple of years.

As a result of the increased number of clients that we are serving, that means that there is more work that we need to do to maintain our personnel database. We have to ensure that the records on the computer system are accurate in order to generate accurate, correct payroll. And obviously as a result of having more clients, we then have more human resource work not only to maintain the computer system but — that is just one component — there is also several more people taking leaves of absence, more people commencing, more people terminating, etc., etc. So it has certainly increased the type of work that we're doing.

The other bullet point talks about the types of our clients.

Seventy-four per cent of them are non-permanent. That creates a lot more work for us because we are having to pro-rate and calculate benefits for this group of employees. And they're a less stable workforce so we have more of these people coming and going on our personnel system, in addition to actually calculating, pro-rating benefits.

It's quite easy to maintain our permanent employees. They're here, they stay, unless they take a leave of absence or they terminate. There's really not a . . . there's less work with permanent employees than there are with non-permanent employees.

We have seen 13 new or enhanced client benefits since 1996 and the detail, the charts describe what kinds of benefits have occurred. Again as a result of having more client numbers, we're also seeing an increase in dental claims and in extended health claims. Our extended health plan is new and, obviously, you're going to see the number of claims increase.

But I think what I want to point out there is it's not just as simple as a client filling out a piece of paper saying: please reimburse me, make arrangements to reimburse me. It means that we have more clients who are eligible for those benefits. It also means that we have to do more interfacing because there is just that many more problems that can occur and we are the ones then who are actually trying to assist the employees in trying to get their claims approved. And if there's any difficulty in what has not been approved or some errors, we need to interface and try to correct those.

Top of page 4 talks, more particularly, about the directive 24 program and the directive 24 program came under the administration of my branch back in 1997. And again those points listed at the top also indicate the number of changes or increases to the administrative work required in that program.

So those are the major factors that have influenced our branch, in addition to major initiatives.

And we've had the new classification system that really required a lot of work to implement and now to maintain it. And certainly now we want to embark on our new human resource management strategy, and that too is going to require a lot of work.

I want to then just quickly point out to you in the appendix at the very back we have substantiated . . . I particularly want to point out, on appendix A7, it goes through in particular and outlines the additional benefits and services that have been provided just in the last four years.

That does not mean we weren't doing anything prior to 1996; what it means is these are the new things. So we certainly still are continuing to administer the previous benefits and services that were there prior to. However, these are the things that have significantly impacted our branch.

I guess the other thing that I want to point out that might kind of be lost within the document . . . The document certainly outlines our budgetary request, our request for new positions. We have the old org chart; we have the new proposed org chart. But then kind of buried on page 9 is the actual strategic plan.

And that's a one-page document in terms of the overall strategic plan. It outlines our vision, our mission, our strategic goals, and our values.

And then that in turn is supported on page 10, 11, and 12 with details on the objectives and the deliverables. And these are things that not only do we want to be delivering currently — and some of those things we have already responded to — these are also things we want to complete by the end of this fiscal year.

And it's basically a four-year plan. By the end of four years, where do we want to be? And again visioning, how are we going to get there? This is part of it, having the goals and the objectives. We have not yet substantiated these goals and objectives with an actual action plan or a course of action.

So again the document contains not only our reorganization component which has a request for staffing, but also then is our strategic plan. So I hope that that does answer some of the questions in particular to my branch. What are those things that have impacted my branch in the last number of years, in particular the last few years?

I know the other comment I want to make as well — and the Speaker just briefly alluded to it — that the Legislative Assembly as a whole wants to also follow the process that's outlined in the accountability framework. And we are presently in the process of initiating such a project, that we will be developing a strategic plan for the entire organization. And we do hope to have that strategic plan completed so that we'll be able to present it to the board in conjunction with our estimates for the following fiscal year. So indeed we're wanting to follow the framework that government is currently using.

And I guess that's my presentation, and I would certainly welcome any questions.

The Chair: — Thank you, Linda. Questions from board members?

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ms. Kaminski. My first reaction is I'm very impressed with the way you've laid out the strategic plan and the work that you've done on it.

And I particularly want to make mention of . . . that not only have you set out vision and mission values, objectives, but it looks to me like a lot of these objectives that you have come up with are measurable. And the fact that they're measurable, it means that, you know, you can come back and you have an accountability framework.

And I think that's the whole purpose of all of this, not just to go through an exercise which is interesting but very time-consuming, but the payoff is really if it's measurable, and then we know where to go from there.

So thank you for putting this together and taking us through it in such an efficient manner.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Kowalsky. Any other questions at this point? Ms. Kaminski? If not . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, Mr. Chair, I do have one. Are there any areas, Linda, where you see that the workload is going to be levelling off. I mean '99 was clearly very much a spike year. And your projections, 2000 into, say, 2003, '04, '05, are we going to be returning to some kind of a levelling off here? Is seven and a half — I think that's your total now — FTEs that you're requesting and that you already have.

Ms. Kaminski: — Correct; 7.5, yes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Is this going to be levelling off? If the status quo is maintained with respect to the number of employees that you serve, the way you serve them in terms of the directives that we draft and create here, would you expect that? Or are there going to be some areas where there's going to be a downturn in the amount of work that you have to do and you may in fact not require the full seven and a half complement that you're requesting and that you have?

Ms. Kaminski: — Thank you. Just to respond to that. Certainly we recognize that we wanted to create as many efficiencies as possible, and indeed if that's all that we were doing, that would be fine. Our request for staffing would reflect that. Because we are wanting to move forward with a new strategic direction, that takes resources. And we would be unable to move forward to do the things we want to do, at the pace that we want to do them, without adding any additional resources. So that's why the request for the staffing component is critical in allowing us to move forward.

Indeed you're correct that we certainly have seen a spike in terms of changes to the number of new things that we've started to do. Do I expect that to level off? Yes I do.

So therefore we want to continue to do the things that need to be done better than we have done them, because admittedly we've not done them well because of insufficient resources. So we want to continue to do those necessary things; we want to do those well.

But in addition to that we do want to have the . . . want to have adequate resources to be . . . to allow us to spend the time that's needed in the developmental stages of the new initiatives that we are proposing. And without additional resources, it simply will not allow us to do that.

So indeed my request I think is a very realistic request; that I do not anticipate that we're going to be coming back with requests for adding two and three more additional staff members to this particular branch. I think this request that we have before us is very realistic to continue to maintain our present benefits and services, as well as to be able to allow us the time to make the steps and strides that we need to do to move forward in our strategic plan.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And then I guess . . . and maybe let me ask it another way. If once your strategic plan is in process and implemented, are you expecting a downturn in the workload because of the way you're doing business and the changes to how you're doing business?

Ms. Kaminski: — No, no I do not. I will need the staff to continue those new initiatives that we will be developing and

actually implementing.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So then we can expect that the part-time staffing that you're asking for here will, at some point in time, there will be a request for a permanent status for those employees then.

Ms. Kaminski: — Exactly. I would expect . . . The request right now, I've said non-permanent for both human resource adviser on the figure two of the org chart, the proposed org chart in red. You have in your document in red blocking, the human resource adviser, non-permanent position and a support clerk, a non-permanent position.

I think that the worst case scenario is that we'd be looking at eight permanent FTEs for this branch and I expect that would be a very realistic FTE complement to continue to carry out our services as well as move forward in our strategic plan.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay well I just . . . I guess if I'd . . . To make a comment. I think as we move towards accountability as a board in terms of some of the directives and the changes that we made, in terms of the way we operate our constituency offices, the way we do business, I don't think there was any doubt in anyone's mind that there were going to be some administrative costs. And I guess what we're seeing now is a reflection of those changes as it relates to the increases and the number of people that you're asking to administer the changes we've made to the directives. And I think that's becoming more clear to me. And I guess that's part of the question I was asking you earlier, Gwenn.

Okay, I have, I've got nothing further to ask.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I have a question related to A3 in your charts.

Ms. Kaminski: — Sorry, Mr. D'Autremont, I didn't hear the page reference?

Mr. D'Autremont: — A3.

Ms. Kaminski: — Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — It deals with the spike, and I assume that that spike is reflective in all of the activities that took place in 1999. Was that reflective of the fact of the changes in the membership of the Assembly because it was an election year?

Ms. Kaminski: — An election year, indeed. And so we're dealing not only with former employees as we're dealing with terminations and severances and that sort of thing, we're also dealing with new employees coming on. In addition to that there was also implementation of the pay equity and COLAs (cost-of-living adjustment) and those things as well. So indeed you will see spikes in A3 in terms of not only election years but also cost-of-living adjustment years.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Anything else? If not then perhaps we can go on. Gwenn, did you want to continue with . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — Marian next.

The Chair: — Okay. I'm sorry, Marian, Marian Powell, Legislative Library.

Ms. Powell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to refer the members of the board to page 15 of the budget document where we've been discussing these various FTE requests. And I'd like to deal with our two-part request in two parts, starting with the .56 FTE non-permanent time for \$14,900 and I'd just like to explain to you the reason for this. This is money that supports the clerical work in our support services branch producing basically the members' current awareness newspaper-clipping services.

In 1999 the federal copyright regulations were published which significantly changed how we were to work with the newspapers. Under those new regulations, no newspaper article could be photocopied for 12 months after publication. And you can all appreciate how valuable that would be to you if we applied that to current awareness services and we had to wait a year to give them to you.

To deal with that, we've had to produce the clipping service using more original copies of the paper and it takes our clerical staff member longer to cut the papers, identify the articles, because there are simply more papers to cut. And that's the largest amount of this money.

The additional factor which is extremely recent and has in fact happened since November is the marvellous gift of two important collections of material. And it's very seldom we have the opportunity to enhance our collection in this way, and certainly not two of them at the same time.

In the late fall the Dr. Morris Shumiatcher law office was being wound up, and we were offered his amazing legal collection. It fits approximately 100 linear feet of shelving and is the most incredible private law collection I personally have ever seen. It's a wonderful addition to our collection.

And then more recently the Provincial Library has been dispersing their book collection as their change in mandate occurs. And once again we've had an opportunity to build critical gaps, fill them in our collection of Saskatchewan materials. Both of those will require a lot of clerical time, a lot of librarian time to get into our system, you know, in our catalogue. And the money that's here is just to be able to put them on shelves and identify them.

The money you don't see here, my head of support services actually calculates it will take \$60,000 in staff time to eventually get those materials fully incorporated into our system. We're not asking for that. So we don't really ask for everything.

The second item on our request for non-permanent staff is to deal with a service issue. And I would actually on this one refer you to a decision item no. 12(f) where there's been a fair amount of detail. I'm assuming you will have read it so I won't necessarily repeat what's there. We're asking for approval to extend an existing full-time, non-permanent reference librarian.

This position is required to meet minimum service requirements on the library reference desk. And that minimum requirement is one professional librarian on duty during the 40 hours a week, year-round, that the library is open. And during session that's two librarians for 47 hours a week. This is minimum.

This position adds a third librarian to the two reference librarians and one manager making up the reference section. It's been staffed for 17 months so there's an incumbent in the position who is working full-time. The incumbent works 13 hours a week out of session and 20 hours a week on the reference desk during session, and carries a substantial share of the CPA conference support.

And I wonder . . . Margaret has I think some charts for you, if she could distribute them. Great. You'll have a blue line chart here and it has two lines on it. I wonder if I can just refer you to that. This shows one piece of the growth. There's a lot of growth going on but this does affect the need for this particular position. And you'll see it goes from 1987 up to 2000.

The blue mountain that you see represents the support of parliamentary conference delegates — MLAs who attend various parliamentary conferences. You'll notice at the beginning of the period we were supporting about two and we're now regularly supporting ten. That work alone takes half a person-year to support. Each one of those products takes anywhere up to 80, 90 hours of librarian time to produce. Each conference we may be supporting two, four, five members in their needs to appear at parliamentary conferences.

You'll also notice there's a nice yellow line. And I'm sure I don't have to tell the members what years the elections were. You'll notice that the blue line, we're not supporting parliamentary conferences. But the yellow line just peaks. And you'll notice there was a big peak when we first started the backgrounders.

And the backgrounders are information. When there are new members, new members come in, new ministers come in, they want the same kind of background documentation that we provide to support parliamentary conferences in their own areas of interest, about their own constituency, about their critic responsibilities.

So if we were to put those in and level them out, you would see that it doesn't matter if there's an election or not, there's a lot of this very high-value, professional work happening. And you can see that it's growing. This is a part of this request.

There's also a contingency aspect to this request. There's a lot of things happening. And I sat here today and I listened to all these wonderful new proposals that offer so much to the House and to members. We're not proposing anything new but we're trying to keep up with all those new things that are happening.

The critical factor for us is that we must at minimum be able to begin to work with all the changes that are happening around us. Special committees such as the Tobacco Committee have greatly increased service demands on the reference desk. The present Rules Committee decisions concerning the increased role of committees and the role of the private member can be expected to require greater library support. And the approval of

the legislative internship program is like giving us another whole caucus research staff to support.

In addition to this, one staff member has just given me notice that she's expected to request significant reduction in her full-time hours and this has a direct impact on the reference desk. We're treading water. This request is to allow us to gauge what we really do need, which is why it's a non-permanent request — if I had my druthers, I'd be here with a permanent request — but we want to see where it takes us and what we really need. But we do know that to keep the reference staff open, we need this position full time.

Now the reason we're coming to you now is because over the past 17 months we've been able to find the funding through periods in breaks of service during recruitment in other positions and during vacancies.

That is no longer going to be the case. We will have basically all our positions filled and we will have insufficient money available to fund the full-time librarian. So we're here making a request for consideration that this non-permanent position be funded for the next fiscal year. And you certainly will expect that we will review our needs and see where we stand with these new initiatives and the impact on the service.

The important role that we serve is that we must be able to meet your needs. We can't say to the third member in the door, sorry, there's nobody here this afternoon, come back tomorrow. And this is the position that staffs the desk, that answers the phone. And that's what we have before you here.

Now I'd be happy to answer any questions.

The Chair: — Thank you, Marian. Board members? The floor is open.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you for your presentation. I'm just wondering how much of your time is spent dealing with requests from outside of the building — students or academic researchers or whoever else may be coming in and seeking assistance?

Ms. Powell: — There's certainly some. Now as members of the board will probably recall, we do have a tri-party mandate established by a legislative committee in 1981. And that requires that first of all we serve the Legislative Assembly in its needs, then we serve anybody from the public of Saskatchewan who may come in the door, and then we serve the civil service of the province for whom we are the only research library that they have direct access to.

And I'm just looking at what I have in my hand here and I don't believe I have a breakdown of that information. But I would guess, and this is a guess, approximately a third to something less than a half could be accounted for at any given time by non-legislative clients.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Has that workload been increasing or remaining stable, or what is happening there?

Ms. Powell: — Well we've been trying to force the non-legislative clients to go down, and we've been trying to do

that by referring them to their own local resources where they may some.

And we've been a bit stymied in that at different times and for different reasons — partly because we have such a unique collection and very much a unique expertise in dealing with legislative documents, with statutes, with the laws — and so throughout the province they do look to this library for help.

We get calls from other libraries. We get calls from other parts of the world for information on legislation, etc. Where a government agency, for example, has a library we will always refer the questions of their staff back to them first, both to support their own awareness of their library and as well, that's their special resource and they will be better able to help them.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So it's people who are coming in asking for information that deals with the legislature, with statutes, implementation or interpretation of law rather than things that could be done at the public libraries.

Ms. Powell: — They usually go to the public libraries for those. No, it's specialized.

I guess in preparation for this, I was doing some thinking about exactly this issue. And Pareto's economic law absolutely applies to our reference service — 20 per cent of your requests generate 80 per cent of your work. And 54 per cent of our requests come from the legislature and the members, and they are not going down, and they are still generating 80 per cent of our work.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Powell, in your earlier comments you talked about the new copyright regulations. Could you explain, so I'd understand the difference between the old system and the new system, why there's increased work with respect to clippings.

Ms. Powell: — Oh sure. What happens is that we have an established list of about 700 to 800 subject headings, and we have a very well-trained clerk who spends his time reading the newspapers, identifying within our policy of what we clip, which articles are pertinent, tagging them so that an assistant can clip them, and putting a subject heading on them.

And in the past we were able to do this with using two copies of each daily newspaper. As you realize if you've got a clipping on one side of one page and you've got a clipping on the other, you've got to have two sides of every page to cut. And then we photocopied. It was a very efficient way to do it.

So for example if we had a story — and election periods are especially good for this — if we had a story about an election gathering and it listed the names of 15 MLAs, both present and past; the gathering was perhaps on an agricultural issue and they had presentations by certain interest groups. In the past what we would do is we would cut out two copies of that article, put it under the name, copy it for each member's name, because we do keep a file under each MLA's name, and a photocopy would go into each file. That's very quick. You cut out two copies, you photocopy the requisite number, and they go into the file.

And we link into those for the current awareness services. And those are all photocopies. We incidentally pay a separate fee for that, and that's covered. But the file isn't.

Now we have to buy more copies of the paper to allow for the normal expectation of multiple copies to cover this kind of situation where we've perhaps got two subjects that are being dealt with and we need to put that in those two subjects, perhaps three member names. So physically you've got to handle more, you've got to cut more out, you've got to highlight more. So the time is very greatly increased.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Second question: when it comes to developing packages for members going to CPA conferences, is there any attempt to . . . Is this done in other parliaments as well . . . by other parliaments?

Ms. Powell: — In other parliaments, what usually happens in those jurisdictions that have research services, the research service does short, analytical papers that are provided to support their delegates. Because we don't have a research service in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, our halfway step is to offer members a compilation of relevant articles, chapters from books, that will give them a quick background to the various topics at the conference.

I would have to guess — and this is a guess because we don't have a research service — but I would have to guess it would take a lot more time to produce the analytical articles with the research service than it takes us to do the compilations. Our members have told us they look really good at these conferences because they're informed. They really value them. It's our attempt to reach partway to the goal of the research papers.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I'm wondering whether we might not be able to sometime buy the research produced by somebody else?

Ms. Powell: — Not usually for the topics we're after. In fact it's usually very hard to find the research papers to even give pieces of.

You'll recognize I'm sure from those of you who have attended various conferences, it's highly specialized or else it's extremely general — the Washington seminar for example, energy policy in the United States, what's the perspective our Saskatchewan delegate wants to take? And so we work with the member in providing what he needs as background. We couldn't buy that somewhere else.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Not . . . see, the topics are handed out ahead of time.

Ms. Powell: — Sometimes not very far.

Mr. Kowalsky: — And you have a, if you have a . . . and all the people, the delegates going from every province to the same conference. So if Ontario has a research service and they're doing it on those topics, then all you'd have to do is maybe fill in something on the Saskatchewan perspective.

Ms. Powell: — And I think probably maybe that's what we do. I guess the difficulty with that — and it's a very good idea — is

that this research is done specifically for the individual member in his home jurisdiction. It's not something that is prepared and provided to others generally in my experience. So it's very hard to link into it.

Our delegate going to a conference attended by an Ontario member with an analytical paper, our member will not receive that. And sometimes the topics . . . you'll recognize that when you go to a jurisdiction, they will highlight perhaps a situation in their own jurisdiction, and our member wants to go with some basic knowledge to be able to contribute to that particular discussion.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well what I have witnessed in these things is we generally have as good if not better information than most of the others have. And so I certainly think that you do a good job in that area.

Ms. Powell: — Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I do have some . . . still cloudy on the copyright situation. You said you need to buy more newspapers now because of that. How many more newspapers would you need to buy? Like what's the criteria?

Ms. Powell: — Well we're experimenting with it. We've worked with the subject heading list. We're working with the individual that does the work to try and get him to estimate the average number of copies that would be required.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So do you need one newspaper per copy or something?

Ms. Powell: — Yes, basically. Actually you may need two, because you have to think of both sides of the page. And if you cut an article out in the middle of one side, it's probably going to take a piece of an article you want on the other. So for every article, you've probably got to have two copies of the paper.

Right now, we're running with about five copies to cover the bases.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So if Mr. Hillson, Mr. Kowalsky, and myself each wanted the same article from the paper, would you need one newspaper or three?

Ms. Powell: — Well for the service, what we do is we do it by the subject heading or the other criteria by which we clip them. And what feeds into this is the current awareness service.

So for example if you and Mr. Kowalsky and Mr. Hillson had registered for our current awareness service and you were all getting that same subject, we have copyright clearance to provide those copies to you. But we don't have copyright clearance to only make one copy of the article and then photocopy everything. So we have this restriction.

We pay an annual fee to the copyright collective to cover all the photocopy needs that we provide directly to members. But what we do with those clippings is we also keep a file in the reading room because most of the members, in my experience, throw them out.

They look at them; ah, this is interesting; and then a few weeks later they or one of their staff will come in and say, there was a clipping on this subject, and we go to our file and we can still provide it. And so there's this file which really takes the cusp of this work because we must have clippings that we keep, as well as the ones you receive and can handle as you wish.

It's not a big increase. I mean we've gone from about 20 hours a week to 28 hours a week. But it has been a factor and it does come into that small amount of additional money.

The Chair: — Okay. Anything else? Thanks very much, Marian.

Ms. Ronyk: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to just keep carrying the members on through the front part of the budget and if you turn to page 17, you'll see the overall summary of the personnel requirements for the Assembly.

And there, even though you've been hearing I think what may feel like an overload of requests for workload resolution, you can see that our request for permanent position from last year is going up by two, two FTEs. And on the sessional or non-permanent side, going up from a 17.13 to the 20.59. It isn't quite as dramatic, maybe, as it seems.

And then on page 18, I can draw your attention to one change where we finally are asking for a decrease in personnel. And that's because of a reorganization of our legislative page program. We don't have the same kind of work needs, work demands for the pages outside of the sitting hours as we used to do because of electronic publishing, intersession tabling of reports, etc. We're only basically going to hire the pages for the afternoons during the sittings, with only two messengers on in the mornings. And so then we can save a few dollars there.

And the other item there is the members' secretaries that we discussed last night, and that is the funds that will be rolled over into the new caucus directive.

Pages 19 and 20 show another non-discretionary increase that we'll be requesting this year. And as you're aware, Saskatchewan is a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association that connects parliaments from across Canada and around the world, and we have to take our turn at hosting various conferences and events as they move across the country.

And this year, in the fall of 2001, it is our turn to host the annual Canadian regional seminar of CPA that will involve delegates from all of the provinces, territories, and the federal parliament to this parliamentary seminar. And that is a budget that will . . . it will be a one-time request, of course. It is not something that is ongoing; we don't host these things every year.

And the other conference that again is Saskatchewan's turn to host is that of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees that will be hosted here in September. Those impact on our overall budget and yet we should see those decrease then next year.

Page 21 shows the travel changes across all of the codes, the

travel codes within our budget. We're basically supporting the same conferences as last year with a couple of differences. As you're aware, the conferences for the professional staff in the Legislative Assembly are professional development as the CPA is professional development for MLAs.

Here the changes that we're requesting are to send a third person to the *Hansard* association, particularly this year with our move to a digital transcription. We're also asking for resources to send . . . staff and finance human resources and the information systems branch to a new conference that Alberta will be hosting that will be for parliamentary support services.

These are people who haven't been having the opportunity to consult with their colleagues in other legislatures across the country. And we're finding more and more that our problems are similar in the various legislatures in other jurisdictions and it saves us resources if we don't have to reinvent the wheel and we can learn from our colleagues who have already maybe spent a lot of money developing a software program to do something. Sometimes they're good enough to just give them to us and it does help to have those contacts across our colleagues in other legislatures.

This year is also the year where we do have the Canadian-American Clerks conference. This is only held every second year so it comes in and out of our budget on a regular basis. It's being hosted in Ottawa this year.

And other travel expenses include the asset management program that we've undertaken to ensure that our fixed assets are properly recorded and inventories are maintained for constituency office furniture and equipment and also for all of the furniture and equipment through the Legislative Assembly offices here in Regina.

And you've already heard I think a fair bit from the IT branch, the information technology branch. There you'll see our fixed asset expenditures reflects a good number of decreases in information technology — a \$25,000 decrease in purchases of hardware and equipment; reduction in our directive 24 estimates of \$24,000; and increases on the broadcast services and Legislative Library side.

And I think maybe I will have . . . Earlier you said you had some questions for Gary. If the Speaker would like to invite Gary Ward to come forward to present the case for this request and answer any other questions you have.

The Chair: — Gary, please. We're quite interested in some of the technology that you've researched and are able to bring to us now for proposal.

Mr. Ward: — The information that I gathered is a direct result of instructions from the Standing Committee on Communications to expand our distribution. Actually, to quote, it is:

To investigate and make proposals with respect to increasing the accessibility of the broadcast of the legislative proceedings through the services of the Saskatchewan Communications Network or by other means.

The most economical way of expanding our broadcast is through SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network). The other means involved working with the direct home services, and those services are extremely expensive. They're like \$300,000, for instance, to just access one of them. And that doesn't include back-hauling our signal to uplink it to those services.

So we're looking at about \$400,000 per year per service with Star Choice or with ExpressVu. So it's out of the question. You're looking at almost a million dollars a year just to get on those two services.

But by going with SCN, we've actually had a proposal from them that they would provide a satellite uplink for our signal from their Regina broadcast centre which is over by the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) building — in that building actually. And recently they were able to get their uplink from their Saskatoon location down to Regina.

Now what we're proposing is taking our signal, instead of using the fibre optic link between the legislature and SaskTel — SaskTel used to uplink our signal — we propose to transmit the signal across the lake to the CBC building which is a nice clear path from the top of our building in a very unobtrusive way — I mean you can't even see the transmitter up there — to the SCN broadcast centre.

The cost of this, what they're proposing is a flat rate of \$160,000 a year based on this year's cost for transponder rental. Now that would include the uplink and the transponder rental for a period of one year.

But in order to do this we have to buy a microwave system. It's a digital microwave system which is, you know, gives us a better quality transmission across the lake. And it's a one-time cost of \$32,000.

So along with this one-time cost and the \$160,000 a year cost, instead of an hourly rate of \$367 an hour which we are now paying to SaskTel, we would have a 24-hour service availability on the transponder for \$160,000 which would allow us to take advantage of . . . for instance if we do eventually televise committees from this room, there'd be no extra transmission cost for us. If we wanted to replay the proceedings, there'd be no extra cost for transmission. I mean it's a heck of a deal. There's really no comparison in terms of, you know, the cost. Because with SaskTel, obviously on an hourly rate we have no ceiling; it just goes on and on and on. If you had an extra-long session, it still stays at the same rate.

So I guess in terms of budgeting, you have a pretty good idea of what you're going to be spending that year for distribution.

The other thing about having it on SCN is that they propose that they would replay the daily question period following their programming day. This isn't the most appealing time because it's at midnight when they go off the air, but they would replay our question period at that time and they would replay it again at 7:30 in the morning before they go on air for the day.

They're also proposing that they may, if we can, you know, get the proper arrangement, the technology, to replay the entire

proceedings overnight. Now what this would give us is the question period rebroadcast twice and the proceedings broadcast on SCN on Star Choice, the direct-to-home service; on ExpressVu, the direct-to-home service; and on the image wireless service as well as our own SaskLegNet (Saskatchewan Legislative Network).

The Chair: — Which wireless? None of those other two, the Star Choice or the . . .

Mr. Ward — ExpressVu.

The Chair: — And ExpressVu, yes. Those are satellite. It's got nothing to do with the satellite.

Mr. Ward: — Yes, it does. Yes. SCN's signal goes up on both of those services.

The Chair: — Oh, okay.

Mr. Ward: — Yes. So because they're not using that time slot for their own programming, they would put our signal on it so we would have — well fairly wide distribution, like I said. As you can see it covers pretty well all avenues for broadcast distribution other than video streaming on the Internet, which you've already discussed. And that would be the sort of the . . .

The Chair: — Okay. Thanks, Gary. Yes, Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Well I think the proposal to go on SCN from midnight till 7 would be a good cure for insomniacs. If this proposal was to be accepted, would the broadcast still carry on on the legislative channel on channel 2 on the cable?

Mr. Ward: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So this would be an enhanced service at basically the same costs that we're currently paying?

Mr. Ward: — That's right.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. The current equipment that you're using, what would need to be changed there? Are the cameras digital? Are you converting to analog from the digital and then converting back to digital? Or what's happening there? What would need to be changed, if anything?

Mr. Ward: — Nothing would have to be changed. But right now as we speak we're testing this system out. We have in place the microwave transmission unit, and it's being transmitted across the lake. We're just sending across colour bars and tone right now just to . . . and then it's being uplinked, and so we can see the signal. This has been going on for about a week now. We just had . . . We're doing the test.

But other than that there's no requirement for any change in the cameras or any of the equipment that we have there. It's converted to digital, sent across the lake, and they take it from there.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The cameras that we currently have, they would be capable of also doing media streaming onto the

Internet, would they?

Mr. Ward: — Oh, yes. Yes. There's no problem there because the conversion to digital will take place with the information services branch; that we just send the signal down to them and it's converted to digital and sent out on the Internet from there.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. I think it certainly gets the broadcasts out to the rest of the province that don't have access to it on cable and especially at the same costs that we're already spending. So I see that as certainly a benefit.

I look at my own constituency. I think I have two communities, maybe three, that have access to the legislative channel on cable. And the rest of the constituency doesn't have that access. If you look across the North, the same situation. Look around most of rural Saskatchewan and that's the likelihood of what the situation is.

The Chair: — We would mostly rely on satellite links.

Mr. Ward: — Well I suppose too on the remote regions . . . I mean when you get up into the northern part of Saskatchewan, I mean, there is virtually no cable service and the only access that they would have to our signal would be either on the Internet or on the direct-to-home services.

And if you really want to see the legislative proceedings, almost everybody has a VCR, and you can record it, you know. So even if it is at an inconvenient time, you can get . . . you can get the signal, you can record it, you can watch it the next day — whatever is your convenience. And I'm saying that access is really what we're trying to establish . . . access to the signal.

The Chair: — Excellent. Thank you very much. Any other questions from the board?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — These may be silly sort of questions, Gary, but if in terms of the broadcast services that we receive from SaskTel, at what, 367 bucks an hour? — \$160,000 — have we negotiated or have we been able to negotiate any kind of a different arrangement with them that might accomplish the same thing but be much cheaper than what, in fact, we're paying?

Mr. Ward: — No, they insist on having an hourly rate and I have . . . I do have a proposal from them on . . . and again I've included this in my report to the Standing Committee on Communications. They did agree to lower their rate, their yearly rate. Let's see, how was it, 17 . . . \$1,450 per month or 17,400 per year.

But what that does is takes it to the SaskTel television operation centre and then, being they're no longer uplinking for us, then it has to be transmitted from there over to SCN to be uplinked. So the cost of that hasn't been included in this. So I don't really know what they're going . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So I guess my question would be is why can't we . . . why can't we broadcast directly to SCN?

Mr. Ward: — Yes, we are.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And have SCN feed the whole legislative channel.

Mr. Ward: — That's what we're proposing.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Is that what this is doing? Or what am I . . .

Mr. Ward: — Yes, we're going directly to SCN from a transmitter we have . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay, and I'm sorry, because I haven't read this. I think I will plead ignorant and . . .

Mr. Ward: — I must not have explained myself well.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So then . . . no, because I missed part of your presentation. I didn't read this part of the book. And so I . . . Well tell me then, does that save us 162,000 a year?

Mr. Ward: — No, it doesn't save us that. We're paying \$160,000 a year based on a 76-day session.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Right.

Mr. Ward: — Okay. But that's for 76 days, and that's if we use 24 hours a week, which we're . . . under the legislative rules that's what we get to televise, for 76 days. It would cost us \$160,000. But if we go longer than that it'll cost us \$367 an hour. Whereas with this proposal it'll cost us \$160,000 a year and it's our channel virtually. It's ours 24 hours a day. There's no limit on it. So we can do whatever we want.

You know, we were thinking in terms of playing other videos. You know, if you wanted information on MLAs and their constituencies, we could do that. It's our channel, rather than just renting a space for a few hours a day.

The Chair: — Just to clarify again, Gary, that the one-time cost of \$32,000, right, for this link, whatever . . .

Mr. Ward: — That's right. This is the microwave equipment.

The Chair: — Okay, microwave equipment, as opposed to continuing to pay \$20,000 a year to SaskTel, right, for the fibre optic link?

Mr. Ward: — That's just the . . . yes, that's the local loop charge. That's just the fibre optics getting it from here to SaskTel. That's \$20,000 a year.

The Chair: — Okay. So if we eliminated that, spent the 32, so we'd save that 20?

Mr. Ward: — We'd no longer be spending that \$20,000 a year, that's right.

Mr. D'Autremont: — One of the things that has been talked about in Rules and Procedures and other committees is the possibilities of broadcasting committees. I wonder if the Clerk perhaps would know how many hours committees would sit annually. Just a wild guess.

Ms. Ronyk: — The Deputy Clerk should be able to tell us that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Because if that happens, that's a significant cost, financial transfer, to SaskTel.

Ms. Ronyk: — And if there's some expectation from the Rules Committee that they'll be recommending increased use of committees for doing things like legislation and estimates, you can use a stronger argument for making those available on television as well.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I mean this is such a scintillating discussion today, I'm sure everybody would have wanted to have been sitting in on this.

Ms. Ronyk: — In our existing level of committee activity we budget for 294 hours of committee meetings per year. So if you were paying \$367 an hour, for 294 hours of meetings, you could see it would be . . . this is a substantial savings not to have to pay additional transmission costs.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — And we're ahead of the game by year two. That's what you're saying, isn't it?

Mr. Ward: — Well, yes. At the \$20,000 first year, that would give us 12,000 remaining to sort of amortize, I suppose, over the next year. After year two we'd be ahead of the game.

The Chair: — Any other questions on that? If not, board members, I want to express on your behalf thank you to Gary Ward for the presentation. Thank you.

And we'll move on to the next item then which is in the book — Legislative Library, books and periodicals.

I'm going to ask Marian to come back and make a presentation to us once again.

Ms. Powell: — This will be briefer, I promise.

Basically the library is holding pretty much of a stand-pat on our materials budget request. The first item that you have is a \$15,000 special one-time request to purchase a definitive encyclopedia, which has not been republished in 30 years. We use it a great deal to support both reference and work for members.

We can actually . . . if we have the money authorized, we can actually ask for slightly less because, if we buy it at prepublication, August, 2001, we'll receive a discount of approximately \$2,600.

We will have to buy it. If we don't . . . well if you're not able to buy it this year, we'll have to pay the full \$15,000. And as I've noted here, it represents 28 per cent of our entire book budget for one set. So it isn't really absorbable under the ordinary materials budget, but it is a one-time cost.

Secondly, our subscription package — our library subscription agent has forecast an increase in the cost of the existing subscriptions that we receive of 11.5 per cent. We're asking for 10 per cent and we'll have to do a bit of cancellation. Every year there's a certain amount of subscriptions that cease and

we're usually able to accommodate something less than the estimated increase.

But that's what we're asking for in our materials.

The Chair: — Thank you, Marian. Any questions, board members?

Mr. D'Autremont: — The encyclopedia has an interesting title, but what is it?

Ms. Powell: — What it is, is it's basic foundation articles on any topics dealing with social and behavioural sciences. So for example, one of the frequent kinds of things we get a request for, someone wants a short, concise summary item on political ethics or the philosophy of politics or, you know, these kinds of very basic core academic background. I can certainly foresee with our potential interns, they'll be using this.

It gives you, usually, an article less than a page on every particular topic. Sometimes it's a big topic, it's longer. It's highly authoritative and it has an authoritative bibliography for it. So that anything in the subjects, it's a reliable source of information to begin with.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Again, are you allowed then to photocopy a page or two of this or . . .

Ms. Powell: — We pay a fee. Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Okay. So you have covered that and you can do that then.

Ms. Powell: — Yes, we can do that.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — So as well as paying for — yes, pardon me for interrupting — so, as well as paying for the subscription, you're also paying for, you're also in addition paying for the privilege to copy.

Ms. Powell: — No, that's a separate fee. The \$15,000 requested for the books and the 17,000 for the serials is simply a cost price. But we pay a separate fee through the Legislative Assembly to cover a copyright authorization fee through CANCOPY for our basic level of copying to support the MLAs.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Won't this publication be of more interest perhaps to the university?

Ms. Powell: — Oh they'll want it too.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So why do we need two in the province?

Ms. Powell: — Because we can't get at theirs fast enough and we need it available.

We also need it for people who come in on foot. You know, we use it a lot to support the MLAs directly, but it's such a standard resource and we need it to support our own background research and book collection. It really is a foundation work; otherwise we wouldn't be coming for this request.

I know it sounds like a lot of money but to put it in perspective, there's a new encyclopedia of art, the Macmillan *Encyclopedia of Art* published in Britain — \$60,000 for the set. So we're not going to ask for that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Can't you get it on CD-ROM?

A Member: — No.

The Chair: — Okay. Anything else from the board members? Marian, anything else you want to add?

Ms. Powell: — No, that's fine. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. We'll move right along then.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'll very quickly finish the analysis portion of the budget. The next item you'll see on page 25 is a decrease, a wonderful decrease. This is in the Legislative Assembly's budget or estimates for supporting caucuses, and here the savings is due to the purchase of telephones. This year the telephone systems, we now don't have to pay the rental costs. So until we have to buy new ones, then we're going to save money.

In addition, there's a savings in long-distance charges with the long-distance rates going down of \$37,000, allowing us to reduce our estimates there by 37,000. And the frugality of the caucuses has meant that we were able to reduce the office supply budget a little bit too. And we appreciate the caucuses' care in those expenses.

The remaining sections are bringing us to the statutory side of the budget and the analysis there deals with the effects on our budget of the cost of living indexing — the stuff that's indexed to the consumer price index — the effects of the postal rate increase, and another small decrease in the current expectation that we know now for the activity of legislative committees in this next year.

And I think that sort of wraps up the analysis of the changes in our estimate.

The next pages give you some summary information. Pages 29 and 30 are the roll-up numbers that the Speaker mentioned to you earlier, that give you the changes in each of the subvotes and the overall effects.

And at this point, any further questions are welcome.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I have just one general question with respect to something that you had talked about earlier, and that is the school visitations conducted by yourself. You mentioned that the demand was considerable. Were you able to meet all of the school demands, or all the requests, or is that possible?

The Chair: — No. It's virtually impossible, between when the school gets underway in October and we're booked right . . . we have bookings right now until even into beginning of March to try and meet as many requests as possible.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Okay. Now in keeping with some of the themes that we've been discussing here, the necessity for us to continue to reach the public and particularly reach young people, I'm very . . . I was very pleased to hear your report on that, in that there's a take-up on this and there's a continued demand. And I think there should be a good payoff on it.

And the problem we're trying to address here, one of respect for the parliamentary system and the sort of democratic system that we have in total, is it's an issue that we're trying to address here in Saskatchewan, but it is also a problem in other parts of the country, certainly across the continent. And I know that there are other legislators, whether they be in the US (United States) or Canada, they're sort of faced with the same problem.

And so I want to make a comment that I was . . . you're following up on what Mr. Hagel started. It kind of proves to me that, hey, this was a worthwhile thing, and that it's something that can be sustained by the Speaker's office into the future.

And I would encourage you to, maybe not this year or in this budget, but maybe in future budgets, to look at maybe even ways of expanding that kind of service, particularly to our youth. Maybe involving the Deputy Speaker on some of them if it's a possibility, and looking at other methods that we can use to instil in our young people in particular, just what a treasure we have here in Canada in our parliamentary system.

And I was looking for an opportunity to make those remarks and this looked like a good time to do it, Mr. Speaker. So I don't need a response or anything. I just wanted to put that on record for you.

The Chair: — Well I thank you for that. I'd like to respond just with a couple of comments. That's very much appreciated. And the response has been such that it's extremely encouraging, as I mentioned, by the teachers, by the students, by the MLAs in those constituencies that I've been fortunate enough to be able to visit.

The other, the teachers' response after having attended the SSTI here in the Legislative Building, it's just been tremendous — the response and now their appreciation. And it's through their participation in that program here that ultimately we start receiving the requests as early as mid-summer for the Speaker to . . . for these visitations.

So I think it's . . . if there's any congratulations, it's to all the members who are participating and requesting attendance of the Speaker at the schools and participating in those programs. Just another springboard to what we talked about, the internship program and beyond; I couldn't agree more.

There is an interest among the young people. They have also, whatever way, shape or form, developed some cynical attitudes or perceptions of what politicians are all about and it gives an opportunity for a very frank question and answer period. And some of the questions that are asked are very straightforward by some of those young people, and they're uninhibited so they ask them. And if I'm not able to answer them, I defer them to the MLA that's with me and what a pleasure it is sometimes. So I thank you for that.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I think, Mr. Speaker, you may be trying to circumvent the media by going direct to the people. You wouldn't be doing that?

The Chair: — No. No, no. That's why I always have the MLA present.

Ms. Ronyk: — I think Mr. Speaker is too modest to note, but I could add that the ideas for the Speaker's outreach program have been shared with other Speakers across the country and they're very interested. And there's a big uptake, really, on carrying forward in their own jurisdictions with some of these ideas and the direct contact between the Speaker, representing the Legislative Assembly and the system, the institution as a whole, with the students and other groups in the communities.

What it takes is just a tremendous amount of energy on behalf of the Speaker and that's the limit for the program.

The Chair: — Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I agree that the program is very worthwhile. And one of the areas that I see a need to carry out this program is in the understanding of what and how question period operates. What it is and why it is. That seems to be the area that the youth seem to totally misunderstand our process and yet they all want to see it. And that's the odd part about it is, while they certainly have some concerns, it's the part they want to see.

And so I think any explanations, any information that they can receive, on particularly question period but certainly the whole parliamentary process — but question period because that is what they see — is certainly of benefit to us all.

The Chair: — Thank you. Anything else?

Ms. Jones: — We're all attracted to gore in some way or another.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Ambulance chasers.

The Chair: — Okay, if the board is now prepared to perhaps . . . If you want to have some direct and specific discussions with respect to any items, I would suggest, and with your approval, we will go in camera to discuss any concerns on the variety of items and issues that we've . . . (inaudible) . . . Yes, Ms. Jones.

Ms. Jones: — May I just ask one question about the \$67,000 decrease. I assume that, although we've purchased our own telephone equipment, that our line rental and long-distance provider is still SaskTel.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes it is.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you for that reassurance.

The Chair: — Thank you. We'll then adjourn to in camera meetings. Thank you.

The committee continued in camera.

The Chair: — Okay. With the approval of board members, we'll deal with item 15. Members, you'll have your . . . the item, item no. 15, and you have received the information in advance. Unless you have some discussion, I'm prepared to present a motion. Yes, Mr. Hillson.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — I wish to make a statement first. I was not aware of this item coming up and of course these are not my lawyers. I've never met with them. They did not represent me, and I've never even talked to them. So I have been advised that this is not a conflict of interest for me.

But notwithstanding that fact, I still believe it would be appropriate for me to absent myself from this to avoid any misperception. And I have been told that it would be completely appropriate for me to be a part of these discussions, but I would prefer not to be. So I'm going to request to be excused.

The Chair: — Okay. You're excused.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. I think on this special warrant there are a number of items. I think under 0009, the one dealing with the personnel costs because of illnesses, that is something that's unexpected and has to be dealt with.

The purchase of the telephone system again is going to be of long-term benefit to the Assembly in decreasing costs.

The questions I have really relate to the legal fees associated with the DEML (Direct Energy Marketing Limited) defamation suit. It was our understanding initially when this was brought forward that it would be narrowly focused and done in a manner that would be as least cost as possible.

I think it's a very important question to each and every one of us sitting in the Assembly as to what are our immunities when we're speaking in the Assembly and when we're speaking in committee. And it's my understanding that this board that we're sitting on now does not provide us with that immunity because it's a board created by statute and not a committee of the legislature.

But when we speak as an MLA in the performance of our duties on the floor of the Assembly or in committee, what is our immunity? So I think it's an important question that needs to be clarified to us.

But this particular item does raise some questions such as: who was the legal counsel involved and how are they selected? And why was the Law Clerk of the Assembly not utilized for this service?

The Chair: — I thank you for that question. I think it's a very appropriate one and you're right. This is an issue that needs to be discussed and I'll just mention that our legal counsel, our legislative counsel, was involved, Mr. D'Autremont. But I'll, if you'll allow me to, have Ms. Ronyk address this particular item.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. The legal counsel that was used was a lawyer that has previously provided legal services to the board. The legal proceedings were occurring in

Alberta and it made sense for us to have legal advice there, present, working from the same city. And that's why we did choose to seek the assistance of the same lawyer who has helped us in the past from Bennett Jones. The lawyer in question is Robert Thompson.

Certainly Mr. Thompson worked closely with Ken Ring, our Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk. The speed in which the material needed to be gathered from time to time required the resources of more than one person to do. And that's of course some of the costs here; that a large law firm has access to very skilled and high-powered researchers who can pull together a large brief in a very short time. And our Law Clerk does not have access to those resources, but was quite involved in giving direction and guidance as the materials were prepared.

The legal fees included the costs for three separate parts of a decision process that went on with this case.

Members were informed in May by the Speaker of the need, in our judgment, that Saskatchewan MLAs' privileges were at risk because of the court, a statement by a judge in the Alberta court that Saskatchewan's privileges under our Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act only protected our MLAs within the province and did not protect them outside the borders of Saskatchewan. This was quite a shock to us and I think to legislators across the land. And we felt that it was important to intervene and make sure that statement did not remain as a precedent in future situations.

The legal fees were there for, firstly, to seek independent legal counsel to provide us with a decision as to whether it was something that we should proceed with, and we asked for an opinion with respect to the scope of the . . . of Judge Kenny's decision which said that a Saskatchewan MLA's immunity did not apply in Alberta.

Secondly, the legal fees covered the retention of legal counsel in Alberta to prepare and file all the necessary documents, prepare the intervention arguments and the legal brief with respect to the application for intervenor status, and to attend to court to speak to the matter when it was heard.

And thirdly the legal fees covered the cost of the research and the preparation of an extensive legal brief on the authorities with respect to parliamentary privilege, free speech, and the democratic process. And it is substantial dollars, but we feel that the issue is . . . was certainly of great importance and significance not only to our members but to members across the country in other provincial legislatures.

The settlement of the case sort of has prevented us now from being able to have a resolution in our favour, clarifying the application of privilege. And at this point we're still discussing with other provinces whether some other avenue should be taken to get a clarification on this matter.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you. It seems to me though that the research being done, while the court was taking place in Alberta, the research would have applied across Canada and particularly in Saskatchewan. Therefore surely our Law Clerk or someone in Saskatchewan could have done the research because it's not just specific to Alberta.

If it was specific to Alberta, then the arguments or the rulings put forward by the judge would have been valid, that it only applied in Alberta or that our immunity only applied in Saskatchewan. But we're talking a precedence across Canada, that our immunity, where we have a suit, up till now has been national in scope. Therefore that research wouldn't have been simply limited to Alberta, it would have applied across Canada and therefore could have been done just as easily ... or potentially could have been done just as easily in Saskatchewan as in Alberta.

Certainly the presentation of the legal documents and that, you need a representative in Alberta to make that to the Alberta courts. Did the lawyer make any presentations, or the law firm make any presentations to the court in Alberta at all?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes. Perhaps, Ken, you could come forward. The actual proceedings in the court start to get a little confusing for me, being not a legally trained person. And I'll have Ken speak to that.

The other issue that you raised, you're very ... (inaudible) ... Mr. D'Autremont, that that research could have been done here and ideally should have been done and probably in future it will be done here.

At that point Ken had only been in the position a very few months and was already very busy trying to keep up with the other part of the duties. And as I had mentioned, sometimes these things are required to be prepared in time for a certain part of the proceeding and we didn't have the resources to throw a bunch of people at it at once in order to meet the deadlines.

And perhaps, Ken, could you add anything to that.

Mr. Ring: — Just to add to that would be ... Although the research could have been done here, it applies across the country. It is a very, very narrow parliamentary privilege — a very, very narrow area and point to the law — and there are not a lot of private practitioners who appreciate the parliamentary privilege and immunities. And so to get ... I guess to sort of have the background to start there you need someone with experience. Also to make a presentation in appellate court in another jurisdiction, you require someone who has experience as an appellant lawyer before that court.

The rules of court in Alberta are considerably different. The possibility of getting intervener status in Alberta is very different in Saskatchewan as it is in Alberta. So it would have meant not only research with respect to the parliamentary aspect of it — unity aspect — but also the rules governing courts in Alberta.

And were I to have done it, I would have had to ask the Alberta Law Society to have a special permit to appear before their courts because I'm not a member of the Alberta bar. And that would have necessitated travelling to Alberta for that application to get a special appearance permit, returning, and then doing the research and following up on the case.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Could I interject? But that wouldn't have prevented you, would it, from carrying out the research?

Mr. Ring: — No. And I think to answer that, I guess I'm getting to that question. To answer that more specifically, this came up in May, the beginning of May in the last session. There were still a number of Bills before the House.

The Law Clerk's office or position is one person with one support staff. So today, for example, while I've been here sitting through the meeting, I haven't been able to do any of the other work that I have in my office to do. And so that was one of the other reasons.

And seeing as I had just come to the Assembly and that was my first full session, I didn't think it would be right to divert my time on this narrow issue and not be of service to all of the members of the Legislative Assembly with respect to private Bills and royal recommendation with respect to public policy ... (inaudible interjection) ... Yes, and the times when Bob ... Mr. Thompson would have appeared in the Alberta courts, to go on Wednesday to speak to an adjournment.

The matter was adjourned, I believe, two or three times before it was adjourned for the summer. So that would have meant having to get someone every time to go to court to do that. You can't just do that over the phone.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Thank you. Was the report ... Has the report been presented to the Speaker or to whomever — I'm assuming the Speaker's office — who authorized it? Has that report been presented and is it available to the members? Because certainly whatever kind of advice is being given in that document, that report, is of interest to us all in the fact that it's our immunity that is being discussed.

The Chair: — As Ms. Ronyk mentioned, as a result of the settlement, there was no opportunity to get the court's decision, Mr. D'Autremont, on that.

As you will recall, that when this was initiated and began, after consultation it was felt necessary to ask for this intervener status in order to avoid any implications of privilege. And I did notify the members — you will have received a letter — that we were undertaking to ensure that the privileges of members were indeed protected not only within the confines of this province, but outside the province.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The lawyer must have, if he made a report, must have given a recommendation or his interpretation of what the immunity is and what our standing is on that.

Mr. Ring: — Yes. There's a brief. Yes. There's a brief of law along with books of authority, about that thick, that I got from the lawyers that were filed in court.

The opposing counsel made presentations and filed a number of briefs opposing the Speaker entering the case simply on the issue of parliamentary privilege and immunity, not on the merits of the action that was before the court. And at the end of the day, the Alberta Court of Appeal decided not to allow the Speaker in on intervener status. But we do have that report and the legal briefs, and it's an excellent brief. It canvasses freedom of speech, the *lex l Parliamenti*, and members' privileges and immunities that an Assembly has as its inherent necessity to continue and to air matters and to ask questions.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And so what was the lawyer's interpretation of their investigation? Do we have, in his opinion, parliamentary immunity in Saskatchewan, in Canada? And if so, based on what is said in the Assembly, based on what is said in committee, based on what an MLA may say in the performance of their duty outside of those two bodies.

Mr. Ring: — Certainly, absolute privilege applies to anything that's said in the Assembly or any committee of the Assembly.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And that's both in and out of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Ring: — Well in Saskatchewan. And certainly I am of the view that it applies across the country, although the Saskatchewan Act, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act that grants that immunity to you is only in force within the boundaries of Saskatchewan.

The Alberta court decision said that because one of the defences that was being raised depended on a Saskatchewan Act and the action was going on in Alberta, the Saskatchewan Act did not apply in Alberta, and so they could not raise that absolute immunity defence under the basis of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

So then that takes us into the realm of the Bill of Rights that existed in '88 and those type of arguments to make the argument that this is an inherent right, that although it's codified in statute, there's also the common law that protects you, I believe. And there's also the Bill of Rights from 1688 from England that allowed . . . and the reason that was put in place was to protect members from saying their piece in the House of Commons and not being dragged off by the sovereign.

So it's a very narrow, unique area of law to research. And when you start researching it you . . . They looked at Australian examples; they looked at American examples; and a number of other Commonwealth jurisdictions.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Did the lawyer make any determinations or recommendation on statements that may be made outside of the Assembly or committee?

Mr. Ring: — No.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Still in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Ring: — No. On that point I think the law is fairly clear as well. Once you step outside the Assembly you don't. You have qualified privilege, but you don't have absolute privilege.

Mr. D'Autremont: — A more technical question. How many hours would the legal firm have spent on this particular matter? Any idea?

Mr. Ring: — I don't have a . . . I think there's a three or four page, single-spaced, three or four page list of all the items that were done with respect to this file, and the appearances and what they were. And that was attached to the bill.

Mr. D'Autremont: — It just seems \$33,000 is a lot of money to spend for something that at the end of the day we didn't get

any benefit out of. It's available — hopefully it's available — for use in the future if . . . Will it be placed in the library, or recorded someplace for use?

The Chair: — We can certainly arrange to have that available. I mean, it would be a public document certainly.

Mr. Ring: — Yes, and filed in the Alberta court so I don't see why there would be a . . . I don't see a problem with that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Has the report been presented to anyone other than the Speaker's office, or legal counsel's office or . . .

The Chair: — No, not at this point.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. That's all the questions I have.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — This is just a comment, I guess, Mr. Speaker. I get, you know I'm somewhat intrigued by this issue myself. And as a member of the legislature I think it's important that we have an understanding of parliamentary privilege and what it means as it relates to members doing their job. And I think we'll all agree that the legislature, and committees of the legislature, need to be a place where free and open debate can take place in an unencumbered fashion because I think that's what makes for healthy debate and that's what, in fact, makes for a healthy British parliamentary system that we govern ourselves by.

And I'm not sure that I would agree with Mr. D'Autremont's comment that this expenditure was made without benefits. Because I think any time that we have a situation where we will want to protect members' privileges from judgments that might be made in Alberta or Ontario or North West Territories or wherever that happens to be, as members of the Saskatchewan legislature and part of the British parliamentary system that governs this whole country, the provinces and territories, we need to ensure that we do what is appropriate to protect this institution. To me it's more than a member, any particular member. This is protection of the institution, and as people who are elected to this institution, we have the responsibility to protect it.

Now there was some discussion earlier as to different jurisdictions across Canada, as I understood it, are wondering what next steps and where this might be brought to a conclusion to determine whether in fact parliamentary privilege extends to another jurisdiction outside of Saskatchewan. And I'd be interested to know if we're going to follow up on that because I think it's something that needs to be brought to a conclusion.

I think just one other point that I want to make. Thirty-three thousand dollars, if that's the figure, is a considerable amount of money. But I guess in terms of hiring lawyers — and take no offence — it doesn't go that far. They are highly qualified people who have expertise in different areas of law and for that command some very high hourly rates. So I can understand three or four different court appearances and interaction with other lawyers would create some time to be spent on the issue, and through that a fairly substantive bill at the end of the day.

And I appreciate very much your explanation because I too wondered why we had hired — this is the first that I heard

about this today — but why we had hired an Alberta lawyer. But I certainly understand your explanation that it is a very narrow point of law and that you would have required some process in order to be able to appear in the Alberta courts with intervener status, as I understand it.

So it would then, to my mind, make very much sense to hire someone from Alberta who's knowledgeable in this area of law to represent the interests of our institution. And I appreciate that explanation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Lautermilch. Anything else?

Mr. Kowalsky: — Just a follow-up, Mr. Speaker, to the question posed by Mr. Lautermilch. What is the status now, at this stage, as a result of that court decision or non-decision or inability to . . . does that not leave all parliamentarians liable under a new precedent?

Mr. Ring: — No. No would be the short answer to that question, but I'll give some explanation to you on that point.

The judgment indicated that the Saskatchewan immunity for MLAs under our Act didn't apply in Alberta. And that was a comment that was made by a Queen's Bench judge in Alberta in coming to a decision as to whether or not the judge would allow a subpoena to be served on someone outside the province of Alberta and deciding whether or not the suit that was an issue should have been litigated in Saskatchewan or whether it should have been litigated in Alberta.

Now in coming to that, deciding what the proper forum was or where the trial should take place, Alberta or Saskatchewan, the judge looks at a number of considerations. One of the considerations is that the defendant would have an advantage in one or other of the jurisdictions. And when the judge considered that question, the judge said well, if you sue in Saskatchewan, there's an absolute immunity under The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. However, if the company brings its suit in Alberta, that same defence, or the Saskatchewan Act, would not come to the defence of the Saskatchewan member of the Legislative Assembly.

And that was one of the criteria and . . . That was a statement that was made and that was one of the criteria that went into the decision to allow the court action to continue in Alberta and for a subpoena to be served outside of the territorial boundaries of the province of Alberta.

Now with respect to the options, the case has been settled. The Queen's Bench judgment at issue is out there and there's really, at this point, nothing that can be done about it directly. Although I think it should be investigated to see what other options there are to deal with a statement that was made by the Queen's Bench judge.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Could I ask if you are conferring with other Legislative Law Clerks across the country? Have there been any discussions?

Mr. Ring: — Yes. I've had some contact with other Law Clerks and they're . . . One other situation has been brought to my attention at the federal level involving a suit that began in

the United States against a federal member.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So it's very clear on this point of law then that there is concern across the country with respect to privilege and some desire to find a resolve and a clarification?

Mr. Ring: — The discussions are ongoing and I think there's really a discussion as to what could we do at this point? And then the next question after that is what should we do? Perhaps we just leave the judgment there and you forget about it and it's distinguished and so lawyers recognize it as bad law.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And perhaps challenge at another time.

Mr. Ring: — And challenge another time. The problem with that is that these type of cases rarely, if ever, come up. And so it would be very difficult to distinguish that case as bad law because this just doesn't happen very often, although it may be happening more and more with the Internet and a larger diffusion of what happens in other jurisdictions.

The Chair: — Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, I just want to clarify something. I do believe that the research and the investigation into this was worthwhile in protecting our parliamentary immunity.

My concern was the amount of money spent and why wasn't it done in house?

The Chair: — I would hope that our Legislative Counsel has addressed that, Mr. D'Autremont. Obviously the implications of again being in more than one place while the session was in attendance, in the circumstances it was virtually impossible. I hope that addresses that.

Ms. Ronyk: — We would have indeed had to have hired someone to replace Ken if he had to be preparing this work and appearing in Alberta, and that isn't easy to do either. There aren't very many lawyers out there that have the experience to do Legislative Counsel Law Clerk work. So it wasn't really a very workable option for us.

The Chair: — We can ask Mr. Hillson to return. If you want to get him, Margaret.

Then if the board is satisfied with the comments and the discussions, I have a motion here I'm prepared to entertain:

That a special warrant for the 2000-2001 fiscal year for the office of the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$71,000, and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Moved by Ms. Jones; seconded, Mr. D'Autremont. All those in favour? Carried. Thank you.

Okay. Then we'll go back to the Legislative Assembly. So we're back to item 12(b)(iii), and that is the caucus computer network, the infrastructure proposal. And I have a motion that I would ask the board to consider if you're ready.

The motion that I would present to the board is:

That the information systems branch of the Legislative Assembly assumes responsibility for the provision and support of a network infrastructure for each of the three caucuses; that information systems branch will coordinate all cable management but each caucus network will remain physically independent; and that the Board of Internal Economy approves funding of \$71,000 to support this proposal.

Any questions or comments?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I just have one quick question on it. I hope I haven't asked this before, but a co-op student at 33,000. I don't understand. How is that rate arrived at? What does that mean?

The Chair: — Greg, do you want to comment on that?

Mr. Putz: — Yes, that was something that we did address yesterday. But a quick overview of that is that what has been proposed in this B-budget decision item is that the Assembly utilize the co-op program that exists at the University of Regina and utilize a computer science student to assist us if necessary.

It's our estimate that adding this proposal to our workload will involve a number of hours. We weren't sure how many. We weren't asking for a position. We thought that until we can assess — if this is approved — the extra workload, we'd do it by means of utilizing a co-op student.

And the program is based on a four-month term and that coincides with the university year. And what we do is contract with the university for that student to come to the Assembly, work for the Assembly for that term, and that's part of their academic . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So this is more than one co-op student then? This is four-month stints . . .

Mr. Putz: — No, this is for three terms. Whether we'd utilize the three terms, don't know . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Right. So you can divide that by three, so if we only use one term then we'd only be utilizing 11,000 of those dollars.

The Chair: — Okay, good. That's it? Do I have a mover? Mr. D'Autremont. Seconder? Mr. Lautermilch. Unless there are any other questions, all those in favour of the motion? Approved. Thank you.

Okay, the next item we go to then is 12(b)(iv) and that item again we dealt with yesterday. And again today we had a little bit of an example of how it would work. And the motion that I would present to the board is that:

The Board of Internal Economy approves funding of \$25,000 to enable the Legislative Assembly to acquire the hardware and software necessary to form the foundation of a multimedia streaming service.

Any questions or comments from the board?

Mr. Kowalsky: — So moved.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Kowalsky. Seconder? Mr. D'Autremont. Unless there's some other comments or questions, all those in favour? Carried. Thank you.

We'll move on to item 12(b)(v). And this deals with directive #6 which is a constituency assistant expenses provision, that it be amended as follows:

Subsection 1 by deleting "maximum amount paid to the program support level 4 position" and substituting the following:

maximum amount paid to a program support level 6 position.

The board will recall our discussion with respect to that item.

Any questions or comments?

Ms. Jones: — I'll move that.

The Chair: — Ms. Jones. Seconder? Mr. D'Autremont. Unless there are any comments or questions, all those in favour? Thank you. Carried.

The next item is 12(c), financial services branch conversion of non-permanent to permanent full-time position request.

And the motion that's being presented to the board is the following:

Effective April 1, 2001, that the non-permanent position of member payment entry clerk be converted to a permanent position.

Any questions or discussion?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So moved.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont. Unless there's any further discussion or questions, all those in favour? Carried. Thank you.

The next item, 12(d), human resource and administrative services branch. The motion presenting to the board:

That the strategic plan and reorganization of the human resource and administrative services branch proceed according to the attached document (as was presented to the board members earlier) a new permanent position of human resource clerk, a non-permanent position of support clerk, and a full-time non-permanent position of human resource adviser.

Any questions or comments with respect to that item?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I'm trying to sort through this document. Can you show me where those two are?

The Chair: — Any other questions or discussions on that particular item? If not, I'll entertain a mover for the motion.

Mr. Kowalsky: — So moved.

The Chair: — Mr. Kowalsky. Seconded by Mr. D'Autremont. Thank you.

Unless there's further discussion or questions, all those in favour? Carried. Thank you.

Next item, 12(f) . . . I'm sorry. I skipped one. Just a minute here. This one, 12(e). Okay. Now there's 12(e) is the decision item with respect to visitor services branch, 1.5 full-time equivalent position request.

Any discussion with respect to that, board members?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I think, Mr. Speaker, members had discussed this and we thought that we would defer this expenditure for a year and perhaps they could redeploy some of the existing staff, as we see how these changes will affect access and operations of the building.

I think this came as two parts, if I'm right, but it might be a different request. This one, I think, was 38,936. The other component, as I understand this, was commissionaire services at 43.

Ms. Ronyk: — That number is actually in the regular budget document, because the decision item here is only for board approval of actual positions.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay.

Ms. Ronyk: — For the commissionaires, it's a contract.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes. Well I think the board would not approve of this at this time.

Ms. Ronyk: — The visitor services or the commissionaire?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — The visitor services one, but that we had agreement on the commissionaires? At 43? Is that how you understood it, Dan?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes.

The Chair: — So that, effective April 1, 2001 . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — So we won't be able to have visitor reception services at the new entrance because right now we only staff for one person at a time. At the front door, we can't . . . you know, there's no one to deploy down there.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well perhaps then we could, instead of the commissionaires . . . I mean, we're pretty flexible, you know, in the requirements as long as someone is at the door.

I think what we're saying is that we weren't willing to expend the 81,000 requested at this time. Hopefully some of the existing people could be deployed. We're wanting to see how this thing shakes down as we have implemented new security arrangements for the new operations and access. So I think we're asking if this could be done for 43,000 as opposed to 81. I

think really that's in essence what we're saying.

Ms. Ronyk: — We would want security first? Security staff first?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes. And I mean if it required a buzzer in order to get . . . whatever. We're looking for a way to economize a little bit as we go through this transition.

Mr. D'Autremont: — We were wondering if it would be possible for a buzzer or some sort of communications upstairs to say that there's somebody at the lower entrance; can somebody from tours come down and deal with the issue if they wanted a tour.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And I think security is our issue. That's really where our focus was.

The Chair: — Okay, then those are the board's wishes. We move on to 12(f), decision item 12(f), Legislative Library, one full-time equivalent position request.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I think as well, Mr. Speaker, that members of the board would ask that perhaps internal redeployment or maybe changes in the way the work is dealt with would be appropriate and that we at this time would not approve this recommendation.

The Chair: — Any other comments? Okay. Then we go to 12(g)(i).

Ms. Ronyk: — Can I just get clarification on 12(f)? Is it just the new librarian position, the 39,000 that we're not going with and we're going to leave the temporary hours and so on in there?

The Chair: — Okay. The next item is 12(g)(i), members' secretaries reclassification to new class plan request. And the motion that would be for consideration is:

That effective April 1, 2001, that the members' secretary funding be based on the new in-scope class plan and that the funding be rolled into the new caucus resources directive #7.2 as proposed in the caucus resources amalgamation decision item.

Any questions or comments on that? Moved by Ms. Jones. Seconded by Mr. D'Autremont. Thank you. Unless there's further discussion or question, all those in favour? Thank you. Carried.

Next item — 12(g)(ii). 12(g)(ii) deals with caucus resource amalgamation and the motion for consideration by the board is:

That effective April 1, 2001:

(1) Expenses in the amount of \$375,000 be transferred from subvote LG01 — administration to subvote LG06—caucus operations;

(2) Directive #7 — Caucus grants — sessional research and general expenses, directive #7.1 — caucus grants — information technology expenses, directive #8 — caucus

grants — secretarial expenses, and directive #9 — caucus grant — research services be revoked;

(3) Directive #7.2 — Caucus resources, as attached, be adopted;

(4) Directive #23 — Caucus accountability and disclosure be amended by replacing directives 7, 8, 9, 11, and 15 in section (1) with directives 7.2, 11, and 15.

(5) Directive #10 — Grants to independent members be revoked and that directive #10.1 — resources for the office of an independent member as attached be adopted.

Any discussion or questions on that motion? If not, I would welcome a mover. Mr. Hillson. Seconded by Mr. D'Autremont . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, sorry.

The members will recall that we had some discussion with respect to the directive #7.2 with some wording that came under discussion. And that directive has now been amended to delete the change. What was (d) or what was . . . yes, eliminate (d) and replace it with what was previously (e). Now have I got you thoroughly confused? Marilyn has just handed out . . .

Mr. Kowalsky: — I have one additional question and that's on directive #7.2, 7(d)(iv) would read to me like this: caucus funding shall not be used for items, services, or activities that are for any of the following similar purposes: (iv) says requests for re-election support, including election campaign material, enumerator's lists, party and constituency workers' lists, and poll activities. Now I don't quite understand the implication here of enumerator's list, in particular, and that request for re-election support.

Except that I would think that would imply we shouldn't be doing these things during a writ period. But at any other time what is the . . . I'm not sure . . . I just don't see the implication of the enumerator's lists. I don't know if we . . . I'm wondering whether we couldn't have another good look at that some time, Mr. Speaker, before we go through with that?

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Yes, I would like to . . . I see our legislative Law Clerk has left. But we had a bit of a discussion last night, and I don't mind putting it on the record that I have, as an MLA, never asked a constituent who comes to call how they vote nor have I ever raised party matters. But the reality is, party matters are raised by callers to me, frequently. And everyone else agreed that's the way it works.

And I think most MLAs do follow that practice that when somebody comes to call on us on a constituent matter, I don't think it's the practice of many . . . or any MLAs to grill them as to how they may have voted at the last election.

But I say the reality is constituents oftentimes raise party matters with me. And it makes me . . . If a constituent comes and requests a party membership and I get it for them, have I committed a criminal offence? And, I say, it's not something I have ever or would ever initiate, but it does get initiated. That's the reality of our position, and I think everyone will agree with me.

And people will come in about a constituency matter and then they will say to me, you know, when there's an election campaign on, be sure you give me a call; I want to help. I mean, these things happen.

And I say, I'm pleased to raise it because I can honestly say I've never initiated a conversation like that in my life. But those conversations just do occur in mine and I'm sure all MLA offices. And can we find ourselves running afoul of the law with the most innocent of intentions?

The Chair: — Your point is appreciated. I would take it as reading if you actively go out and pursue an action with funding that's not . . .

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — If I put Liberal Committee Room sign on my constituency office, I mean I understand that it . . .

The Chair: — And the signs are paid for by the caucus money, then you're . . . you know, or like members' money.

I'm not sure how we can narrow these down. It's a matter of common sense, I believe, on a lot of these issues.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well yes, I agree with my colleagues on the other side of the table that this does cause some concern. My particular concern on this is enumerators' lists. I find enumerators' lists in my office to be extremely helpful, when . . .

Ms. Jones: — The voters list. Right?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. The voters list. When I want to phone Mr. Jones, and if Mrs. Jones answers, I'd like to be able to refer to her by her first name. That's on the voters list, so you can do that.

Ms. Jones: — I'd prefer Mrs. Jones. Ms., actually.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Ms. Jones.

And so that's very helpful. And I don't see where having an enumerators' list in my constituency office is any where, way, shape or form in contravention of any . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — . . . if you need to spend any money on it, and I don't know . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well they're free.

Ms. Ronyk: — I don't think it matters that you have them there or that you're actually talking about things there, in that space. It's whether you purposely use this caucus funding to reproduce them or . . . (inaudible) . . . them.

I don't know. This was listed out of the federal parliament's list of do's and don'ts and I really don't honestly understand just how it . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, you know, I know there is some concern. Members are really, really wanting to use their constituency offices and their caucus funds for other than political purposes. But sometimes, your role as an MLA

and your role as a caucus member is so closely tied to what you do, it is political. I mean, your job is political. That's what you are. And so there's a lot of concern.

I really would like to sit down as sort of, say a three-party group along with the Legislative Law Clerk and Gwenn, Mr. Speaker — you know, just a crew to sit down as a committee and have a look at this and talk about what the implications of this mean legally and what would put you in contravention so that we can spell out the intent as well as . . . You know, spell out the intent maybe as an aside to the directive — I don't know — but so that we all understand and so that we're all on common ground.

I don't know that we can hash that out today, but I think it's really . . . You know, it's raised now and I think we're all a little uneasy, so we should try and sit down and figure it out.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, you said, and I agree, that it should be a matter of common sense. But we all know that common sense does not always carry the day.

The Chair: — Caucus funds. It could be one simple line: that caucus funds should not be used for other than the MLA's purpose of representing his or her constituents, period. Okay. And use common sense. But then you come up with, all right, then the auditor will be asking us, what specifically can they use these funds for, what they can't.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I've been on this board since 1986 and, man, I hate to go back . . . to even think back that far. But these are the things that we've struggled with and never . . . I don't think we've ever come to a conclusion that we're all totally satisfied with.

And maybe we need to take another stab at this thing because, you know, I just think the uncertainty is not good. And we should try and define what this means, you know, so that somewhere, some place it's written.

Ms. Ronyk: — I think you're right. It certainly could use some discussion between all parties. I'm just wondering if right now specifically (d)(iv) could just be amended by deleting everything after the first line there and it would just state: requests for re-election support including election campaign material, period. Because we don't really know what all the rest of that stuff refers to.

But if that isn't sufficient to satisfy you, maybe then we should what? Hold off?

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Well again, for instance I totally understand that it would be highly offensive for the receptionist to have a membership book on her desk and, you know, as you come in, how would you like to buy a membership? You know, I totally . . . That's completely offensive. But on the other hand, to say the reality is when people want a membership, they call our respective offices.

Ms. Jones: — Mr. Chairman, I think we're mixing apples and oranges a little bit. This is caucus and we're referring to the member's secretary in the caucus office, and I mean I know we have similar rules in our constituency office, but we should not kind of lump the two of them together in terms of the

experience with having a voters' list in your caucus office as opposed to in your constituency office and selling memberships up here as opposed to there.

I think we do get a little bit, you know, mixed up if we start talking about paying your constituency assistant out of caucus funds, because they're two separate things.

So I don't mind having the debate and I think it's a worthy thing to try to sort out, but I just say that I think that we're mixing our apples and oranges a bit.

The Chair: — Would it just satisfy us to . . . I'm sorry, Mr. D'Autremont, I just . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — I was going to say I like the suggestion of striking out everything after material including enumerator's list, blah, blah, blah.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I agree, but let's then agree to meet between now and the next Board of Internal Economy meeting to try and build some comfort into a directive.

Ms. Jones: — Now, what are we striking, Mr. D'Autremont?

The Chair: — Can I offer a suggestion to the board for consideration that if we're going to strike that out, why don't we strike out requests for election support including and just have under 4, election campaign material? No, you can't spend money on election campaign material — or caucus money. Election campaign material and eliminate everything else.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — That'll do in the interim.

The Chair: — Okay, could I . . . Will that suffice without further discussions or do you feel we still need to have further discussions, Mr. Lautermilch, about the wording of this particular . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — No, I'd be comfortable with that.

The Chair: — Then I would entertain a motion to amend this directive 7.2, to amend 7(d)(iv) — eliminate all wording except election campaign material or words to that effect.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Kowalsky. Bet you it'll be seconded by . . . Seconded, Mr. D'Autremont. Thank you. Any further discussion? If not, all those in favour? Carried. Thank you very much.

Now that motion's carried to amend this.

Ms. Ronyk: — Do you understand that 5 and 6 are still there or did you understand those to be gone? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Points 5 and 6 are still there? Yes, okay.

The Chair: — So the motion then will be to approve directive 7.2 as amended, okay, having read it all previously.

All I need is the board members' agreement that directive #10 have the same wording then, because it refers to independent

members. So it's a . . . there's agreement for that, we won't need to go through a . . . Okay, thank you. Thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Just one problem I've got there, Mr. Speaker, on the independent member. It prohibits the member from advertising party functions. I don't . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — You never know when he wants to have a birthday party or something.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Or a party of independence. You never know.

Ms. Ronyk: — Actually some of our independent members have been leaders of a party, so.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, what was it, the Yukon had . . . I can't remember the name of the party, but they had two leaders of the party because there was two members in the party.

The Chair: — Well, board members, I believe that earlier prior to our discussion we had . . . Mr. Hillson had moved the motion as I'd read out with respect to the various amendments dealing with this issue of amalgamating caucus grants. Do you want me to read through that again?

What we've done, the motion we've just passed is to approve amending 7.2, the caucus resources, 7.2 for . . . and 10.1 of the independents. Okay, so if you'll take it as read, Mr. Hillson's moved it, Mr. D'Autremont seconded — and unless there's further discussion or clarification — all those in favour? Carried. Thank you very much.

Mr. Kowalsky: — There was a similar clause, I believe, with respect to constituency assistants, as well. I wonder if we shouldn't deal with that at the same time. It's a clause that's on the books.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — That's the same — 7.2 and 10.1 are the same as the constituency one, are they?

Ms. Borowski: — Constituency service?

A Member: — Service, yes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Myron's right. We might as well amend that one the same.

Ms. Ronyk: — It's not before us, but we can. You can . . . (inaudible) . . . a motion to do that.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Anyway, can we just put that in the form of a motion then? Do you want to move it?

Mr. Kowalsky: — I would move that the same . . . the similar amendment for . . . with respect to the directive that applies to constituency assistants and constituency offices be . . .

A Member: — Constituency services.

Mr. Kowalsky: — . . . constituency services be authorized. It would just be implemented.

A Member: — Worded the same.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Be worded. Okay?

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you. Secunder? All those in favour? Carried. Thank you.

Okay, board members, you've been given a copy of a draft letter to the . . . to answer the concerns of the auditor with respect to caucus accountability and disclosure.

A Member: — Directive 23.

The Chair: — Directive 23?

A Member: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chairman, on this. I would really like to defer this, this decision to another meeting. I'd like some opportunity to share this with my caucus and with our people. If that's fine.

The Chair: — The amendment is no. 2 there and it . . . or all the amendment is in bold, bold print, so it'd be easy to follow.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, I think I will have a look at this first.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you. Now that brings us to item 14 that we've not addressed. We've not had any discussion on that item and that is the secondary caucus office. Mr. D'Autremont, I wonder if you would lead us in that discussion.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Well what I was asked to bring forward and propose to the Board of Internal Economy is not an increase in any way, shape, or form in costs but rather a question of how the funds can be utilized.

Our caucus is asking that we basically be authorized to open another caucus office outside of the building, namely in Saskatoon, for use by caucus members for caucus activities.

Presently if we need to perform caucus duties in Saskatoon, we have to rent a hotel room and access those services in that kind of a manner. This would allow us to have those kinds of services available on an ongoing basis and simply be paid for out of our current budgets.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chair, I mentioned to Mr. D'Autremont that I really haven't had a chance to and nor have my colleagues had a chance to give any of this proposal consideration and I would like to, if we could, if we were to have another go at this, I mean bring it back at the next meeting when we've had some time to think about it.

The Chair: — All right, thank you very much. So now that takes us down to . . . Unless there are any other comments about the Legislative Assembly budget or questions or concerns?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, if we dealt with all of these issues. I've been going back and forth here.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Item 13, directive 22, have we dealt with that?

A Member: — We did that last night.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Oh, we dealt with that one already. Okay, good.

The Chair: — Just consequential amendments.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I just meant with respect to the budget here. Have we dealt with all of the B-budget items, because I'm sort of . . . Man, this is a first, Gwenn.

Ms. Ronyk: — We owe you big time, I know.

The Chair: — I believe we have. Okay, if we go back through the items — if you want — the board approved the internship program and we've done away with the boutique proposal. It's deferred. The caucus computer network is approved and then we go to the multimedia streaming was approved, amendment directive 6, school tours and hospitality, and then our financial services branch . . . yes, we stood the visitors' branch.

Okay, then I would present to the board a motion for consideration:

That the 2001-2002 estimates of the office of the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of . . .

We're just figuring that out.

Ms. Ronyk: — While we're waiting, can I raise another couple of things? Yesterday tabled early on was the auditor's observations of his audit of the Legislative Assembly. And we said then that we'd be preparing a draft response to the auditor, based on some decisions that the board was making over the course of the meetings.

And this is a draft . . . Eldon, there's copies there for the rest of them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Right, it would now have to be changed. What we're doing is sort of reporting to the auditor on the improvements that the board has authorized. So we have revised the directives that authorize caucus funding, providing direction and so on in the use of these funds.

That next sentence would now be changed to read: the board is now considering requiring all caucus offices to have their auditor's report on rules and procedures, etc. That's what you've got in that draft directive that you're going to take back and consider.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, I'm just wondering if we wouldn't be prudent just to hold the letter and the directive until we've considered it. I would assume . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — We can do that. We can do it.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I would assume we'll be having a board meeting in the spring, early spring.

Ms. Ronyk: — . . . you've received the report on the House officers salaries and stuff during the session.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes and we can probably deal with all of this then and clean it up.

Ms. Ronyk: — Okay, good.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I think that would work.

Ms. Jones: — And you'll put all the deferred items in a new package so that I won't have to dig them out of this whole package? Is that correct?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, we'll bring them forward again.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Well, in the interests of time maybe the board might want to consider to say whatever figures you come up with based on what we told you to cut. Well, a five-minutes recess would be good.

Ms. Ronyk: — Well can I catch you one more minute though before you go?

The Chair: — Okay.

Ms. Ronyk: — Well with respect to the gift shop, I'm wondering if you'd have any objections if I pursue some discussions with SPMC and see if they would be interested in running a gift shop in that space that's there. Would they be interested in contracting one out? Would they be interested in getting one of the other public facility gift shops to work out of here as well?

There are different options that we might be able to do that won't really involve Legislative Assembly money at all. If you'd like, I could pursue that and get back to the board.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Yes, Gwenn. I mentioned when we were in camera, so you weren't with us, that part of the Government House redevelopment plan includes a gift shop. So there's an obvious crossover there and you may well want to communicate with them. And I think also that our thinking is that the gift shop should be very site specific to the legislature and Government House in that I think we also owe it to private business that it's not a souvenir shop as such of general Saskatchewan souvenirs or Canadian souvenirs. It's specifically related to your visit to the Legislative Assembly and Government House. I think that's the thinking that's developing over there.

But the inventory, it seems to me, would be . . . If we do proceed at some point with a Legislative Assembly gift shop, the inventory I assume would be very similar to what Government House would be doing. And I think that's also, you know, a contact you'll want to make.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And I would think it would be worthwhile to ask whomever you may be talking to to see if some entrepreneur would be interested in providing that service.

Ms. Jones: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to say the opposite. I would like to ensure that it doesn't become an entrepreneurial enterprise in our heritage site. So I want it on the record that . . .

The Chair: — And I appreciate what board members are saying, but there may be other implications such as accessibility to the building at whatever hours, the security aspects, and maybe some things.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I think we're looking for . . .

The Chair: — But would you appreciate a five minute recess just to . . . Okay, just while we're fine-tuning the figures.

The board recessed for a period of time.

The Chair: — Members of the board, I have two motions for consideration. The first:

That the 2001-2002 expenditure estimates of the office of the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$17,571,000 as follows: the budget to be voted is \$5,977,000; the statutory vote is \$11,594,000. And that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So moved.

The Chair: — Seconded by Mr. D'Autremont. All those in favour? Thank you. Carried.

And the other motion that is tied into that is:

That the 2001-2002 revenue estimates of the office of the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$9,000.

Ms. Ronyk: — Those are at the very back of your book. And our revenue is very low now because we're not selling subscriptions to legislative documents. Our revenue this year is estimated to be \$8,000. If we had a gift shop it would be higher.

The Chair: — Whoops.

Mr. D'Autremont: — No, your revenues would not be.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — As Ms. Jones said, she didn't get . . . (inaudible) . . . money. And it seems her wish has come true . . .

Ms. Jones: — I did not say that. I said I wondered if we would make money on the gift shop items.

The Chair: — Any further discussion on that motion. If not, I'll entertain a mover. Mr. D'Autremont. And a seconder, please. Seconder, Ms. Jones. All those in favour. Carried. Thank you.

We have another item to discuss and that is the decision item — request for funding by the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures. And I wonder if perhaps . . . You have the item. You should have the item for consideration . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . item 16, yes. And that deals with the Rules and Regulations Committee's proposal and recommendation to have members travel to other jurisdictions to obtain information, to observe and interview members of other jurisdictions with respect to committee functions, formations, and operation within their Assemblies.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Last spring the Assembly saw fit to implement a Special Committee on Rules and Procedures to take a look at the operations, legislative operations of this Assembly. And part of what that mandate was in deciding that . . . the Rules and Procedures Committee decided was to look at how the committee structure of this Assembly worked, how private members' business took place, and any consequences resulting from any changes in that area.

We did considerable investigation across the Commonwealth to find out what was happening in various jurisdictions. Any changes that may possibly be made to or recommended by the Rules and Procedures Committee will have a very profound effect on the operations of this legislature, and a profound effect on the relationship and how the legislature operates, its relationship . . . the members' relationship with the Assembly, with cabinet, with government caucus, opposition caucus, and with the various legislative committees that are in place or may be in place if changes are made.

So we believe that it's extremely important that we look at all those areas that could offer examples for us. So we contacted various jurisdictions and asked their operation. One of the things that we were very conscious of in making our requests was that if you look at our own legislature, we have a number of committees in place, approximately a dozen. And if you look from the outside looking in at our legislature, you would say my, don't these people use a lot of committees, you know; they must be very active.

Unfortunately, if you actually look at the day-to-day operations of our committees, a good number of them are inactive and have been inactive for a number of years. So simply looking at it from the outside doesn't tell you how that committee operates and its relationship with the rest of the legislature and the members.

So in our investigations that we did in contacting the other jurisdictions, both directly and over the Internet, we found a number of locations that seemed to have a different method of operation for committees than what we do ourselves.

And the discussion in the committee — the entire Rules and Procedures Committee — further discussion with the steering committee from that was that we were interested in looking at those areas that have what could be termed sectoral committees, with powers of reference. That you would deal with a segment of society within one committee, rather than having a committee of agriculture and a committee of education, an environment committee. You would put a number of these into sectoral groups and may actually only have four or five committees at the end of the day.

But that those committees, in some of the jurisdictions that we've looked at, have the power to self-reference — sort of like what the Ombudsman has, in what her term is, own motion — to investigate various things within that sector without a direct reference from the legislature.

If that kind of a recommendation was to come forward from the Rules and Procedures Committee and be accepted by the Assembly, that is a dramatic change in how this legislature operates.

So before we were prepared to make any kind of a recommendation, we felt it was critical that we look at those areas that are already doing that kind of an operation, those kind of committees. In particular, those jurisdictions that are doing this to a lesser or greater degree were Ontario and British Columbia, which we felt were the most appropriate for us to look at in Canada, and a number of the jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand.

Particularly of interest is Western Australia. That is actually going through the process right now of changing from a committee structure, such as what we presently have, to a sectoral committee structure. So they're going through the process — and I believe theirs is effective on January 1 this year — of what we would be going through if we made the recommendations and accepted those kind of changes.

So we believe that it would be very important for us to look at the Australian and New Zealand examples, as well as Ontario and British Columbia, to see how they actually operate in practice, not just in theory. How the relationship is developed between cabinet, the Assembly, members on either side of the House and the committees, and how they relate to each other before we can possibly make recommendations from the Rules and Procedures Committee to the Assembly on any changes that might be needed.

We would also be looking at how those jurisdictions deal with their private members' business. There's various different ways that things are being done and all those, again, change the relationship . . . would potentially change the relationship that our Assembly now has with the members.

That is why the recommendation has come down from the Rules Committee with a request that we travel outside of the seat of government for investigation. That was part of the mandate given to the Rules and Procedures Committee when it was struck this spring, that it be allowed to travel outside of the seat of power for its investigations.

What we're requesting from the committee is that we be funded to provide the Speaker, one member from government caucus, one member from the opposition to proceed and visit the various locations that we have outlined — those being Ontario, British Columbia, New Zealand, the capital of Australia which is Canberra, the legislatures in New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Yes, I think that Mr. D'Autremont has laid out the case very well but I'm sorry I have to say that I think the optics here may well bring it under a cloud even if it is undertaken with the very best of intentions.

And at least initially I think it would be preferable if we restricted ourselves to Canada. And I would also in that regard like to share an experience I had in December when I attended a conference on federalism; a joint conference between Russia and Canada.

And while obviously I believe in international co-operation and whatever we can learn from the rest of the world, I have to say that our federal government is wanting to look how other federations relate. Well this frankly didn't help a whole lot

because we came away wondering if Russia is even a federation and if there was any connect at all.

The purpose of the conference was to see if they could learn something from the Canadian experience; we could learn something from the Russian experience. Well as we know, at present the Russian experience is that they are attempting to use armed force to hold together their federation. And you know we've, I think, all accepted as Canadians that is not the way our federation will be preserved.

Now I'm not saying that Australia and New Zealand are necessarily in that situation, but I am saying that you get into different countries and different situations and are we . . . Is there any lineup here at all? Or are we just simply countries with different traditions, different historical backgrounds and, well it's an interesting trip. How this really relates to us is just very, very much open to question. And I would think that at least for this year we should not leave Canada.

The other thing too that I'd like to say in terms of I don't know what the traditions are. Obviously I know that Australia and New Zealand are both parliamentary democracies but our strong tradition of party discipline is one of the factors which has of course worked against committee structure. We know that committees work in the United States in part because your party label in Washington does not go nearly so far in determining your vote. I mean I understand that virtually all votes in Washington will split; that votes are never completely along party line or seldom, seldom totally along party line.

So there's a difference that we have to somehow find a way to strengthen our committee system in the light of the culture and traditions within which we operate. And I'm just worried that you go halfway around the world and while it's all very interesting, you're finding out that the traditions and the culture are just so different — even with Australia and New Zealand — that there simply isn't a link-up with the way we do it. So I raise that question.

And I also raise the question that while I certainly take this as completely well-intentioned and well-meant and diligent, I am frankly nervous about the optics.

The Chair: — Mr. Kowalsky, you had a comment.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Well I thank Mr. Hillson for raising these issues because that's something that I've been thinking about, and as a member of this committee and also as a member of the Rules Committee.

At first I was thinking that it would be . . . obviously would be most beneficial if we're looking at the rules and how we can adapt our rules so that the public in particular feels that there's an . . . you know, there's a better access to what is happening to the way the country is governed, as it happens, and also taking a look at the regulations, as the regulations are made — how we can do this. That it would be best if we were able to send, you know, all seven members of the committee to — or I believe it's seven committee members — to the jurisdiction in Australia and New Zealand.

However, my concern with the seven was that the optics of that

certainly would present a problem. And I'm supportive of the concept that Mr. D'Autremont brings forward, because I think you can accomplish the same thing with a couple of people going over, along with Mr. Speaker. But I'm hesitant to think that we should defer this a year because in my experience with the legislature — I've been here since '86 — there's only certain times that you can actually effect rule changes. And I believe that we are at a stage here, now, when we would have the will on . . . from both sides of the House to effect changes. And I think we're of a bit of a common mind here that we think that enhancing the committee procedure and amending the committee procedures somewhat would be quite an improvement and would be well accepted by the public.

Australia and New Zealand — in our discussions within the committee, and also with previous contact that we've had with the Australian models — we know that they are more advanced perhaps than even Westminster or any other model in the Commonwealth, particularly in the way that they deal with their regulations. As you know, many people who are affected by any legislation that we pass in principle are even more affected . . . it's the application of these regulations and how the regulations . . . it's the regulations that impact on them.

The regulations now really undergo no public political scrutiny. They undergo scrutiny through our Regulations Committee to see whether they fall under the mandate that's provided by the legislation.

Using the American model or the . . . some of the Australian model and I think that's in the . . . the regulations are . . . Pardon me, the Australian model — I'm not sure about the American models — under the Australian models there is some opportunity for scrutiny of regulations. I don't know . . . and I know that in the American model, there is opportunity in many cases, in some cases to bring forward discussion to committee level before even second readings of the . . . of any legislation.

And so I'm thinking that prompted by the success and the relatively . . . the success of the example that we had with the agricultural committee and the response that, the positive response that we've got from the public on that, that for us to delay the work of the Rules Committee, we might be missing something that we otherwise would maybe later regret.

The question, he says, what about just Canada. I guess it's easy for us to look at Canada, and we can get the information. But where the real action and the real experience in this is — and it really is — is those two places, Australia and New Zealand.

I know that in one sense what it does is it, it almost commits you, you know. I mean if you . . . that hey, you're going to make some kind of changes if you're willing to take this first step.

Personally, I know that our caucus is ready to make some changes. We've actually put a paper out in that respect. And we're ready to move somewhat in that direction. However, I guess I, you know, defer to some comments by the other members. But I wouldn't want to see a delay, and I do think it's important to follow up.

The Chair: — Thanks, Mr. Kowalsky. I have Mr. Lautermilch,

and then Ms. Jones.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes. But just, Mr. Speaker, I've been watching with some interest the working of the Rules Committee as it relates to the changes. And what they've been looking at is a very, very dramatic change in terms of how our legislature functions.

And it would appear to me that one of the things that will be achieved is much greater involvement in the role of private members as it relates to the decision-making process, which tells me that the changes can only be good. Because I think it'll bring the development of rules and regulations and legislation much closer to the people, who we all — all 58 of us — represent. And so while I welcome that move, I have concerns as well in terms of whether this will make it a better system for us or whether it won't.

Over the last number of years, interaction between our provincial government and other governments — in particular the South African government — it's been fairly close. And they have spent a lot of time as they've developed their new political system and as they move into their new future.

And they've spent a lot of time looking at what we do in our province here so they can determine where they may want to go, not because we do everything right but they'll compare us to other jurisdictions even in Canada in terms of their government structure.

I know they spent some time in Alberta, they spent some time here in Saskatchewan, and they spent some time with our federal counterparts, and they're trying to gather as much information as they can so they can do it right. Because once you've made these changes there's really no turning back in the short period. You're there for the long haul and so you need to do it right.

So I'm certainly willing to, because this is such a dramatic change . . . and I agree with Mr. Kowalsky in terms of the window. The window, I think, is now if we're going to do it. We've got all-party committee . . . we've got, I think, all-party commitment to effecting some change that is going to make our system more inclusive of all of the members.

And so I mean I can support . . . you know, optics . . . whenever a government member or whether a caucus member travels outside of the country, there's always some concern. But I think this is very much a legitimate change that is taking place, a reasonable change, and before I could support in the legislature a recommendation from the Rules Committee, I would want to know that they have explored all of the different options that are out there and brought back comparisons that would give them and give us, as legislators, the best advice.

And I certainly support sending one member from each party as opposed to the whole committee. It's not a huge amount of money in the scheme of things. And I think we're going to find that committees are going to be costing, and we're going to be approving, as a board, more and more money on committees.

I just looked at some of the committee expenditures here from last year. I think Rules and Procedures spent 8,000 last year and

are budgeting whatever this year. Child Prostitution, that committee, was \$30,000. That was all with inside the province. But I think they're all worthwhile. Public Accounts Committee operates at 30,000, Crown Corps at 20, and so on.

But I think — and I don't want to dwell on this any more than I already have — I just think it's really important because these are not small changes we're making and I don't think any of us take the changes lightly. And I certainly know the members of the Rules Committee that I've discussed this with don't. And so I support . . . as a matter of fact, I would move the recommendation, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: — Thank you for that. Ms. Jones, you had a comment.

Ms. Jones: — I have a question actually, Mr. Chair, and I don't mind who answers it. Originally the proposal was for \$35,000 based on five committee members plus a committee Clerk, so that's six people travelling. Would it now be four people travelling?

And so how would the prorating happen if it was . . . Are you basing the travel costs kind of on like if it was six and it was going to cost 48,000, it would be \$8,000 each, or is it five? Is the committee Clerk paid for out of some other fund or would that be paid for by the committee?

So are we looking at, you know, 21, 24, or 4 times 8 is 32?

Mr. D'Autremont: — What we are looking at is sending the Speaker, one person from the Clerk's office, one government member, and one opposition member — so a total of four.

And we recognized, in making this presentation, that there were cost factors involved and that's why it isn't the entire committee that is asking to go. Because we recognize that the economic situation is that we're under restraint. So that is why it's four members.

The committee does have some money still available to it in its budget, and part of that will be used, plus a further request that is coming to this board at the present time.

You know, you have to look at the parliamentary system that we have around the world within the Commonwealth, and the Australian and New Zealand models are longstanding, stable democracies who have taken some very good initiatives perhaps in the utilization of their committees and the members in their House.

I think the comparison though with the US system is not valid in this particular case because the American system is representative democracy. They do not have a government in the sense that we understand the term of a governing party.

So we're looking at those areas that have a responsible government in the same manner that we have, and that is why Australia and New Zealand are those that are most closely aligned with us and most represent the new thought and the changes that we may be interested in making.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you for that answer. I'm not really

arguing against your proposal. I was just trying to determine the amount of money that the prorated . . . what amount is your four instead of six representing, I guess is what I want.

The Chair: — I believe, Ms. Jones, that Mr. Putz would have that answer for us. Do you want that now? Or Mr. Hillson wanted to make an additional comment.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — You can stay with this point first.

Mr. Putz: — Members of the board, we did cost this out based on the Rules Committee meeting last week. There was . . . we knew at that point that the Rules Committee wanted to do this and come before the board. For four people to go, based on our costing out, would be just over \$29,000. And as Mr. D'Autremont indicated, there is money in the Rules Committee budget right now.

When the board looked at the Rules Committee budget last year, of course the committee hadn't organized so they didn't budget for this. If they had budgeted for it, we wouldn't be here doing this today because the House has authorized the committee to travel to other jurisdictions.

In any event, that's where we're at now. The costing out would be just over \$29,000 for four persons. There is money in the budget. So my estimate would be that the committee would need an additional \$22,000 to do this trip based on the numbers you were talking about tonight, numbers attending.

Ms. Jones: — Supplementary to that. Is that just for the Australia-New Zealand trip or does that include your BC-Ontario?

Mr. Putz: — I think what the Rules Committee is looking at is . . . that doing the Australian part now and doing within their budget in the new fiscal year with the budget that you just approved today.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you very much for that information.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Yes, I don't want to sound so negative, but I think the one debate we do need here at home is that the way I see it you can't have an effective committee structure if you are going to have a rigid party discipline structure. And we have seen that the rigid party discipline of the Assembly has tended to spill down to the committees — the Public Accounts Committee where you routinely have 5-4 votes.

The debate it seems to me we have to have is are the parties — and most specifically the executive branch of government — prepared to allow committee members the opportunity of working collegially to hopefully come up with new approaches to public policy.

And unless the parties and specifically the executive branch of government — and I realize I'm part of the executive branch of government — but unless there's an openness to doing that, you really can't and won't have effective committees. And that is the debate that we have to have here and it's a debate that I would encourage and it's a debate I have some views on.

And I think it would be a reform of our system. I think we have

needlessly expanded the concept of votes of confidence beyond what there is any requirement for under our constitution.

But if we are going to rigidly stick to the concept of confidence covering basically all votes of the Assembly and its committees, then I find it very hard to imagine how we can strengthen committees to have the viable committee structure that — I think there is a consensus around this table — we would like to see and we see some benefits in it.

The Chair: — Thank you. Good point. If there's no further discussion, I have a motion that the board may entertain . . . is:

That the Board of Internal Economy approve additional funding in the amount of \$22,000 (statutory) for the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures, to be used in the 2000-2001 fiscal year for committee travel.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I would so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Lautermilch. Mr. D'Autremont.

Thank you for your discussion. Anything else? All those in favour? Carried. Thank you very much.

That brings our agenda to a conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate the diligence with which the board has worked for the last couple of days. It's been long and strenuous, but knowing each and every one of you, I know you're hardy and I appreciate that.

So thank you and I want to thank my staff that's been here and all the people that have contributed to this successful couple of days in our meeting. Thank you very much.

The meeting's adjourned . . . or do I need a motion? Mr. D'Autremont, adjourned. I don't think we need a seconder for that. Meeting's adjourned until the next call.

The board adjourned at 7:59 p.m.