



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

MINUTES AND VERBATIM REPORT

Published under the authority of
The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



No. 1 — February 26, 2003

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY
2003**

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Prince Albert Carlton

Dan D'Autremont
Cannington

Doreen Hamilton
Regina Wascana Plains

Hon. Glenn Hagel
Moose Jaw North

Carolyn Jones
Saskatoon Meewasin

Arlene Julé
Humboldt

Hon. Ron Osika
Melville

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Room 10 Legislative Building
Wednesday, February 26, 2003

Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Mr. Dan D'Autremont
Ms. Doreen Hamilton
Hon. Glenn Hagel
Ms. Carolyn Jones
Ms. Arlene Julé
Hon. Ron Osika

Staff to the Board

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

Officials in Attendance**Office of the Chief Electoral Officer**

Jan Baker, Chief Electoral Officer
Jean Ouellet, Manager of Election Finances

Office of the Provincial Ombudsman

Barbara Tomkins, Provincial Ombudsman
Lynne Fraser, Human Resources and Financial Administrator

Office of the Children's Advocate

Deborah Parker-Loewen, Children's Advocate
Glenda Cooney, Deputy Children's Advocate
Bernie Rodier, Human Resources and Financial Administrator
Caroline Sookocheff, Executive Administrative Assistant

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Mr. Richard Rendek, Acting Information and Privacy Commissioner

Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Mr. Gerald Gerrand, Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Office of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Guy Barnabe, Director of Information Services
Lorraine deMontigny, Director of Visitor Services
Linda Kaminski, Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services
Pat Kolesar, Assistant Legislative Librarian
Viktor Kaczkowski, Clerk Assistant (Committees)
Marian Powell, Legislative Librarian
Gregory Putz, Deputy Clerk
Ken Ring, Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk
Pat Shaw, Sergeant-at-Arms
Mr. Gary Ward, Director of Broadcast Services
Margaret Woods, Clerk Assistant

AGENDA Moved by Mr. D'Autremont, seconded by Ms. Hamilton, that the proposed agenda be adopted. Agreed.

MINUTES Moved by Mr. Osika, ordered, seconded by Ms. Jones, ordered, that the Minutes of Meeting #2/01 be adopted. Agreed.

ITEM 1 Table Items:

Legislative Assembly Year-End and Quarterly Financial Forecast Reports

The Chair tabled the fourth quarter report for the year ended March 31, 2002 and the first, second, and third quarter financial forecast reports for the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

Members' Accountability and Disclosure Reports; Audited Financial Statements and Schedule of Fixed Assets of the Government and Opposition Caucuses; and Financial Statements for the Offices of the Independent Members of the Legislative Assembly

The Chair tabled the reports for the year ended March 31, 2002.

ITEM 2 Table Items: Report of the Provincial Auditor – Memorandum of Audit Observations for the Year ended March 31, 2002

The Chair tabled the report.

ITEM 3 Decision Item: Review of the 2003-2004 Estimates for the Chief Electoral Officer

The Estimates, in the amount of \$811,000, were presented by Ms. Jan Baker, Chief Electoral Officer.

A debate arising, the item was deferred until later in the day.

The Board recessed for a short time.

ITEM 5 Decision Item: Review of the 2003-2004 Estimates for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

The Estimates, in the amount of 122,000, were presented by Mr. Gerald Gerrand, Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

A debate arising, the item was deferred until later in the day.

ITEM 4 Decision Item: Review of the 2003-2004 Estimates for the Offices of the Provincial Ombudsman and Children's Advocate

The Estimates, in the amount of \$1,652,000, were presented by Ms. Barbara Tomkins, Provincial Ombudsman.

The Estimates, in the amount of \$1,269,000, were presented by Ms. Deborah Parker-Loewen, Children's Advocate.

A debate arising, the items were deferred until later in the day.

The Board recessed for a short time.

ITEM 6(a) Decision Item: Review of the 2003-2004 Estimates for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

The Estimates, in the amount of \$367,500, were presented by Mr. Richard Rendek, Acting Information and Privacy Commissioner.

A debate arising, the item was deferred until later in the day.

ITEM 6(b) Recruitment Process for the Information and Privacy Commissioner

A debate arising, the item was deferred until later in the day.

The Board recessed for a short time.

ITEM 7 Decision Item: Review of the 2003-2004 Estimates for the Legislative Assembly**ITEM 7(a) Review Legislative Assembly Strategic Plan**

The Board reviewed the Strategic Plan for the Legislative Assembly.

A debate arising, the item was deferred until later in the day.

ITEM 7(b)(i) Review Budget Document

The Board reviewed the Estimates for the Legislative Assembly submitted as follows:

Budgetary:	\$ 6,167,000
Statutory:	\$12,145,000
Total:	\$18,312,000

ITEM 7(b)(ii) Decision Item: B Budget:

The Board reviewed B Budget request for the Legislative Assembly in the following amounts:

Interparliamentary commitment:	\$50,000
Hansard (additional committee verbatims):	\$40,000
Statutory amount (committee reform: chair and deputy chair remuneration)	\$59,000

ITEM 8 Decision Item: Approval of Dissolution Guidelines for MLA Expenses, Benefits, and Services 2003

The Board reviewed the Dissolution Guidelines document.

A debate arising, the item was deferred until later in the day.

The Board agreed to meet "in camera" at 5:12 p.m.

The Board resumed public meetings at 8:43 p.m.

ITEM 3 (con't) Decision Item: Review of the 2003-2004 Estimates for the Chief Electoral Officer

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

That the 2003-2004 Estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, in the amount of \$811,000 (Statutory) be transmitted to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1557

ITEM 4 (con't) Decision Item: Review of the 2003-2004 Estimates for the Offices of the Provincial Ombudsman and Children's Advocate

Moved by Ms. Hamilton, seconded by Ms. Julé:

That the 2003-2004 Estimates of the Provincial Ombudsman be approved in the amount of \$1,564,000

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

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1558

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

That the 2003-2004 Estimates of the Children's Advocate be approved in the base amount of \$1,140,000, plus a one-time amount of \$67,000 to address pressures, for a total of \$1,207,000,

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

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1559

ITEM 5 (con't)

Decision Item: Review of the 2003-2004 Estimates for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Moved by Ms. Julé, seconded by Mr. Osika:

That the 2003-2004 Estimates 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.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1560

ITEM 6 (con't)

Decision Item: Review of the 2003-2004 Estimates for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded by Ms. Hamilton,

That the 2003-2004 Estimates of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be approved in the amount of \$306,000,

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

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1561

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

That for the recruitment process for the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Board appoint a selection panel of senior officials, composed of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Chair of the Public Service Commission or designate, the current Acting Information and Privacy Commissioner, and a representative designated by Government, and a representative designated by the Official Opposition;

And that the mandate of the panel be:

- (1) to hold an open, national competition;
- (2) to develop selection criteria;
- (3) to screen and interview applicants; and
- (4) to make a recommendation to the Board of Internal Economy.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1562

ITEM 7(b) (con't)

Decision Item: Motion to approve Budgetary and Statutory Expenditure Estimates of the 2003-2004 Budget for the Legislative Assembly

Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded by Ms. Julé:

That the 2003-2004 Estimates of the Legislative Assembly be approved as follows:

Budgetary:	\$ 6,261,000
Statutory:	\$12, 204,000
For a total of	\$ 18,465,000

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

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1563

ITEM 7(d)

Decision Item: Motion to approve Revenue Estimates

Moved by Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. Osika:

That Revenue Estimates for the Legislative Assembly in the amount of \$8,000 be approved for the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

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

Minute # 1564

ITEM 7(b)

Decision Item: Conversion of co-op student position in Information Systems to permanent position

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

That the Board approve the conversion of the funding for the co-op student in the Information Systems branch to a permanent position.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1565

ITEM 8

Decision Item: Approval of Dissolution Guidelines for MLA Expenses, Benefits, and Services 2003

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

That the Board approve the *Dissolution Guidelines for MLA Expenses, Benefits, and Services 2003*, as attached.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1566

ITEM 9

Decision Item: Extended Health Benefits for Retirees

Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded by Ms. Hamilton:

Effective February 1, 2003

That a premium subsidy be provided for retirees enrolled in the Legislative Assembly's Extended Health Care Plan for Retirees (Retiree Health Plan);

That the retiree premium subsidy be on the same basis as Executive Government's retiree premium subsidy (present subsidy: Single 9%, Couple 7%, and Family 9%), and

That the Department of Finance be requested to pay the retiree premium subsidy on behalf of the Legislative Assembly.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1567

Decision Item: Deceased Employee Salary

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

That the Board of Internal Economy approve, retroactive to January 1, 2003, the payment of a deceased employee's full monthly salary for the month in which the death occurs;

For this purpose a deceased employee would include Members, employees of the Legislative Assembly, caucus, and constituency employees.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1568

ITEM 7(a)**Decision Item: Legislative Assembly Strategic Plan**

Mr. Hagel noted that the status of the strategic plan was that it had been received by the Board for consideration at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 21:00 p.m.

The board met at 09:00.

The Chair: — Well good morning, everybody. I want to welcome everybody to the meeting of the Board of Internal Economy. People in this building and outside the building who are independent officers, or work with the Legislative Assembly Office, have been quite busy over the last couple of months. And it's all in preparation of the material that we're going to be examining today.

And what we'll be doing is sort of reviewing some of the work that has been done over the last year, but in particularly setting our plans and directions for the upcoming year through the budgets for the independent officers and for the Legislative Assembly Office itself.

Members, you have received in advance agendas and information with respect to agendas, so at this time I would like to bring to your attention the agenda as presented in the binder. It has on it nine items. And I ask you to examine that at this time and what I would look for is a motion to approve the agenda as distributed.

I will be tabling an extra item under item 1 that is not indicated on there. A motion by Mr. D'Autremont that we approve the proposed agenda. Seconded by Ms. Hamilton.

Ms. Hamilton: — . . . so, Mr. Chair, that we're going to have the review from all of the officials today and then we would have a session later on where we would do our in camera budget deliberations, as we've done in years past?

The Chair: — Thank you very much. It was my intention to follow a process that we'd adopted in a minute previously and that is that the budgets, they are distributed one or two weeks prior to the meeting; that the senior management appear before the board to present the budget of the respective office; that the board members have opportunity to discuss the budget and ask questions of the officers. Then the board meets in camera to deliberate on necessary decisions. Then the board would meet in public with the officials present to announce the decision regarding budget request. And then last of all, the Chair of the board would transmit the approved estimates to the Minister of Finance for inclusion in the Estimates book for tabling in the House. So that would . . .

Ms. Hamilton: — That's what was the intent with our motion.

The Chair: — Thank you. So those in favour of the motion to adopt the agenda? Any opposed? Motion is carried.

First, you have received . . . towards the back of the package, there are minutes from the meeting of '01 and the meetings of . . . meeting 1 and meeting 2. They are white tabs at the very back and we should just pause here for a moment to give you a chance to look through your notes, whether there's any comments or questions with respect to any of the minutes, minute 1 or minute 2.

If there aren't any comments or questions, I would entertain a motion — a single motion will do — to approve the minutes from meeting 1 of the year '02 and meeting 2 from the year '02.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — I so move.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Osika, seconded by Ms. Jones. Those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Motion is carried.

Item 1 is a tabling of the Legislative Assembly year-end report. It's under tab 1 and it has for the year '01 and the quarterly financial and fiscal forecasts. These items have been previously distributed to the members. This is simply . . . By tabling them here today, we have the opportunity to ask any questions or make any comments you might want with respect to the quarterly budgets as being the first opportunity since they've been distributed for members to ask questions.

I think the one thing I would like to mention is that we're on target with our budget. Our last fiscal forecast here puts us on target and I don't think there's anything new in here that would be unexpected, that members haven't been made aware of previously in the budgets. But it is part of our reporting system now to try to provide more timely reports to members as we go along and as also suggested by the auditor that such be done.

The next item I want to table . . . Yes?

Mr. D'Autremont: — On this item, the first issue, Standing Committee on Agriculture, comments there on the coffee service, is this for all of the committees in the legislature sitting or was this just for the Committee of Agriculture?

The Chair: — I've been advised it's for all committees.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Would that cost not have been budgeted in previously?

The Chair: — The intent last year was to have it budgeted but I believe, during our deliberations, it was one of the things that was cut out of the budget. That decision didn't last that long and so it was put back in after the meeting.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So the two last items, members' indemnity and caucus resource funding, those would be . . . this report would be for the third quarter?

The Chair: — The item 1 is for the third quarter.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So there will be further savings then in that particular area because of fewer members in the House at the present time.

The Chair: — Just a minute. Is that completely true though because there is by-elections? There will likely be some saving in that area.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, because some of those vacancies will be up to three months or more.

The Chair: — Right.

I want to at this time also table the caucus audit member disclosure statements for the '01-02 fiscal year. Members will have received these previously. This includes the MLA

(Member of the Legislative Assembly) accountability disclosure statements, both caucuses' financial statements as well.

They have been tabled and the office . . . the financial statements of the office of independent members. These have been tabled previously but we want to advise the committee members and also put that they have been tabled here and also put on record that they have been tabled here in addition to having been tabled in the House.

And then we have item 2, which is tab 2, again a tabling item. This is the report of the Provincial Auditor and a memorandum of audit observations. So once again this becomes an opportunity for members of the committee to ask a question about this. This had been received by the Speaker in November of 2002.

As per usual the . . . No, I guess I shouldn't make it usual but it's . . . I'm satisfied that the auditor has commended the board on having adequate rules and procedures to safeguard and control its assets and suggests better internal reports. And it also suggests that we continue to work on defining and documenting our operational goals and objectives and defining targets and measures to be able to monitor those.

We have started on some of this, particularly with the strategic plan, and you'll be hearing about that when we get into our own budgeting later on this afternoon.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — The auditor has done a fine job.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Osika. No other questions and then we go ahead with item . . . then we can proceed right to item 3. Item 3 is a decision item. It's a review of the 2003-2004 budget for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. So I invite now as witnesses before the committee the Chief Electoral Officer, Jan Baker, and manager of election finances, Jean Ouellet. Welcome to the meeting. Ms. Baker.

And you have . . . I believe in your kits everybody should have received a copy of a document which is ring-bound and identified as the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, 2003-2004 expenditure estimates.

Ms. Baker: — Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and members of the board. With me today is Jean Ouellet, the office's manager of election finances. We are pleased to be here today to have this opportunity to provide background as to the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer's 2003-04 expenditure estimates, and to allow board members the opportunity to obtain further clarification regarding the related expenditure figures before you.

As you are familiar, the responsibilities of the office are regulated through various statutory enactments. In this regard the office is responsible for the administration of provincial elections, by-elections, enumerations other than during a writ of election, and provincial election finances under The Election Act. The office is also charged with administering The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act. And last, the office periodically conducts referendum and plebiscites under The Referendum and Plebiscite Act, and time votes under The Time Act.

The mandate of the office is to exercise direction and supervision over the administrative conduct of provincial electoral events. The principal mandate is the conduct of fair and impartial procedural, operational, administrative, and financial electoral practices. The office's goal is to facilitate provincial electors, registered political parties, and candidates in the exercise of their democratic right as entrenched in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The office enables provincial political stakeholders to exercise their constitutional entitlement by ensuring fairness, impartiality, and statutory compliance with the Act.

The environment within which the office is accountable is a unique and complex due to the uncertainty of the provincial electoral cycle, the decentralized nature of the electoral administration, and the interaction among political parties, candidates, and the electorate. The integration of this decentralized process among the province's political stakeholders rests with the office and its centralized administration and impartial application of the Act.

The office is responsible for maintaining a state of provincial election readiness. In this regard the office appoints requisite number of constituency returning officers and election officials to ensure election preparedness throughout the government of the day's mandate. The office also prepares electoral guidelines and conducts workshops throughout the province with election officials to ensure effective execution of electoral events and compliance under the Act.

Assistance is also given to political parties, candidates, chief official agents, and business managers to aid in their compliance with the Act, both in relation to electoral conduct as well as annual financial electoral reporting.

The office also maintains a small public relations program to ensure political stakeholders and the public are aware of important aspects of the office's mandate by producing and distributing informational materials, responding to public inquiries, and liaising with registered political parties, candidates, and their chief official agents and business managers.

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, administration of the political contributions tax credit system, and for two proposed new office initiatives.

The non-base-year estimates include potential annual electoral activities specific to a general election, constituency by-election, a non-writ-period enumeration, a referendum or plebiscite, and 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 addition to the office's 2003-04 budgetary estimates, the office provides the board with detailed estimate and actual figures for fiscal year 2001-02. Specific itemization includes operational and one constituency by-election expenditure.

The office's funding request for fiscal year 2003-04 is the critical funding request in the electoral cycle and coincides with the 10-year interval of the establishment of a Constituency Boundaries Commission.

General election preparations must be complete in 2003-04, which will mark the commencement of the fourth year of the current Legislative Assembly. Additional funding is necessary to enable the office to fulfill its mandate in the manner that was intended and directly relates to provisional salaries, appointment and training of constituency returning officers, and mapping requirements.

To elaborate upon this statement, cost estimates of \$100,000 are identified in regards to production of office electoral mapping requirements and preparation of written legal descriptions of approximately 3,000 polling subdivisions within the new provincial constituencies enacted under The Representation Act, 2002.

In addition, general election preparations in 2003-04 total 37,912 and include 14,712 in provisional salaries to facilitate packaging, distribution, and retrieval of election materials, and 23,200 for the critical returning officer training.

I note that funding for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer is based on statutory provision.

I'd be pleased to answer any specific questions you may have regarding the office's budgetary estimates.

The Chair: — Well thank you for a very concise, to the point, and direct report. And the floor's open to comments or questions by the members.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is wondering when we have two and perhaps more by-elections occurring and an election may or may not be held within a further six-month period after that, if there's a enumeration undertaken for a by-election, does that process have to be repeated? Is there a time frame within which that process does not need to be repeated again if a general election were to occur?

Ms. Baker: — No. Specific to each electoral event, an enumeration takes place. But specific to a forthcoming election, as you are familiar, The Representation Act, 1994 was enacted . . . The Representation Act, 2002 was enacted December 18, 2002 and new constituency boundaries will be adopted with dissolution of the Legislative Assembly.

So currently the office is running two sets of electoral boundaries. Until a writ of provincial general election is issued, the office is functioning on The Representation Act, 1994. Following issuance of writ of a provincial general election or dissolution of the twenty-fourth Legislative Assembly, the office will immediately enact the new provincial constituencies under The Representation Act, 2002.

Ms. Jones: — That's a good point. In general though, if we weren't going into the new constituencies, is there a time period — a maximum time after the last enumeration or before the next enumeration — that you wouldn't have to repeat that process?

Ms. Baker: — No.

Ms. Jones: — So every . . .

Ms. Baker: — Every electoral event.

Ms. Jones: — Every electoral event . . .

Ms. Baker: — The first 10 days of a writ of . . . issuance of writ of an election is enumeration.

Ms. Jones: — Okay. Thank you very much.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you. Item no. 558 has other miscellaneous materials and supplies, and I'd be assuming that the jump there is the new boundary maps and materials prepared. But when we're looking at your forecast for this year, you're back down to \$2,000.

Could you explain that line item for me, and then just quickly outline the new initiative items that you have listed on the next page?

Ms. Baker: — Are you asking me to account for the 7,203.40, the actual in 2001-02 or are you querying the \$2,000 allotted to 558 for this particular fiscal budgetary request?

Ms. Hamilton: — Yes, I was assuming that's extra maps and design and draw of the new areas, or new boundaries, or . . .

Ms. Baker: — No, the \$100,000 that I made mention of for realignment of the province's 3,000 polling subdivisions, which is also inclusive of a provincial map for composite . . . (inaudible) . . . representation, a directory of communities, and an urban street index — and the individual constituency maps total 83 — and that is identified under 290 for the contractual services required for the preparation of those mapping requirements, and under 318, which is duplication services. All of our maps are prepared in Mylar form and we don't go to print, we just duplicate.

The \$2,000 identified, I believe under 558, is for miscellaneous materials and supply required by the office.

Ms. Hamilton: — So there was additional materials that were required last year?

Ms. Baker: — In 2001-02.

Ms. Hamilton: — 2001-02, okay.

And the new initiative, just if you could quickly outline the Web page development and communications program.

Ms. Baker: — The new initiatives at this point are certainly a vision; the office has not had opportunity to move forward on either. We certainly would like to have a Web page established prior to a provincial general election. We were nearing a point in time where we could move forward with Web page development; however with boundary realignment, we gave consideration to alignment of boundaries and hoping to provide a Web site that would be more informational specific to boundary realignments. At this point we have not moved

forward on that. We are hoping to give consideration, through a Web site, of all facets of the electoral process in addition to providing statistical information. But to date we do not have a Web site.

Particular to the development of voter educational materials, the office has a vision to provide information as a way of educating the youth of the democratic process. We have not yet moved forward on that initiative either.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — A couple of different areas that I'm interested in. You list possibilities of referendums and time vote, etc. The conducting of a time vote — how would that be done? Would that be province-wide at all polling stations or fewer selected points, or how would that be carried out?

Ms. Baker: — Certainly specific to The Time Act. The Time Act prescribes 24 time-option areas and half of the province maintaining Central Standard Time on an annual basis. I believe if you were going to have a province-wide vote, there would have to be consideration of a plebiscite initiated by the government and it could potentially be held in conjunction with the provincial general election.

I do have here a cost summary of three provincial plebiscite questions held in conjunction with the 1991 provincial general election. The cost at the constituency level was 218,216. The cost for administration of those three plebiscites was 143,047, for a total of 361,264. And that would have been over and above the costs of the general election.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So then when your estimate here is on referendum and plebiscites for 3,768,860, that is if it's conducted outside of a provincial election.

Ms. Baker: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So would that cost not then be the same for a time vote conducted outside of a provincial election?

Ms. Baker: — Should it be a plebiscite question initiated and held under The Referendum and Plebiscite Act, I believe that the estimate that I've identified here does include an enumeration. So if held stand-alone, that would be the cost.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I just wondered why the cost for the time vote was 11,000 to hold a province-wide time vote, and then 3 million, almost 4 million to hold a plebiscite.

Ms. Baker: — Right. Specific to a time vote, as I made mention, there are 24 local time-option areas in the province in which time votes can be held. Votes are initiated by petition signed by 25 per cent of the total number of persons who are 18 years of age and residents of the time-option area or by school divisions initiated by resolution of the board of a school division within the time-option area. They are specific to areas and . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — To one of the 24 areas with the possible . . .

Ms. Baker: — To one of the 24 areas and the resulting cost would be minimal.

Mr. D'Autremont: — In the preparation with the new boundaries, where are you at on that for maps and polling stations, etc., etc.? Is that all prepared and ready to go or is there still some time needed?

Ms. Baker: — Do I get down on my knees?

To date, as I said, the office is running two sets of electoral boundaries concurrently. An order in council was passed February 12 appointing constituency returning officers in the new 58 provincial constituencies. Returning officer workshops were held in the latter part of that week and early in the following week. All 58 constituency returning officers have started the exercise of realigning the 3,000, approximately 3,000 polling divisions within the new electoral boundaries. The office has set a timeline of approximately two weeks.

Particular to our mapping agency, we're looking at six to eight weeks for production of the maps following production of the written descriptions of the 3,000 polling divisions.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And the determination of the polling divisions is being carried on right now?

Ms. Baker: — Pardon?

Mr. D'Autremont: — The determination of the polling divisions is being carried on . . .

Ms. Baker: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — . . . as we speak?

Ms. Baker: — Yes.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was wondering if you could give me some indication if the constituencies will be receiving, in addition to the maps that they have been issued right now, whether they'll be receiving maps that are somewhat clearer. And also, whether or not accompanying the maps there might be a written description of, not only the land descriptions, but also of the communities and so on. Because the maps, as they have been distributed, the way they are right now, do not clearly indicate whether a town may be in or out of a boundary.

So I'm wondering if there will be something issued to the constituencies that will provide more clarity.

Ms. Baker: — Well certainly particular to the province, the office offers and it is available free of charge. As I said, we have, we have the provincial map, the four composite maps of the major urban centres. To complement the rural constituencies, we have a directory of communities that identifies the new provincial constituency in addition to the current federal. And specific to the urban constituencies, we have a urban street index which, by civic address, identifies the location of the new constituency to electorates in the urban centre.

The individual constituency maps, the written polling

subdivisions — as I said, the preparation of the map itself following a written description of each polling division is not something that has been requested previously by the political parties but is available in our office, and certainly should you wish to receive copy, we'd be pleased to provide it to you.

And so as The Representation Act provides the boundaries of the constituency, the office provides the boundaries of the individual polling divisions. And specific to the rural, you are absolutely right. Any community of population of less than 1,000 people would logically not have more than two polling subdivisions so, as a result, a secondary map would not be provided. So therefore the written description would have to assist you to identify the boundaries in those communities that are less than 1,000 residents.

Ms. Julé: — So what I'm hearing is, then, I can get a hold of your office to get more definitive information on those polls.

Ms. Baker: — Absolutely.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you very much.

Ms. Baker: — Certainly we'll make it available at your request.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you.

Ms. Baker: — As soon as we get it prepared.

Ms. Julé: — Okay.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. In your report on by-election expenses, 209,000 — that's an estimate per by-election, is it?

Ms. Baker: — Yes it is.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. You talked about establishing a Web page. Would you be looking at having a Web . . . Web access available for election results on election day?

Ms. Baker: — I don't believe so.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Is it a matter of cost or time?

Ms. Baker: — It's a matter of time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Time. Okay. I think that would be something that people would find very advantageous and make use of certainly.

Ms. Baker: — Right. I think that a future initiative is to move towards more electronic endeavours. But at this point, at the constituency level, we are certainly not there. And being a central organization we don't have the ability to get those results, get them on a Web site and available as quickly as the press, for example, or others.

We generally do not have preliminary results available until noon the following day.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I suppose your concern would also be

that the accuracy . . . that people will take the result off of the Web page as being gospel when there still is perhaps a few outstanding polling stations that haven't reported yet.

Ms. Baker: — Absolutely. Election night results in regular polls, personal care facility polls, and advance polls being counted, you know, 12 days following polling day as final count which at such time we're including hospital and absentee vote, remand, so yes, the results could change substantively.

The office always suggests to people that the results on election night are preliminary.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And sometimes we even find out that they are. Okay, thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm wondering, since it's always better if you were able to decide, if you were asked to find any potential savings in your budget, where do you think they would most likely be achieved?

Mr. Baker: — Given where we are in the election cycle, I don't believe the office has made every effort to maintain estimates identified in the year 2001-02, that our ongoing operations remain around seven-ten, but given consideration of an electoral redistribution and the critical training of the constituency returning officers, I don't believe, particular to these budget estimates, that I could identify — other than potential retirement of the Chief Electoral Officer. I'm sorry, I was just joking.

I'm sorry. Jean, do you see anywhere where we could? I don't believe it's possible, particular to this estimate year.

Ms. Jones: — Fine. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Are there any further questions?

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a comment to the Chief Electoral Officer is to express appreciation for the layout of your budget documents for our review. We had a little bit of difficulty with the previous ones, so I just wanted to make note and express our appreciation, I'm sure on behalf of the board, for your efforts in presenting the documents so that we can make the comparisons from previous years in actuals and expenses and so on. I just make that comment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Osika. And with that I would like to thank the Chief Electoral Officer for her report. And I think the members have had opportunity to ask questions, make comments, and we will be voting on this some time later today after deliberations. Thank you very much.

Members of the board, we've had a request to switch two items, switch the order of two items being presented, in order to accommodate schedules. And with only . . . with and only with the total authority given from the board, we would switch items 4 and 5 and proceed first with the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and then with the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman. Are we okay with that?

The Chair: — Agreed all around? Thank you very much then. We will proceed with item 5 first. And for item 5 I would invite Mr. Gerrand, our Conflict of Interest Commissioner, to come to the table. Welcome back to the table, Mr. Gerrand, and I invite you to present your report. Members, this is under tab 5 in your booklets.

Mr. Gerrand: — Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. The budget has been filed with you. It is identical in total amount to the budget proposed for last year. There are some minor variations in the body of the budget, but the total budget is the same as last year and I think the year previous to that.

I invite you to give favourable consideration to the budget as presented. I have no further comments to make. I would be pleased to attempt to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. We'll pause for a moment to give members an opportunity to peruse the numbers before them, in case there are comments or questions.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. I'm glad to see that the budget's coming in the same as it was last year. I'm also pleased to note that there is a short form this year for us to fill out for our conflict of interest . . .

Mr. Gerrand: — And I look forward to receiving your copy, sir.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And I look forward to sending it in.

A Member: — In a timely fashion.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, I have always got it in there, not always on time.

Under item 218, legal services, I'm wondering why you have . . . are requesting \$15,000 there, when the actual in 2001-2002 was two seventy-eight and your estimate was 21,000 for last year?

Mr. Gerrand: — It's more a matter of protective action on my part in the event some major problem, totally presently unanticipated, arises where I require to obtain legal services. That has not happened in the past. It has happened in other jurisdictions, and considerable expense has been incurred in other jurisdictions. We hope and expect it will not occur, so it's more a matter of protection in . . . for budgetary purposes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I just was curious to whether there was anything happening that we should be aware of, on the board, that was making it necessary for these expenditures.

Mr. Gerrand: — No, no there isn't, not presently.

The Chair: — Any other comments or questions from any quarter?

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. In reference to item 220, rent of grounds, buildings, and other space, I wonder if you could indicate for the board what the extent of those rentals are? Where that would be . . . those buildings would be rented? Is

this all within the city of Regina?

Mr. Gerrand: — Yes, yes it is.

Ms. Julé: — And what grounds and buildings does it refer to?

Mr. Gerrand: — That refers to the arrangement that has existed since the time of my appointment, whereby a rental is paid to the law firm with which I am associated, for space, the use of facilities, and legal services. That was the arrangement that prevailed with my predecessor, Mr. McLeod, as well.

Ms. Julé: — All right, thank you.

Mr. Gerrand: — I might point out that the figure was proportionately reduced at the time that I resigned as Information and Privacy Commissioner, so that that figure was reduced by the same proportion that my total salary — combined salary — was reduced.

Ms. Julé: — Then the request for 2003-2004 is \$4,000 more than the estimates for 2002-2003 so . . .

Mr. Gerrand: — Yes.

Ms. Julé: — . . . can you give some explanation for that?

Mr. Gerrand: — I think I'd invite Ms. Borowski to comment on that.

The Chair: — Ms. Julé, would you mind just repeating your question so . . .

Ms. Julé: — Okay. Item 2 . . .

Mr. Gerrand: — I'm afraid I can't give that answer to you at this time. Ms. Borowski would have to go up and look at her working notes.

Ms. Julé: — All right. All right then. I take it then we can contact Ms. Borowski for an explanation of that increase or that amount? Thank you.

Mr. Gerrand: — Yes.

The Chair: — If there are no further questions, I would like to at this time thank Mr. Gerrand for his presentation to the board, and mention how important we as members feel about this particular work and to have access to an independent officer. It's one of those things that has really led a lot to the members feeling confident about their own integrity and the integrity of their dealings within government spending. So thank you very much for the attention that you've given this and the advice that you've given all members.

Mr. Gerrand: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: — Thank you. We are, members, proceeding then to the item labelled as item 4 which is a review of the 2003-2004 budget for the offices of the Provincial Ombudsman and Children's Advocate. Presented with this, you do have a booklet, a ring-bound booklet, budget proposal.

We invite to the table at this time the Ombudsman, Provincial Ombudsman, Barbara Tomkins and also the Children's Advocate, Deborah Parker-Loewen. With them today is . . . With Deborah Parker-Loewen is Bernie Rodier, who is the human resources and finance officer. And with Barbara Tomkins is Lynne Fraser, also human resources and financial officer.

They will be making a joint presentation and individual presentations and I invite them to set up their own order of presentation. So I turn it over to you.

Ms. Tomkins: — Thank you. Good morning to you all. Our proposal, if it's satisfactory to the board members, is as in past years that I'll make a submission on behalf of the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman, and take questions. Then Dr. Parker-Loewen will make her submission in regard to the Office of the Children's Advocate. And this year we have, as you've seen in our budget submission, a sort of part C which is a joint request and so we thought we would jointly make that submission.

If that's satisfactory to you, I'll start.

The Chair: — Yes. And I would just pause for a minute. You have other officials with you. Perhaps we could introduce them at this time as well.

Ms. Tomkins: — I have Lynne Fraser with me as you introduced, but no others.

The Chair: — Yes, I've done that and I'm just . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — I have with me Glenda Cooney, who's the deputy children's advocate in the office; and Caroline Sookocheff, who's our administrative assistant and is in the process of taking on some new responsibilities in the office and here as an observer this year.

The Chair: — Thank you.

Ms. Tomkins: — As to the Office of the Ombudsman, I'll give you a brief overview of the office and a brief overview of the budget submission. I don't intend to go into great detail as I think, or hope, that it's clear in the document we submitted and in addition can be clarified by your questions.

By The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act, the Ombudsman is charged fundamentally to promote fairness in the provision of government services. This is done primarily through four different powers set out in the Act. These are to receive, review, investigate, and where appropriate recommend corrective action regarding public complaints — those are individual members of the public who come to our office with a concern or complaint about the provision of services by the government.

We have a power to conduct — and do conduct — own-motion investigations. These are investigations that are initiated on my own motion, perhaps as a result of a complaint or complaints but not necessarily as a result of that.

We have the power to — and do — work to negotiate, mediate, and facilitate the resolution of complaints through

non-adversarial means and outside of our traditional investigation process.

And lastly, we are charged to conduct public education about the office and role of the Ombudsman.

We have two offices, one in Regina and one in Saskatoon.

In regard to public complaints, I've provided you a chart indicating the numbers of complaints we have received against government, not against government, and in total for the last number of years. You'll note that during calendar year 2002 — and we do report on a calendar year basis — in calendar year 2002 we received a total of 2,647 public complaints against the government. This is an 11.5 per cent increase over the total of against-government complaints in 2001. There's a chart at the bottom of page 4 that shows the numbers of complaints, total and against government, and you'll note that they're both rising at a fairly steady rate.

Notwithstanding those increases, I haven't requested any increasing resources directly relating to the management and investigation of public complaints. I cannot say that there is no impact on our work as a result of the increases. We are managing the impact and are seeing time in investigation increasing and we believe it is in part due to the increase in the number of complaints.

We anticipate additional increases that are perhaps unusual in the next year or two as a result of our major investigation report which was released in November of 2002. Any time that an office like ours releases a public report or even makes a public presentation, we see an almost immediate impact at the office. Having released a report of that nature, we certainly have generated a great deal of interest beyond our normal . . . for example, requirements for presentations and things of that nature. But we also have seen and anticipate continuing to see increasing numbers, or increased numbers of complaints respecting correctional centres, simply because we've highlighted certain issues and people are more knowledgeable and more willing to report them or bring them to our notice.

We also anticipate increased work regarding investigations as a result of the review because there is, we believe, and must be a sort of monitoring role. Having done the work — and I'm quite satisfied it's very good work — it would make no sense to not monitor compliance, to not carry out further . . . or future investigations in the context of that review. This will require an additional step.

So in summary, we're seeing increases in numbers. We also are seeing changes in the nature of the work. We are prepared to, and believe we are able to, absorb them — not without impact, but we think without impact that necessitates additional resources at the current time.

I will say that one way that we intend to manage the increased work in the oversight role coming out of the corrections review will be by dedicating one-third of one of our investigatory positions to that purpose.

In terms of own-motion investigations which is the work from which, for example, the corrections review came and a number

of other smaller and not necessarily public systemic reviews, we have one position in the office dedicated to that work. We believe it is likely that the allocation for that work will be reduced in the '03-04 fiscal year. And I'll explain later why and where that is.

In terms of alternative case resolution, our work in that field continues, continues to grow and continues to be appreciated. We have a couple of initiatives in the works. One we discussed last year which continues regarding information and workshops for governments regarding complaint . . . government employees regarding complaint management and fairness. That is progressing and so far being well received. And we believe we're able to manage that aspect of our work without additional resources.

Public education and communications is an area where we face challenges. As a result of the budget numbers last year, we eliminated our communications coordinator's position. Since that time we have attempted to manage and have managed our communications needs by devolving them among various members of our staff, generally senior staff who are involved in the work that would be subject of those communications needs.

Some of the communications work we would like to see done has not been done. Some of the public education work we would like to see done has not been done, and I am satisfied that it needs to be done.

What I am proposing to do, assuming our budget submission this morning receives favourable consideration from the Board, is to reduce the position dedicated to major investigations to one-half time, not probably working half days but six months of the year, and to allocate the remaining funds from that position to create a half-time communications position. In that manner we will be able to continue the work that we are charged to do without requesting additional resources from the Board for that purpose.

We have requested certain increases from the Board, however, and those are set out in the budget submission.

In order to maintain our work, continue our work on the same basis as we did in fiscal year 2002-2003, we are requesting a total sum of \$64,000. It's referred to in the budget submission as maintaining the status quo.

That sum is comprised primarily of increases in salaries to various staff totalling \$56,000. I'd like to point out, these are increases that we will incur over the 2003-2004 fiscal year. We are not requesting that the board additionally fund increases from last year which were absorbed.

Those increases that we have requested funding for is an increase of 2.5 per cent effective July 1, 2003, that has been announced for out-of-scope staff. There are in-range increments for out-of-scope staff available on the same date, and those projected and announced salary adjustments total 17,600.

In the fall of 2002, a number of my staff were reclassified. The ombudsman assistant positions had been classified at level 5 and were raised to level 6. The net result of that was that eight of our employees each received an 8 per cent salary increase.

The total of that is \$38,600. This is a one-time increase and is the reason our number is 56,000 and not a smaller number.

In addition we understood from information we received that we ought to consider, for codes 2 to 9 non-salary items, a flat increase of 2.4 per cent. Using that figure we request for all other codes an increase of 8,000. The total of those two is \$64,000. And we're requesting that our budget from last year be increased by that amount.

In addition, and you will have seen this in submission, our office — both of our offices — are facing certain serious challenges regarding information technology hardware. And we have made a submission for an increase dedicated to that purpose. It's a joint submission by my office and the Children's Advocate office and we'd like to speak to that jointly after the Children's Advocate has made her submission, if that's all right. And if it is, I'm certainly prepared now to take questions on the Ombudsman's submission.

The Chair: — Thank you very much.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your presentation; it was very good. And I'm just wondering if you could clarify a couple of things for me. Some of the comments that you made, I think at least what I believe I heard, indicate that your office is assisting in government staff complaint management — like complaints that government staff would get. Is that correct? And then how to deal with the resolution of those complaints?

Ms. Tomkins: — I don't know if it's technically that we're assisting government staff, but what we are doing is we're working now with sort of focus group, or are about to set up the focus groups with government staff, who deal with people who are not happy or who have complaints.

Initially what we're doing is talking to them about are the skills that we have because our office is skilled in dealing with complaints and in complaint resolution mechanisms. And are there skills that we have that we could impart that would assist them that thereby complaints would be resolved sooner, more easily, and not end up at our offices and also not frustrate the government staff who deal with them?

We have people in our office who are extremely skilled at this kind of work. We have, over many years, through various kinds of contacts with government staff, become convinced and it's been indicated to us that this kind of information would be valued by government staff. And it is the sort of work that we've always done as part of promoting fairness and fair treatment in any event.

Ms. Julé: — Yes, I can certainly agree that you have the intelligence and the wherewithal and certainly the professionalism to take care of it as your mandate dictates, but I'm not too sure . . . do you feel that this kind of a work is within your mandate?

Ms. Tomkins: — Oh absolutely I do. It's our mandate in the big picture to promote the provision of fair services by the provincial government and if we can do that by . . . as we do talking to government staff about what fairness is, what we're

looking for when we talk about fair decisions, how . . . what fair treatment is — these aren't necessarily airy-fairy terms or personal opinions. There is various kinds of information techniques and even legal decisions as to what these things are and what is expected from government staff, and we very much see it as our role to make sure or to help government staff to understand what that is.

Ms. Julé: — I'm just . . . I'm reflecting as you speak on the many, many requests you get from the general public that come to your office regarding complaints about government and the need to have these complaints resolved. And I know that . . . I've also understood from your office that often there's a waiting time, a long, lengthy waiting time for many members of our province, many people in this province, to be able to get their issues resolved.

And so, you know, as you mentioned that your office's resources are being used in order to assist government staff in dealing with complaints that they may get from the same general public as you are, I'm wondering whether or not that's . . . I mean, that's why I asked about your mandate.

I think that there's . . . It seems to me that it's a bit of a conflict here because you're using financial and human resources to assist government members whom, in fact — government members' staff — who in fact the general public are complaining about. There might be some complaints regarding that department, any specific department.

I'm just kind of . . . I just never ever dreamt that that would be part of your mandate is to assist government staff with dealing with complaints from the public.

Because, for instance, I as an opposition member, I do that on a daily basis. And I wouldn't think to ask your office to help me to resolve some of those things or to learn how to assist the public. I never thought that — at least it wasn't made clear to me — that that was part of the mandate of your office was.

Ms. Tomkins: — We haven't had a request from any member of the Legislative Assembly for expertise of that kind, but as you mention that if there was an interest, yes we would be quite willing. Because our primary purpose genuinely is to promote the provision of fair services by the provincial government. And if government staff understand what that means and provide fair services, then we won't get those complaints.

So in that sense, it's not a duplication. What it is, is it's proactive in preventing complaints that might otherwise come in the future.

So I . . . Yes, I absolutely see it as part of our role. And I think you'll find that all ombudsmen offices across Canada would take the view that it's part of their role.

Ms. Julé: — Okay. And I just have one more question for you if I could, Ms. Tomkins.

You had indicated that there was an increase in salaries, and this increase in salaries is part of the reason that there's a request on your part for a budgetary increase.

You'd indicated that there was a classification adjustment from level 5 to level 6 and that will then warrant an increase in salary. So I'm just wondering how . . . Who authorizes the classification adjustment?

Ms. Tomkins: — Public Service Commission makes the classification adjustment.

What happened in this case was what they call an equity review. And it was an assessment of the job requirements, knowledge, skills, and ability, and so on of my ombudsman assistants, which are more commonly known as investigators, in comparison to — and I don't think that PSC (Public Service Commission) would use that word, so excuse that word — but basically in comparison to the equivalent positions in the Children's Advocate office which are classified substantially higher than ours.

Ms. Julé: — Okay, thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Ms. Julé.

Ms. Hamilton: — I was intrigued by Ms. Julé's comments because I know that what we do on an ongoing basis in our office is predominantly deal with people who are very upset about either a lack of communication or something that has occurred in a department that has either been a challenge of what the person expected or it hasn't really met their expectations.

So in many instances I would assume that your office would see individuals who have, for whatever reasons, heightened emotions about an issue and many times you would probably at the end of that conclude that there's been a miscommunication; or people, because they aren't able to approach the issue in the way your trained investigators would, because of the public relations skills, be able to have addressed that much earlier. So to me I think that it's very important that your office would have that kind of workshop available to the civil service. I would expect that this is a way that in the long term you would see far less escalation to your office to correct something that's either a miscommunication or because of a state of emotion.

I guess I'm wondering if you have an idea of, or by the complaint basis, you have an indication where you would start and then you go in with groups that seem to have the most difficulty or . . . and do you have an idea of what percentage of your caseload may drop if you have this alternative case resolution training available to civil service?

Ms. Tomkins: — I don't think I can answer either of those questions, I'm afraid. Our alternative case resolution process is something that we use for complaints that come to us. And this work that's being done, focused on government employees, is being done by the two staff of ours who are most skilled at the alternate dispute resolution processes. So it's an adjunct of their work. The cost certainly to date is minimal and is being absorbed.

What they are doing right now is arranging to meet with focus groups of government employees — quite small and not necessarily great numbers. I can't recall off the top of my head but I think we're talking about four or five focus groups and

talking to them about what kind of situations they encounter, what kinds of situations they have trouble with, what kind of situations they find recurring, and whether they think that we have information that would be helpful to them — and if so, what kind of information.

And from that we will develop the workshops. We will not require anyone to take those workshops, although I'm very intrigued by the idea that a workshop about our office be compulsory for all government employees, not just about ADR (alternative dispute resolution) but about the office, but I haven't been able to swing that just yet.

So at this point, until we have the discussions with the government employees and learn from them what they see their needs are and whether there's a fit and where the fit is, I can't say how many employees will receive the workshop or be affected or . . . It's possible I suppose that they'll say that they don't need us, and we won't do it at all. From certainly our past experience and preliminary inquiries on this project, we don't expect that's going to happen. I might have better answers to those questions next year.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. On the subject of training again. This training service that you're providing to the government, is that to government departments? Is that to ministers' offices? Which staff is this that are being trained?

Ms. Tomkins: — We have talked to many government employees in many circumstances about the office and various parts of the office, and we certainly don't have any rules. I can't conceive that we would turn down any request.

I personally have talked in the last few months about the Ombudsman's office, about fair process, fair decision making to the staff . . . or the board members and staff of the Highway Traffic Board. I met with the directors of the EcoRegions of SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management). I've met . . . It's always hard to do this off the top of your head. We've met with various parts of . . . not parts, but various sections of various correctional centres. I've met with, repeatedly, with senior staff of correctional centres to talk about these things.

It runs the gambit from front line workers to senior staff to policy development people. Often it comes out of the work that we do on a specific complaint and then . . . Our work is generally not seen as adversarial and therefore, in the course of the work on a complaint, the government agency involved may say, gee, I hadn't realized this; we're going to do this differently now and you know it might be helpful if you could come over and explain what this is about to our policy development people or whatever. And if they ask, we're there.

So I can't say who it's to. It's to whoever wants and in some cases to who we think needs it, which also would probably come out of complaints.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I can certainly understand why there would be a need for this when you look at the fact that there's rising numbers of complaints against the government,

that obviously there are problems there and the solutions are not becoming readily available.

But I do have a concern that with this process in the fact that I don't believe you're charging for it. Is that the case?

Ms. Tomkins: — No.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Whenever government service provides service from one department to another department, there seems to be a cost associated with it. When SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) provides any service, it's charged to whichever department receives that service.

And I think that what's happening here is a transfer of training costs from department, from the minister's office, from wherever in government on to the Ombudsman's budget and I don't think that's right.

I think that . . . I think it's good and well and proper that you provide that service but I believe there needs to be a charge back to the department receiving the benefit. It's of benefit to your department, perhaps indirectly in the fact that the resolutions may occur before it comes to your office. But nevertheless it takes budget from your office, that is to be . . . that is there to provide help for the clients that call in resolving their difficulties with government, rather than helping government resolve its difficulties before it comes to you.

Government has other avenues available to them for that training if they wish to utilize that and you're one of those possible resources. And I think that if departments, if ministers' offices wish to utilize your services, that they should be paying for it just as they would pay for a service from SPMC or many other government departments.

When the Department of Health needs a CVA (Central Vehicle Agency) vehicle, they just don't run down and grab it and there's no cost associated to the Department of Health. There is a cost there. And I think that you need to budget, you need to bill out those services that you provide in that sense to whichever departments are utilizing those services. I think that's only fair and it should not reflect on your budget the training in other departments.

Ms. Tomkins: — It certainly is something that we could consider. I don't think it's something we have considered.

If this project that now we consider a pilot project, were to . . . or better yet, using the example I said earlier that I would like to have compulsory piece that all government employees spend a half a day with someone from our office learning about fairness and fair process, if it becomes extensive or something of that nature we would have to consider something like that I would think, or this board would have to consider whether we should consider something like that. At this stage the resources devoted to this kind of work are not in direct dollars significant because public education is a part of our mandate. And education about the office is part of our mandate.

If it were to become an extensive, organized, structured event, it may be something we have to look at. On the other hand if, in the course of doing or working on a complaint, a government

agency is interested in what we're telling them and asks if we would come, as I said in my example, and talk to their staff about how we got where we did on that complaint and what it means to them and how they might . . . things they should know and take into consideration when they do their work, I see that as part . . . as growing out of the complaint, sort of part of that evolution. So to me there's that line. I don't know if you're looking at that line or if you're looking at everything.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I was looking at everything. But in the research and resolution of the complaint, if you explain to a department official or someone in a minister's office that here would have been a better way to resolve that, that particular item I don't consider to be training.

Ms. Tomkins: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — More . . . it's more advice. But if a department contacts you and, we would like to have three of our officials sit down with you and go through a resolution process, that's a training program and should be paid for.

Ms. Tomkins: — It's certainly something we can consider.

Mr. D'Autremont: — How many days, work days, have been spent on those kind of training programs with department people?

Ms. Tomkins: — Something you would call a training program, I obviously don't have a number but I would not think it was extensive. The number of days we've done presentations to various groups that may or may not include government agencies would be a much, you know, a larger number. And the one that comes to mind is we have spent a day . . . The correctional centre workers are required to take a one-year course through — I want to say SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) but it's the SIAST in Prince Albert — and we provide one-day training on fairness, fair decision making, and fair process as part of that. Again we see it as a benefit to our office to do that in a number of ways.

Mr. D'Autremont: — But during this training program for the correctional services, someone shows up from the Department of Education. The Department of Education . . . either that person is paid by the training program or the Department of Education is compensated by that training program. They're not there gratis.

Ms. Tomkins: — The one at Woodland, I don't think that would happen because it's an actual course that the students are registered in — that you would have to be a student in that course to be in that class.

Mr. D'Autremont: — But would they — and you probably can't answer this — but any outside resource that they utilize would be compensated for being there for that day. They'd get travel expenses. They'd get meal allowances. They'd likely get a per diem for the day. So their office, be it private or public, would be compensated in some way, shape, or form. And yet your office is not being compensated for providing that same kind of service. And I see that you're providing a subsidy to other departments by doing this.

Ms. Tomkins: — It's certainly something we could consider. I would like to say though that similar work is done for us by government agencies.

We had yesterday in our office people who are implementing or are responsible for a new government program come over and spend time explaining to my staff what the new program looks like, what it's intended to do, how it will operate. So that when we . . . if we have complaints about that program, we'll understand what it is. And they don't charge us for that.

So there's a little bit of two-way, but on the other hand if it becomes extensive it's something we'll have to consider.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mind you the program you mentioned there yesterday, that's a government program that they're promoting for their own . . . for that department's purposes. And so they're encouraging people to utilize and facilitate that particular program, whatever it might be.

Ms. Tomkins: — Actually in those cases, we have asked . . . we will often ask government when they bring in new programs — especially programs we expect will affect numbers of members of the public — we will ask them to come and give us a presentation about the program so that we can understand it if we get calls. It's both ways.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I think it's something you need to take a serious look at.

Ms. Tomkins: — I will.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The fact that complaints against government is on the rise, what would you attribute that to. Is that better education? That people understand the Office of the Ombudsman and recognize that they can contact that office where they have a complaint? Or is there some other reason?

Ms. Tomkins: — I think it's a number of things and I certainly think it's . . . I hope it's better education, more knowledge of the Office of the Ombudsman. I think it's a change or a progression in attitude among members of the public in the sense of a simple willingness to — for want of a better word — to fight rather than to let things go and complain about it to their neighbours, which I think is a positive thing.

I think it may have to do with accessibility to the office. As I suggested, when we do presentations, complaints go up and there is some residual piece of that. It's generally the case that Provincial Ombudsman offices across the country — although not in every case — but it is generally the case that complaints go up, continue to go up and don't . . . One doesn't realistically think, gee if we went out and gave a speech to every government employee they would go away — they're not going to ever reduce to zero or anything close to zero.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The results of your investigations and work to come to resolutions — and I hesitate to use the word success — but how many of those complaints would be found in favour of the complainant and how many against?

Ms. Tomkins: — The vast majority will be resolved through assistance provided, through finding a resolution of the actual

issue or whatever and the vast majority of those — 80 per cent, 75 per cent — will be resolved within two weeks maximum and probably a lot less than that. Of the remaining . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Can I interrupt there? Would you say that resolution is success? And it may very well be.

Ms. Tomkins: — No, but I take a much more narrow view of things than virtually anyone outside of our office. My role is to promote the provision of fair services by the provincial government and I believe that absolutely.

So you may bring or someone else may bring a complaint to the office, believe they're treated unfairly for 18 reasons and believe that this, whatever, would be a fair resolution. Government may disagree or whatever. We may get to a point where we agree that something didn't go quite right and the complainant thinks this is a fair resolution and then government thinks that's a fair resolution and I may recommend this resolution down the middle or out here or over there.

So my view of what's a resolution, what's a fair resolution, may be different than the complainant's or government's. To me, that would be a success and yet I suspect the complainant or the government, neither of them would be particularly happy. It doesn't happen that often because usually the resolution, often a resolution or a fair resolution, is a pretty straightforward logical consequence of whatever the facts are.

In some cases I see things resolved that I'm not sure had we taken it further, I would have considered the complaint substantiated. But I do see government saying, look this person's unhappy. I have the flexibility to repair this; I have reason to repair this; I will repair this. I'm not going to worry about a three month investigation and whether it technically meets some fairness criteria. That is a positive thing, but was that resolution necessarily fairness, I don't know.

So from my really narrow viewpoint, no. To our complainants and to government, yes. I think a resolution is considered success by our office.

And as I say, we resolve or advise or do something that takes a complaint forward and eventually leads to some kind of a conclusion quickly and with the vast majority. The remaining ones continue on the investigation process and end up being the detailed investigation that takes time. Of those, we will substantiate about 25 or 30 per cent.

And I found, reading annual reports from ombudsmen around the world, that that seems to be the case everywhere in the world no matter what the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, no matter what the country, which I find a staggering thing but it seems to be so.

And of the ones which we find substantiation — I was looking at those numbers recently — it's around 85 or 86 per cent that we obtain the resolution that we recommended.

Mr. D'Autremont: — By substantiation you mean that the complainant had a valid complaint?

Ms. Tomkins: — Yes. Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I know that certainly the items that go through our office, that there seems to be three sides to every story and that they're not always obvious.

You mentioned that you were looking at reducing the staffing for major investigations and transferring one individual, I believe, to communications.

Ms. Tomkins: — One half of . . . I have one position I'm thinking to dedicate at one-half to major investigations and one-half to communications.

Mr. D'Autremont: — What impact is that going to have on the overall ability of your office to carry out investigations?

Ms. Tomkins: — It's going to have virtually no impact on the ability of the office to carry out investigations of public complaints because the position is currently dedicated to major investigations.

What it will certainly have an impact is going back to the corrections review which was done by that position. Questions might be raised about why the corrections review took as long as it did. When I say it was done by one person, it answers virtually all of the questions on its face. Now that one person will likely, commencing April 1, be one-half of a person and it will have that kind of impact.

Will it have more subtle impact in that one wouldn't undertake something of that magnitude when you know there's only half a position available? It could have that kind of impact but I haven't been there yet and I can't say. I just am convinced that we must have some ability to prepare communications materials and public ed materials and we don't have them.

And one thing that may be almost . . . I'm fairly certain is on our horizon, I've been engaged in discussions with Department of Learning and it appears likely that a piece about our office and the role of the Ombudsman in parliamentary democracy is going to be included in the school curriculum. This, for us, is a very major thing and frankly, a dream come true for us. But it will require that we produce some kind of a brochure or pamphlet or something that's suited to that grade level. Right now there's no one in the office who has the skills to do that or the time, because none of us, none of the existing staff have, you know, free time to dedicate to production of pamphlets and booklets and things of that nature.

As I say, it's spread among a number of us now, but frankly, I'm not a communications or public ed person and I'm not sure I should be writing the brochures. And I'm certainly not skilled to write brochures for grade 4s or grade 8s or some specific level. So it's partly with that in mind that I say in addition, or doubly so, that I need some kind of capacity to do the communications work.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Would that . . . That would be done through your personal service staffing, through that cost item?

Ms. Tomkins: — Do you mean whether I'd hire a position or contract it?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well that's what I was wondering. I'm

looking at contracts — certain contractual services. Your budget has increased by roughly 25,000 there. I was wondering if that was . . .

Ms. Tomkins: — Contractual services in our budget is almost entirely rent.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay.

Ms. Tomkins: — Yes, it's almost all rent. The number shows contractual . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — So SPMC is charging you more?

Ms. Tomkins: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — That's why you . . .

Ms. Tomkins: — But I'm interested in . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — . . . have to start charging them.

Ms. Tomkins: — Well maybe I'll make sure to charge SPMC.

So in terms of the communications thing, as you say, I've put it forward as something that I'm seriously considering, a way, I think, I might manage this, the office over the next year. Whether that would be a hired half-time position or whether it would be a . . . using the funds from a half a position to contract, I don't know. But my suspicion is that it would be a hired, permanent, half-time position because the benefits and efficiencies of that are far greater than I could achieve by contracting for specific pieces of work.

Mr. D'Autremont: — On your budget, you're projecting a increase in capital assets. What is that item about?

Ms. Tomkins: — That has to do with the information technology submission that Dr. Parker-Loewen and I will speak to after Deb is done . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Oh, okay.

Ms. Tomkins: — . . . if that's okay.

Mr. D'Autremont: — On page 18 — and maybe this is part of your proposal, I don't know — you talk about the Youth Criminal Justice Act that's coming into force April 1.

Ms. Tomkins: — You've zipped into the Children's Advocate submission.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Ah, sorry. Okay.

Ms. Tomkins: — But if you're interested in my views on the Youth Criminal Justice Act, we'll have a chat. Nobody's asked me about that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. That's my questions.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to make some general comments and perhaps address some of the concerns that my hon. colleague has indicated.

First of all, I want to commend the Ombudsman's office, having had personal dealings years ago with that particular office, the willingness to assist in informing people of what the responsibilities of the office were and how the agency I was with at the time could help. We worked closely together.

I think this business of the training, what I hear you saying and Ms. Tomkins is that you're being very proactive in ensuring that agencies working with one another to serve the public should work in a co-operative and collaborative effort to do the best they can to ensure that the public is well served. In that respect, I'm a little concerned about all of a sudden we're talking about training costs when it's merely an exchange of information and ensuring that people that are working for the public are aware of what other agencies are doing. I feel that this is an ongoing thing, that agencies try to tell one another how they can help one another and ultimately wind up being of greater assistance to the public that we serve. So I just want to make that point.

And I want to commend you on your efforts in obtaining assistance in your communications by going to other areas. And I note, and I thank you for that, that you did receive some assistance from Executive Council's communications procurement services branches. And my feeling again is that we have those kinds of people available if we try to source folks that have the expertise that are already within departments that may be available, and this is not an unusual thing to ask from one department to another if one of their communications' people might be available to help. Once again, we're all in the service of the public.

And I haven't heard of anybody truly objecting, unless they were overwhelmed with the workload, to say no, we have six communications people and they're all busy and we can't help you for two or three weeks to assist in the preparation of a brochure or an information pamphlet for the benefit of the public. I mean, that's what public service is all about.

I believe what you are doing, in talking to agencies with . . . Not a matter of how to handle complaints, but perhaps how to respond to your needs in addressing the concerns that the public bring. What I'm talking about is, and again from past experience, in a lot of cases what people look forward to is either a verification of a process that an agency or department has followed, or through your investigation, bringing to that agency or department some miscommunications, misunderstandings or misinterpretation of the intent of whatever the subject is of the individual's complaint. And I think that's very important.

It's non-adversarial. And in some cases as you pointed out, you may determine through your investigation that an agency was not right in the way they handled the situation. And yet that agency under statutory law, whatever, may believe that they have. So you know, sometimes there's an impasse.

I appreciate your comments as well that it's more general I think among people that if they're not happy with how they feel the government has dealt with them, you complain. That's why we have an Ombudsman. I believe that it's a person that's not in government. It's someone that reviews, and in an unbiased manner, the way that individuals have been treated. So it's an

important part of our process, I do believe. I sincerely support that.

Ms. Tomkins: — The fact that they come is not necessarily negative.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Pardon me?

Ms. Tomkins: — The fact that they come in increasing numbers is not necessarily negative.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — No, and that's the point I'm trying to make. The people have a better awareness and what you're doing by talking to public service personnel and staff — regardless of the department or agency or where they're working — to better inform them on how they might prepare themselves for a subsequent investigation that your office might be asked to carry out.

And again, I've learned that through a little experience that you can work much quicker and come up to much more beneficial results by being co-operative and collaborative, and not saying well, if I'm going to come in here and help you out and tell you what we're doing and how you should best prepare to help us, we're going to charge you. I don't think that's the intent or should be of the public service. I mean we're all in this together to serve the public.

As far as the costs of your facilities, I can well appreciate that rents go up, some of the offices spaces when they're moved from a third floor to a main floor become user friendly. I mean, SPMC is faced with costs and those costs need to be passed on to tenants and clients. So that's not something that's unusual for any sector, whether private industry or government.

Again, I just want to say that I appreciate the co-operative efforts that your department is now showing by being proactive in the education process. And in the event I notice as well that you're talking about school curriculum in the near future, which would be marvellous. And I do believe that you would probably get support from the Learning department and the Education department . . .

Ms. Tomkins: — We are.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — . . . to assist you in these processes. So I just wanted to make those comments because I do have a deep appreciation for the work that your office does on behalf of the public. And I don't have any specific questions.

Again the communications position that you're talking about, reducing your investigator half-time, and the other half a communications positions, and I don't know whether you looked at the possibility or tried to contact or source departments that have communications people that perhaps seconded — and we do this from time to time among departments — that they might have people who have been doing brochures, information pamphlets, as a part of their responsibility, their employment responsibilities within government.

So I don't know if that makes sense or not, but it would be one way to obtain some assistance in what I believe is very valuable

to the people that we all serve.

Ms. Tomkins: — I don't know if you're intending to get involved in a detailed discussion of that, but what we can obtain from the Executive Council is advice and guidance but they do not do the work for us. And we have, because of being an independent office, difficulties with retaining services of government departments. And in addition to obtain, for example, secondment, we still have to pay for it. So it all comes back to the dollars at the end of the day, I'm afraid.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Okay.

Ms. Tomkins: — But I don't diminish what you say. Yes, Executive Council and the communications person at the Children's Advocate office have been incredibly helpful to us and we do appreciate it. But at the end of the day it's me who's trying to write the brochure, and I don't think you're paying me to write brochures. And I'm not getting it done.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think most of my comments have been covered by Mr. Osika but I wanted to comment for the record that if the role of the Ombudsman . . . And it's stated in our book, and the role is to promote fairness in the provision of government services and the administration of government programs and legislation. It seems to me that the type of programming they've undertaken is designed to be proactive, designed to assist government employees to resolve issues before it becomes large enough to reach your office, hopefully in a more timely way on the front line office staff.

And I also note that under our legislation that you have the authority to determine your own programs, hire your own staff, and make decisions regarding your spending priorities. And so I would commend you for the work that you do in terms of alternative case resolution and the proactive stance that you've taken in serving the public in a more timely and efficient manner.

So I just wanted to say thank you for doing that and I hope rather than . . . I hope that we're all swimming the same direction in the stream as opposed to worrying about whether or not we're charging each other for services when indeed all of our hopes and desires are to serve the public better. So I simply wanted to thank you for the work that you do.

Ms. Tomkins: — Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. And I'd just like to say that I agree with Mr. Osika and Ms. Jones that we need fairness and that we need co-operation and sharing amongst government departments, and it would be nice if the government actually followed that procedure.

When one area of government makes a request for information, that request seems to come with a bill — there's a charge for one area, the legislative in particular, asking for information from a department. There comes a cost to provide that. And if we were to follow Mr. Osika's comments that that information should be provided and knowledge on a voluntary basis, on a co-operative basis, on a no-cost basis, I'm in agreement with

that. It's one area of government serving another area.

But unfortunately that's not the case. When we do our freedom of information request of a department, they send us a bill every time for the cost to provide that information. And I would think that with your office, in providing information and knowledge to other departments, should be treated likewise. And in fact I would like to see in your budget proposal a . . . if that information and training and knowledge is to be provided from your department, that it be budgeted for and shown as to what those costs are in providing that to other departments.

When it comes to providing knowledge and information and training and communication, I think it would be my view that initially, at least, that direction was to provide information to the public as to your office to gain . . . for them to have knowledge that the services you provide, the fairness and equity that your office is there to promote. And in promoting that, certainly you can promote that within government as well.

But I think there is a cost associated in providing that service to government, and that needs to be dealt with. Your time, your travel, your expenses for the days involved in it, the training for the individuals involved in providing so that they can provide that information to others, I think is all a cost that's associated with your budget. When your budget is being spent in that area, it prevents you from dealing with other items.

And just as the departments feel that in providing information to another area it's a cost to them, therefore that cost should be borne by the recipient rather than the department providing that, I think the same applies to the Office of the Ombudsman, that just as it applies to the Department of Health, Department of Justice, Department of Education, Highways, whomever it might be.

Thank you.

Ms. Tomkins: — This has been a very interesting discussion for me from both yourself and Mr. Osika and Ms. Jones's comments, and Ms. Hamilton I think involved herself, Ms. Julé did — everyone's talked about this.

It has been very interesting. It certainly is something that I will consider. And particularly if what we're now working on on a pilot basis evolves into a comprehensive, ongoing program, it is certainly something that we will have to consider. And indirectly or directly, it will be something this board will have to consider because there is no question that if it becomes a comprehensive, ongoing program there will be costs involved with it.

Similarly, our efforts in the schools, there will be costs associated with. If we, when we, become part of the school curriculum, we will have to develop our Web site, which we have not had resources to do. And we will have to develop a part of that Web site which is suitable for students and teachers of the grade levels that the curriculum is talking about. Those are going to have financial implications for our office because we don't have the resources internally. And those are questions we will have to consider, and as I say, I think this board will have to consider at that time as well.

So I do appreciate this discussion.

The Chair: — Thank you, members. I think then you can proceed with the next portion of your presentation.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Well good morning, and it's a pleasure to be here again and a privilege to have this opportunity to present my office's 2003-2004 fiscal year budget to you. You've already met my staff so I won't take time to do that again.

The purpose and activities of the Children's Advocate office I know are familiar to all of you and I'm not going to walk through that with you this morning. Our strategic plan is included in the budget submission as an appendix and I'd welcome any questions you might have with regards to that.

In addition, our Web site has all of the information about our office available on it. And you're more than encouraged to check out our Web site, which we've just launched a new Web site which has also got a very dynamic, youth-friendly element to it. So I certainly encourage all of the members to take a look at it.

I just wanted to say too, as part of my introduction, that I've appreciated the support of the board and your thoughtful questions as my office with yourselves and the Saskatchewan citizens work together to deepen how we understand how we can more effectively create a safe and caring environment for all Saskatchewan children. I know that all of you share this goal.

This past year in 2002-2003 was a challenging one for our office. And I also just want to take this time, before I present my budget, to acknowledge my staff and thank them for the work that they've done this past year. They responded to the pressures with a renewed spirit of excellence and we've . . . I've certainly appreciated that.

I also want to acknowledge and thank the work that we have from the administrative and other staff at the Legislative Assembly Office who give a considerable amount of support to us, particularly in this area of finances and human resources, and in this past year with the development of our Web site.

This is my ninth budget submission to the . . . as Children's Advocate. I anticipate having the privilege of presenting two more budgets to you in the upcoming years. We've seen a lot of improvements in the last eight years in the services and programs provided with and for Saskatchewan children and families. And the breadth and the depth of the advocacy work that we're doing has correspondingly also changed and evolved and developed in these past eight years.

I've attempted to provide some of this information in our '03-04 budget submission. You'll note that our request is presented basically in three sections, and part 3, as Ms. Tomkins pointed out, is a joint request with the Provincial Ombudsman, and with your agreement we are deferring that conversation to a joint discussion.

So I'll just touch briefly on the major aspects of our request. We have three major goals that we're working to achieve. One is to

increase the accessibility, inclusion, and timeliness of our advocacy services. And we are particularly challenged to do this in the northern aspect of . . . the northern regions of our province where, as you know, access — geographic access — is difficult.

But we also know that in northern Saskatchewan there are a high number of children or young people under the age of 20. Forty-seven per cent of the population in northern Saskatchewan are under the age of 20 compared to about 25 per cent in the rest of the province. So we continue to be challenged to provide accessible services in the North.

Of interest, we continue to have about 1,000 to 1,100 new files in process through our office each year. About a quarter of those complaints or concerns come from children themselves. About half come from parents or other family members. And the other quarter come from other citizens in the province — professionals who are involved with the child or other individuals. And this is all detailed in our annual reports each year.

We're also feeling very challenged by the review of child deaths that we've undertaken. We are in 2003 now just concluding the review of the deaths of children where the deaths occurred in 1999. As I point out to you in our submission that this is an unacceptable delay and it's a serious challenge . . . a serious problem that our office is experiencing.

We have been having ongoing conversations with the Department of Social Services and to a lesser extent with Corrections and Public Safety about how we can complete these deaths in a more efficient manner and perhaps prioritize certain deaths in a more effective way.

We have now concluded the review of 82 deaths, and we've got a lot more experience under our belt with regards to what might constitute a death that would require the kind of in-depth review of our office and which deaths may require a less intensive comprehensive review. So we're hoping to achieve some efficiencies in the upcoming year by streamlining those in a different manner.

Our second goal is to do research and action on what we call systemic issues in our office. We identify a number of systemic issues. Again we've identified these in our annual report.

These come somewhat from the individual advocacy concerns or complaints into our office that, while they may be resolved for a particular child or family, that same kind of issue comes to our office repeatedly and so we work on a systemic level to have changes to practice, policy, and/or legislation regarding that particular issue.

We'll speak to our computerized information system later, but one of the issues we have with the tracking system that we are utilizing is it's difficult for us to keep track of some of these systemic issues in a computerized manner. And it requires manual review of files when we do that.

In addition, on an also systemic level, we have unpredictable pressures that are compelling to our office. For example, in 2002 we were required to prioritize the investigation of an

injured child. And we have other requests for special investigations or special systemic reviews that we place on hold or put into consideration pending resource allocation.

We all know the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which is a federal Act, is coming into force April 1. And this Act we anticipate having significant change in how young offender services are provided in the province. We, at this point, are not requesting additional funds with regards to that Act because we're really not quite sure what it's going to entail. But the new Act brings forward a number of new administrative decision points for government. Where the decision points may have been taken by court in the past, we're going to see an increase in what we would call administrative decisions, which would then be subject to review by the Children's Advocate office and in some situations by the Ombudsman.

So what we've been doing this past year is ensuring that our staff are well familiar with the new Act and are ready to deal with any issues that come forward. We expect there'll be quite a bit of confusion, as the new Act is quite complex so we're just getting ready for April 1.

And our third area where we have goals is in providing quality services to the public. And we are continuing to ask ourselves, how can we improve what we do? How can we ensure that the public understands what we do? And how can we promote safe and caring environments for children and the well-being of Saskatchewan children in a positive way?

So with that we have put forward to you our budget request, firstly as a status quo request and then, in addition, I have included some additional funding requests to address some of the pressures that I have just outlined to you.

So in terms of maintaining a status quo, which for us means maintaining the current level of service that we're providing to children and families in Saskatchewan, we are requesting \$47,000 increase or a 4.2 per cent increase. And these increases also result from forecasts around personnel and administration costs and they are detailed in your submission.

In addition, I have requested \$67,000 to address the ongoing concern we have with regards to the timeliness of the child death reviews. What we anticipate is that, in the next year, we could get more current so that we're dealing with at least reviewing the deaths closer to the time that they occurred. And once we're able to do that, we anticipate having — those funds which we're proposing, to hire a new position — have that person begin to then work more with the other advocacy work in our office, particularly around the challenges we have to serving northern and more remote children.

So in summary, I'm respectfully requesting that you consider the request positively that we've put forward and we'll give you the exact figures when we do our joint presentation. So I welcome your comments and questions and thanks for your attention.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Forgive me, maybe I know this and forgive me if it's not a question that you're able to specifically address. But in the case of child death and the ones that you investigate, in the cases of sudden

deaths, are the police any source of assistance to you in any of these investigations and to any extent? I would hope they are. I'm again trying to think back to . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We have an excellent working relationship with both the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and with the municipal police forces.

What happens is that we are reviewing a very select number of deaths. These are deaths of children where either at the time of their death or in the 12 months prior to their death were receiving services from the Department of Social Services under The Child and Family Services Act or from what is now Corrections and Public Safety under The Young Offender Services' Act.

There is some provision also in the protocol agreement we have with the Department of Social Services for us to review deaths of children in a daycare, but that hasn't actually occurred.

And our office is reviewing the administrative, not the criminal, aspects that might be related to the death. So if there's an outstanding criminal matter, we defer our review of that death until the criminal matter has been finalized or until we're satisfied that we can proceed without interfering in any manner with the criminal investigation.

But when we have required to look at police files, to look at, oh, photos of the death or that kind of thing, the police have been extremely co-operative with them and in fact we're very pleased with the protocol that we have with them.

In addition we have established what is called a multidisciplinary review team. And this is a team of about 8 or 10 individuals who provide regular advice to us with regards to the deaths that we do review. One of the members of the review team is the ex-chief of police from the city of Regina and another is a former RCMP officer.

And they both give us excellent advice in terms of if . . . The reason we have the multidisciplinary review team is where we lack expertise in a particular area these individuals can ask questions and prompt us to do further investigation into a particular question that our staff . . . because we don't have a complete range of expertise, we've invited a multidisciplinary review team to assist us. And the two former police members on that team have been extremely helpful to us in asking some questions, particularly around traffic accidents or alcohol related deaths.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Well that's excellent. I'm glad to hear that, the importance of sharing of that information when carrying out an inquiry or an investigation into a sudden death or a questionable cause of death.

Those two police officers that are helping — former police officers — is there any costs that are assigned to your department? Is there a fee for service there?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — The members of the multidisciplinary review team are appointed on a voluntary basis, and they're appointed under our legislation through a delegation of my authority to them, and we do cover all of their out-of-pocket expenses, and we provide them with a small honorarium.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Which is fair enough, but it's not a salary or it's not a fee that you would . . . retainer fee or whatever the . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Oh, no, no. With the exception of . . . We have on occasion — maybe three or four times — we have paid for a pediatric consultation. Where the death was a natural cause death but raised some concerns for us, we've requested a pediatric consultant to review that information and we have paid a fee for service for that.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — That's for professional services. That's understandable.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Yes. But we don't have . . . We wouldn't have that service in our office. We would pay for that.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — The Youth Criminal Justice Act that you indicated might be complex and will be new to a lot of us now . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — . . . who will be tutoring you or how will you have that explained or discussed or will that be with the Justice department or people from Justice or . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We're pretty well finished the training that we're going to take in our office.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Okay. That was by whom? Whom . . . I'm sorry.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We've had a variety of different kinds of training. All of our staff have gone . . . participated in the training, that's a two-day training that Corrections and Public Safety have been providing to all of their employees, and it's an extensive training that is developed for corrections workers across Canada.

In addition, I and the legal counsel attached to the Ombudsman and my office participated in four days of training with the Provincial Court judges, and we were invited to participate with them because of the nature of the work that we're involved in and anticipate being involved in. So we were very fortunate to have the opportunity to take the training with the Provincial Court judges and again that was national training that's been developed through . . . excuse my lack of knowing the exact terminology, but it's the national body for judges' training.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Did you get a bill for that training?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — No.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — I'm glad to hear that. And I . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — I was glad too.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — I'm probably glad to hear that . . . I don't expect that the Legislative Assembly has been billing you for some of the help with some of the things that you're doing as well.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — . . . I have to say I appreciate it.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Co-operative efforts prevail, don't they? Okay, I don't have anything, any other questions. I just wanted to clarify the situation with the investigations and I'm very pleased to hear that, you know, this sort of volunteerism that is involved in once again meeting the objectives that you've set out in your mandate, and I thank you for that.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Thank you.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I just wanted to also commend you on your work. The Child Advocate's office is an important office. As time has gone on, I think you've had more added to your slate as such and one of the things that was . . . certainly had come to my attention some years ago was the need for a more thorough review of child deaths, and the circumstances surrounding the deaths of some of the children. And I think part of what you're doing now certainly facilitates looking at that.

I wonder if you could maybe describe to the board what the difference is between the RCMP investigating the death of a child, and your review or your investigation as such. Like I'm sure many people would say, well that's really the work of the RCMP to investigate, and . . . further investigation after a death takes place, and would want to ensure that there's not a duplication of services going on here. So if you could be so good as to explain to the board what the parameters, I guess, of your review is, and what your mandate is as far as review goes. I understand that it's children that are under the care of Social Services, so that much I know that most everyone understands, but as far as the intricacies of the review or investigation, if you could describe the discrepancy it would be helpful.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Thank you for the question. Children die for a variety of reasons, and the coroner in our province classifies the death. And about half of the deaths in Saskatchewan of children are natural . . . what we would call natural cause deaths. And typically the police wouldn't become involved in a review of natural cause deaths. There are a variety of other causes of death, so the police — the RCMP or the municipal police — wouldn't necessarily be reviewing every death of every child in the province. That isn't their mandate, either.

In fact, in Saskatchewan — and we've done now a thorough review of this — there's no one agency, organization, or body that reviews all of the deaths of children. The Department of Health and vital statistics keep some records, but the deaths of all children aren't scanned with what we're calling expert eyes consistently by any one particular body, and our office has recommended that that need to occur.

But to get back to your question, our office is looking at . . . have the services that have been, that were provided to that child by a government department or agency, consistent with the policies and legislation of that government department or agency? So we're primarily looking at what we would call the administrative aspects of the service provided to that child.

The police, where it's appropriate for them to do so, will be reviewing it from a criminal perspective, and we take their

information into account when we conduct our reviews. But we're really looking at, what can we learn from this death that might improve services for children in the future? That might lead us to prevent deaths of this nature and to provide accountability to the public for services that are provided by government or government agencies or government departments.

So we're looking at three primary things: how can we promote quality services for children; can we learn something from this death that might prevent a similar death in the future; and our office has . . . we feel charged with the responsibility to look at it from a public accountability perspective.

Several of the deaths we look at, we've seen exemplary service provided to the child and the family. Children who have come in to government service or government care because of a particular range of needs, and government employees and government agencies have provided very exemplary service that have probably in some ways extended the life of some of these children — for example, children who are medically fragile and require extensive support services.

So we're reviewing a range of deaths within a prescribed protocol that we have with the Department of Social Services and Corrections and Public Safety.

The Chair: — I believe you were . . . had made an earlier request, Ms. Hamilton, so I would now recognize you.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you. Certainly eight years goes very quickly.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Oh, it does, doesn't it.

Ms. Hamilton: — It's been amazing when you said that to me, that it's that length of time. And then on the other side of that, we lived how long without you and the ability of an office such as this to advocate on behalf of children in the province.

That being said, of course one of the areas that is most . . . tugs at the heart would be a death of a child. And you certainly outlined that there are some reasons why a time lag, because you would have to wait, of course, until a lot of the investigation has been completed and that may require some length of time.

But you have outlined in your report in here, page 22, that to try and deal with some of the backlog that you're dealing with here, an additional staff position — permanent, full-time position. And it's my . . . I'm trying to understand whether you are saying that that's required until a backlog has been addressed and so you're requesting that as an additional pressure? Or what you're really saying is that we would add that to address the backlog but it would become a base item because of the other instances that you've outlined and some of the discussion on this page. If you could clarify that for me? You're saying this person as an additional until we get some of this pressure released?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — I have requested that we have the additional position to deal with the backlog but I'm also . . . And you're right. I am requesting that that also be included in

our base budget once the backlog is addressed. We have other pressures that we also need to address and I'm not asking for additional resources for that. I'm hoping that within that staff complement we can manage those additional pressures.

It's a matter of setting some priorities and wanting to come to you with a reasonable request, while also recognizing that we have this particular pressure right now around the child deaths. We do believe that within a year or so we could get current if we had an additional person working on that team.

Current, as you point out, doesn't mean that in 2003 we would be reviewing 2003 deaths. We still would be looking at deaths that occurred about a year ago because the process we have is that the departments complete an internal review and then we examine that information from a variety of perspectives. And if there are any outstanding criminal matters or if we're waiting for an autopsy or waiting for the coroner, a pathologist's report, there's a variety of things that we could be waiting for.

So in answer to your question, I'm requesting assistance to deal with the backlog. Once that backlog is hopefully under what we would see as being better under control, that that person would be reassigned to other duties and that this position would be added to our base budget.

Ms. Hamilton: — I just conclude in saying that I appreciate the information you provide to us on an annual basis.

One of the areas that I know you spent a lot of time and your team spent time with was a review of children in care of Social Services and the report that came out. And we all appreciated the light that's shed there in the ways that we could improve children in care. So I thank you for that and for the information that's been provided.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you very much. What is your current staffing level at, in scope and out of scope?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Currently we have 11.85 full-time equivalent positions which includes all of our staffed permanent positions, plus a part-time, non-perm person.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. How many of those are in scope and how many out of scope?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We have two who are in the scope of the union and the remainder are out of scope. And my position is not counted in that FTE (full-time equivalent) number.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Both you and the Provincial Ombudsman use the term, maintaining the status quo. I wonder if you could explain that. I could have asked either one of you.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We're using the definition . . . We've put it on the top of page 21 that we've calculated status quo based on last year's budget allocation plus the anticipated personnel costs due to cost of living, salary increases, reclassifications, and we're projecting a 2.4 increased index on the non-personnel expenditures. So basically when we're talking about status quo we're talking about maintaining our existing level of services that we currently have in the budget year '02-03 while paying the increased bills that we're going to

have.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So status quo is services and personnel, not budget.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Okay. Yes, it is. I just had to think about that for a minute.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And that was, like to me when I . . . Like, because we're dealing with budgets, when I look at status quo that means zero change but . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Sorry it's not . . . We're not asking status quo. The way we've defined it and presented it to you is not a zero budget.

Mr. D'Autremont: — That's why I was asking to have you explain it.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Yes, it's not. It's to maintain the services and personnel that we currently have at the current level that we are utilizing them.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Overall your budget increase, maintaining the status quo, is projected at 4.2 per cent and yet you're projecting a two and a half per cent, 2.5 per cent increase to the in-scope employees, Public Service Commission.

Why then is it a 4.2 per cent increase overall? What are the other factors involved?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Well it's 2.5 per cent for all personnel, not just the in-scope personnel. In addition we have in the past year been able to recover some costs from a leave of absence without pay that one of our employees has been taking and in order to maintain the level of service we have identified to you in our '02-03 budget, we can't rely on that leave of absence without pay to offset some of those costs. So that's why it looks like that. Well that's why it is what it is.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So it's because an employee was off last year on unpaid maternity leave or unpaid leave of some kind?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — She's on a . . . It's actually Glenda Cooney, our deputy, and she's been appointed part-time to the Commission on First Nations and Métis Justice.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. So that wasn't budgeted in last year. This year, she's employed full-time here then.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Well not . . . We can't rely on that as a cost saving.

Mr. D'Autremont: — No. So you have to include that — her full salary — in the budget this year and it wasn't last year even though your staffing level hasn't changed?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We're not changing the staffing level. We're asking for the funding to maintain the staffing level at our current, at the current level that we have.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right. So you're staffing level last year was 11.85?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — FTEs. Correct.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right. And you're asking for the same thing this year. The difference in the cost is though that one staff was off on unpaid leave part of the time last year.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — That's correct.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And this year that person is going to be here for the full year — projected to be here.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Right. We aren't relying on her being absent.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'm sure she is relying on not being absent as well.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Right. Well she's still appointed — to be clear — she's still appointed to the commission. And we're not wanting to budget on that basis.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right. Was that the only other reason for the increase was that this person is now back from unpaid leave plus the two and a half per cent across-the-board increase?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Well, there were performance pays. We had one staff member reclassified. So there's some other personnel . . . They're all personnel-related expenditures. And there was an in-scope salary range adjustment. Although it was for only two employees, it did also impact on that. So this is a compilation of funds. We could probably provide a more detailed breakdown.

Mr. D'Autremont: — There was no equity changes here, involved in your office?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — No. We didn't have any.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Under item 6, capital assets, you're projecting a \$16,000 increase there. What's that item about?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — That's the part of the information technology/information management requests that Ms. Tomkins and I'll speak to in a sec.

Mr. D'Autremont: — It's still coming.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — It's still coming. But it has to do with the information technology requirements for our offices.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had another question in mind earlier and it just slipped my mind for a moment. When you refer to the need in northern Saskatchewan for child advocacy and so on and the percentage, I guess, of children that would benefit from advocacy, etc. and concerns and complaints that might come forward from the North, what kind of measures do you think could be recommended to improve services in the North? I mean your information technology and I guess exchange of information could be one way, through information technology, but I'm wondering if there's anything else that you think might be done to be able to facilitate more expedient services for children of the North?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Thank you. That's a very welcome question and I've got lots of ideas. But just to state that Ms. Tomkins, Provincial Ombudsman, the Chief Commissioner for the Humans Rights Commission, and myself jointly made a significant effort in the past year, two years, to meet with citizens in northern Saskatchewan and we met in several northern communities. The three of us travelled together — greater efficiencies — and held public meetings and then met with community leaders, and then brought with us our staff who then also took individual concerns and complaints from the citizens in the northern communities that we were in.

And as a result of those opportunities in those communities, we jointly produced a small report which I believe we circulated to all of your offices. And out of that identified . . . One of the needs that the northern citizens identified was for our three offices — I don't want to speak for all three of us — but for all of us to be more visible in those communities and to have a presence in those communities in some way.

So we've been working very hard in the Children's Advocate office to do that. We've now assigned our advocates on a geographic basis and we have, as you may know, over the last couple of years we've hired individuals who, one who speaks Cree, and who is able to meet in those communities in a way that is welcomed by the communities, I think. And so we're actively working to have a greater presence in those communities.

There's a lot of work to be done in terms of forging that link and understanding better what's happening. Our plan for this year is we're working with the provincial youth delegation which is attached to our office. This is a group of 15 young people from all over the province who provide advice to us on a number of areas.

And the project we're working on with them is developing a presentation and interactive opportunity which we will be taking our advocate and a young person into the community schools. All of the schools in northern Saskatchewan are designated community schools.

And we'll also be going into the community schools in the southern part of the province as well and doing workshops with young people and helping them understand advocacy, children's rights, and when and how they might contact the Children's Advocate office.

So our goal is to, with an advocate and a young person from our provincial delegation, reach out into those community schools. We've had the opportunity to meet with the directors of education from those areas and they're very excited about us offering to do this.

And over the summer we will be . . . well we already have hired a young person who will be developing the workshop package that will be pilot tested in the fall. And we'll be proceeding next year in that regard.

So our plan, which is part of our strategic plan, is to actively reach out into the schools and to have young people in the schools and the teachers and their families understand our services and how they might get in touch with us if they needed

us.

But we need to do that in conjunction with having someone who can actually go and deal with any issues that arise because we're afraid that if we don't . . . if we advertise ourselves and then can't deliver, then that is inappropriate as well.

Ms. Julé: — I could comment a little more and so on but I thank you for your explanation on that. And I guess where my thoughts go in response to what you've said is any recommendations that might come forward from your office to expedite better services, better care for young people would be necessary.

I'm thinking, you alluded to that . . . What are we going to do with this? What do we do with it now? How do we act? How do we respond to this and what kind of action would we take?

I'm wondering if there has been discussion facilitated that has gone as far as possibly linking with community leadership or church leadership in the North. Maybe different church groups and so on that might be able to facilitate some of the kind of assistance, whether it be education or caring assistance in some way or other that might be the answer to some of the recommendations that might come forward from you. Now I don't know if you're . . .

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We haven't specifically met with church leaders. But when we did our meetings in northern communities, there were leaders of various spiritual organizations come to the meetings and offer their support and interest. And certainly we advertised those meetings extensively in various ways, including posters in the communities and on the radio and in the local newspapers and that kind of thing. So we had a variety of folks come, and many community leaders.

And in several communities we actually had an opportunity to meet with . . . different communities have different structures, but some of them have kind of like interagency co-operations or interagency groups. And many of those include ministerial associations who are actively involved in making a difference in their communities so . . . and we would certainly welcome that involvement.

Ms. Julé: — Yes, I asked the question because, frankly, it does relay back to budgetary provisions in the future because there's parameters that your office would have to be staying, I guess, within.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Oh, for sure.

Ms. Julé: — Otherwise, you know, your responsibility would get too magnanimous. And so I just wanted to know whether or not that kind of work had been done or that kind of communication with some of the other service providers or families in the North had been expedited.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Both the Ombudsman's office and our office are working hard to find efficient ways to communicate our service. And actually the Ombudsman is undertaking a very interesting initiative which with your leave she might be able to give you another sort of perspective on that.

Ms. Julé: — I would be interested in hearing that.

Ms. Tomkins: — I'll just try and do this quickly. What we have is one person who's been designated to — as a project, not an adjunct to their job, but as their project — to establish contact or better yet to evolve or enhance the contacts that were made when we travelled with the Children's Advocate and the human rights commissioner, but also to look at various models for effectively serving small populations distantly located and geographically distant from one another.

And so what's being looked at in an academic sense is various models of service delivery. There's been consultation with other — for example, the Northwest Territories Languages Commissioner who faces similar problems but much more geographically difficult than ours — with other ombudsman offices, with other advocate offices, with government offices, with government offices in the North. So what we're . . . And an academic literature search. So what we're looking at is various kinds of models so that we might identify the models that will be workable for us — efficient and cost-effective. And also as a piece of this, we've been doing on behalf of the Ombudsman's office extensive travel in northern Saskatchewan communities, making contact with virtually any agency up there that's got a door and we're in it. And the impact already has been staggering just from making these contacts.

But in that regard we're finding absolute support for basically . . . and volunteered absolute support for virtually any model or any approach we want to take. And I think, as Deb said, we did speak with leaders of spiritual organizations when we were there and I know they're involved as well in these discussions that the member of my staff is having and it very well may be that that's one of the routes that will be one of the models.

Certainly there will be community based routes. We certainly can't consider an office in every town and we have to look at something meaningful, but manageable and sensible. And that may be one of the routes we look at.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Are there any questions not specifically I think to the individual proposals? If not we'll go on to the joint proposal.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Thank you. And Ms. Tomkins is going to lead that.

Ms. Tomkins: — For this part of the proposal I don't think Deb will be offended if I say that Ms. Rodier and Ms. Fraser have far more knowledge and understanding than either of us. So I'll give you the general and we'll be prepared to answer your questions but if you get very specific or technical, if it's all right with you, we will defer to Ms. Fraser and Ms. Rodier.

I think it's been raised with this board and over a number of years the difficulties that we've been having and concerns we've had about our information technology, both hardware and software. We mentioned in our submission last year that we intend to engage in a review of . . . that's the wrong word . . .

A Member: — Needs assessment.

Ms. Tomkins: — . . . a needs assessment and an assessment of our current hardware situation and a risk analysis.

In the course of the last year we did retain that service. It was done independently. The result in a nutshell is that our hardware is going to crash almost certainly within the next 12 months. This is a major catastrophe. And the people who did the review also proposed two models for what we might do now to deal with it and preferably to deal with it before the crash occurs. Both of the models are included in the submission; both are based over five years.

The model that we prefer and for which we have submitted is, in total cost over five years, slightly lower in cost than the second model. It has a much larger first year investment. However, it's a better model apparently technologically. It's also a better model for us practically.

What it does is gives, particularly me who has two offices, access to the computer information of both offices. Right now we don't have that. We have an information exchange for tracking information which means with a delay. The information from both offices ends up available to both offices, but not on a current basis. But non-tracked information is at no time available to both offices. A very simple one is, I have no access to our budget because Ms. Fraser does our budgeting. She's in Saskatoon and I have no access to the computers in Saskatoon unless I'm in Saskatoon.

So the proposed model is a model that is preferred for practical purposes, preferred for technological purposes and, in the long run, for financial purposes.

After having this assessment done and receiving these proposals, we took it to the government's information technology office. We took the proposal and gave them all the information that we had given the people who did the proposal. We asked them (a) is this work that the government's information technology office would do rather than us contracting for it? And they assured us it was not. We were assured, however, they reviewed it, we understand, in some depth.

We understand that the information and technology office says that this proposal is both practical and financially appropriate. They have said that it is consistent with the standards set out in the government's enterprise architecture, which I think is a fancy way of setting out some standards for IT (information technology).

They have said that they would not do the work for us. And therefore, on that basis, with the independent review, with the independent analysis and the confirmation from ITO (information technology office), we have submitted a request for funding, a capital funding I believe it would be called, to enable us to engage in this process.

The difficulty is that in order to start we'd need some sort of a commitment that we can finish and it is a five-year process that is proposed with, as I say, the major investment in the first year. That investment has been divided between our two budget submissions in proportion to our use and numbers of terminals and various things like that. And as I say, we're prepared to

take questions about this.

We see this as something that we are not pleased to have to make submissions for. I would draw to your attention however that we have not ever had a substantial allocation for computer and software needs; it's always been something we've done with little, tiny pots of money and savings from other areas, and that is partly what's put us in the position that we're in.

We're prepared to take your questions, and as I say, Ms. Fraser and Ms. Rodier will have technical answers for you where Ms. Parker-Loewen and I don't.

The Chair: — Well thank you very much for that presentation.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I think perhaps more so with the Child Advocate than the Provincial Ombudsman's office, youth are those that are most connected. And accessing the IT services of the Provincial Ombudsman, I think, is something that people . . . the youth would do.

Now this service you're talking about — I'm getting skeptical looks here — is perhaps not involved in that — it's administration.

Ms. Tomkins: — This is our internal office administration; nobody would have access to this, youth or adult.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, but it gives you the basis to start moving in that direction, and you're already moved partway there. I know that in the past you've come forward with requests again for moving partway in that direction of IT services that have been not accomplished yet. And I think that the offices need to have a long-term plan in moving in this direction, because you can't on an ad hoc basis build a good system.

And I know all of us have been struggling with this and trying to do this on an ad hoc basis in most cases, and it's only been in the last number of . . . last few years that the recognition has come about that we need to do this properly, on a long-term basis, on a sustainable basis, to be able to have a system that gets up and running and stays that way.

And part of that then allows you to branch out into those other areas that I'd like to see happen, and that is people being able to access your offices, particularly the youth, because they are the most familiar.

My concern on this is, and you've said that no one else has access, but if you have access between your offices in Regina and Saskatoon and any other location or office around the province, others can at times gain that access. What security measures are you putting in place to ensure that that doesn't happen?

Ms. Rodier: — We've been in consultation with the consulting group that did the needs assessment and that was one of our concerns too.

The system they're proposing is a secure system with only access between the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate files, so we wouldn't be interchanging information with other

government agencies or . . . They're going to provide a very secure system, firewalls, and that kind of thing.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The system will be software based, the security, will it? Because you're not operating out of the same physical structure.

Ms. Rodier: — Correct.

Ms. Fraser: — It's based on a central server that has connections to both offices.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right. And you may have advocacy offices someplace else in the province. As the Child's Advocate moves into the North more, you may have extended offices. So those connections will be made not over . . . will be made over a land line of some kind, you won't have a dedicated line, and so you'll be accessing it on your security provided through software.

Ms. Rodier: — Yes, correct.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Because it's safer if it's not, but when you're over distances, that's probably the best you can do.

Ms. Rodier: — Correct.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Your costs under the second proposal is a high-cost start-up with ongoing annual costs to year four and then an increase on year four. That ongoing \$19,200 cost, is that a lease contract, is that a service contract, or is that an estimate of what the ongoing cost would be?

Ms. Fraser: — That's the estimate that they gave us for the ongoing communications costs to be connected to this system.

Ms. Rodier: — That's correct. It's a sophisticated telecommunications Internet connection. And that's the estimated cost over the four years.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Will you be entering into a service contract to ensure that that cost remains stable and that you're . . . Because computers are pieces of equipment; they break down. Is part of your agreement going to be that the warranty and ongoing service requirements are covered under a lease agreement or a service contract so that the costs don't vary?

Ms. Rodier: — Well the . . . Is it the 19,200 we're speaking to?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right.

Ms. Rodier: — That is the high-speed line. So that's a service through SaskTel. That's the way it's being proposed in the model.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So that's simply the SaskTel cost.

Ms. Rodier: — Yes. That's the communications cost.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So you will have additional services contract costs then over and above that for this service?

Ms. Rodier: — Correct and that's already in our annualized

budget. We have a small amount for that which isn't being reflected here. We're not asking for that in addition. Both of our budgets have . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Will the amount that you already have in your budgets then be sufficient to cover the kind of service contract costs that can and do occur?

Ms. Tomkins: — We believe so and we are advised by the consultant that they should be adequate. On the positive side — maybe this was a too simplistic way of looking at it — but the current system we have is ad hoc and we have a lot of problem that require support. Maybe with the new system we'll need less support because maybe it'll work better. Maybe that's too simple.

Mr. D'Autremont: — We always hope that.

Ms. Tomkins: — We can always hope.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — I'll maybe just also note that we'll have to tender for this work and so we would be entering into a tender. And we would be reviewing the options and looking at what would be the most efficient and cost-effective way of having this service provided to us.

Mr. D'Autremont: — What would your current costs for IT service contract work be? Not necessarily contract work, you may be providing it in-house, but your service maintenance?

Ms. Tomkins: — Just support?

Ms. Fraser: — Just support? Not buying new hardware or . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right.

Ms. Tomkins: — Roughly in the range of 15,000 a year we would have allowed for that.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — And in our office about 5,000 a year.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So combined you would have roughly 20,000 available to . . . I would think that it would be worth your while to check into what it would cost to get a long-term service contract for the entire package. It may be beneficial to you in the long run.

And if you do something like that, I think it would be beneficial to see that in the package as well as your purchase upfront costs because those are part of the ongoing costs if you have a lease agreement or a service contract. I think it works better.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Are there any further questions? All right then, thank you very much for your presentations. You're all invited to stay for lunch which we will have wheeled in in a minute.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Just a question of process. You'll be considering this in camera and then requesting the officers to return. And is there any indication of that . . . of how you're going to proceed with that, as I will be returning to Saskatoon.

The Chair: — What we usually do is we consider them in camera and then we may be asking for additional clarification. That sometimes comes out of that. Now I don't know if we need everyone there but somebody remaining behind I think would be helpful.

Ms. Tomkins: — You'd like us to stay here until when, sir?

The Chair: — At the rate we're going, I would expect late this afternoon.

Ms. Tomkins: — And do you require that we stay in the building? Or as long as we're reachable by telephone at our office is that adequate?

The Chair: — That's probably . . . I think, members, that's probably, would probably be good. I know that you are busy. You have things to do. So thank you very much. As long as we know how we can reach you I think is the main thing in the event there are some questions.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Thank you for your interest.

The Chair: — So once again I thank you very much for your presentations. We're going to break for lunch right away. I do want to bring one item though, put one item on record before we do that. And that is there was a question raised by Ms. Julé of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. We now have a response available to that question. So I'll just ask Marilyn Borowski to put it into the record.

Ms. Borowski: — When Mr. Gerrand held both positions, we made one payment for the office space rental that he was using. Of course it would have shown up in two different budgets so the total amount was, I believe, 4,200 or something like that. You only were seeing one-half of it in the pages that you were looking at. So when he says it was reduced, it was reduced — you, of course, not seeing it on the other half. So it went down from . . . Actually his payments were 4,200 to the firm for both positions. They're now . . . (inaudible) . . . for the one position. So that's the reduction.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Members we will have the noon hour break then. And was the members agreed to break until 1 p.m. or do you want to get back sooner? 1 p.m. is fine. Then lunch will be brought in and we'd invite everybody in the room to participate in that portion of the meeting.

The board recessed for a period of time.

The Chair: — So at this time, members, I bring to your attention that we are . . . proceed to item 6 which is a decision item, review of the 2003-2004 budget for the office of the information and privacy committee . . . commissioner. Welcome, Mr. Rendek, our Information and Privacy Commissioner, to the table.

And to open the discussion, I'm wondering do you want to start with Mr. Rendek or do you want to start with any general remarks, first of all from the government side?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well I think we'll . . . Mr. Rendek will begin. Now let me just check . . . (inaudible) . . . we'll be presenting two items. Will you . . . One, if the office continues as is and then focussing your attention as well on the proposed expanded office.

Mr. Rendek: — Well let me start and maybe I . . . it's something like that.

The Chair: — The reason . . . I'm sorry, the reason I'm asking for this, members, is because some of the information that we were given prior to the meeting was that the government had an intention to increase the size of the office. And I thought you might . . . wanted to make that clear first. And I wanted to make it clear that the expansion of the office was not something that was proposed from this end, from the Legislative Assembly Office.

Mr. Rendek: — I think I could deal with that, if you want.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Perhaps then just, with respect to Mr. Rendek, Mr. Speaker, then let me start then by making it clear that it is the intention of the government — and perhaps that facilitates the presentation of the commissioner — it is the intention of the government to see the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner expanded. And we are very interested in expanding therefore the resources that are available to the commissioner and are very interested in hearing the presentation of the commissioner regarding the resources that are necessary in order to meet the needs of the privacy as well as information office.

This will come as a result, I think in our province, of a heightened sensitivity to the importance of the freedom of information and the protection of privacy and it is important that both of those principles be protected with integrity in the interests of the citizens of the province. And our way of doing that here in Saskatchewan is through the office of the commissioner. And therefore, we are most interested here in dealing with the proposal to move on with the office in the expanded role in terms of resources from where we currently exist.

So it may be the preference of the commissioner to give that a context by commenting about status quo and then commenting about recommended change. But at the end of the day, it is the government's intention to approve an office which brings us a full-time commissioner and the necessary resources to do the job.

Mr. Rendek: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, members of the board. I am very glad to hear Mr. Hagel's remarks because when I took on this position seven months ago, August 1, 2002, I was given a commitment that the government would in fact be doing something about expansion of the office and I really appreciate the fact that the government is going to honour that commitment.

I was going to start out by saying I'd like to . . . As the other presenters have, I was going to start out by saying I'd like to thank my staff for the wonderful job that they've done. But I can't do that because I don't have any staff and I just thought maybe that would bring home to you the size of the office and

what has to be done.

Last month I was at a meeting of the privacy and information commissioners from across Canada, and they were absolutely amazed when I told them what the situation was in our province as compared to other provinces. I can tell you that if my recommendations are adopted, this will now put us at the same level as the lowest province now in staff, and that is Prince Edward Island. That's the effect it will have.

So what I'm really trying to say is the recommendations I'm making here are, in my mind, the bare minimum that have to be done to get the job done.

Now I, without . . . I don't want to labour the point about requiring staff except to maybe tell you why, and that is that what I've learned is that when this Act was passed some 12 years ago it was enlightened legislation that was happening across the country. And the emphasis was on freedom of information, access to information; governments should have no secrets. And that has developed very well. But as time has progressed, the sort of throw-in that was . . . when the Act was passed it was almost an add-on — was he'll also be a Privacy Commissioner, we'll also have a Privacy Commissioner. Wasn't much emphasis on that.

But as time has progressed in the last 12 years, the pendulum is shifting the other way. I have no trouble in keeping up with accommodating the access to information requests, and I'm able to handle that quite easily. But what is really burgeoning and becoming almost a monster is the privacy issues that have been raised in the last five years and particularly in the last year, particularly in the last month that we're all aware of. And it's in that area where I really require assistance. That is expanding so rapidly with technology, collection of information, security matters regarding private information.

I should make one thing very clear at the outset, that what I'm asking for here is not for myself. I have made it clear that I think we need a full-time commissioner, and with the staff that I suggest here, I don't intend to be that person. I took the job on an interim basis because my friend, Mr. Gerrand, who happened to be a classmate of mine as well, resigned and they needed somebody. I said I'll take it on; they gave me the commitment as to additional resources, but I said the Act requires that this be a five-year appointment and I'm not prepared to make a five-year commitment. I want to do a little more golfing at my age.

So I've indicated to the Speaker's staff and I've indicated that I would be quite prepared to assist in the selection process. I've got things like job descriptions and that all ready, and other areas like that.

What I would like at the end of the day is for the . . . whatever is recommended, that there also be in that recommendation a date as to which the new commissioner or the full-time commissioner's appointment would be effective.

I had initially suggested — as you'll see in the report that I filed — I had initially suggested December 31 of this year. And the reason I put that date in is, I think I said in my report, that that would be in order to meet all contingencies.

And among other things, what I meant by that was that this has to be an appointment of the legislature — the five-year appointment. The Act provides that it's an appointment of the legislature. And with the fact that there might be an election, with other matters that are happening, that would ensure that regardless of the contingency you should be able to make that appointment by that time.

I believe in the document that you have, the government's position is September 30. And that's fine with me. I just want to know for myself when my term will end so I can make my own private plans. And the only reason I suggested December 31, if you pick an earlier date and you don't get a new commissioner, I might be somewhere else. So I'm merely pointing that out that that is why I said the end of the year.

One other comment that I should make is that the budget that is before you that I have proposed, it triples — it triples last year's budget. I still think it's just a bare minimum.

The only thing is if it's a September 30 appointment then . . . of course this is an annualized budget that I've got in front of you. So that if it's a September 30 appointment, some of those costs will only be for a partial year. And I've had Ms. Borowski do the calculations for me and just approximately, if it's a September 30 appointment we'll still have all the one-time costs that are in the budget and most of the other costs. But there would be an apportionment of approximately \$61,500 saving for the coming year, for the coming budget year, which would bring it to \$306,000 as opposed to 367.5.

Of course if it was December 30, there'd be even more savings. I haven't done that calculation. Since the government's proposal is September 30, I've sort of proceeded as that will be the calculation on that basis.

Just as a side note, you should be aware — and I realize this is just for budget purposes only but that you are aware — that there could be other budgetary connotations. In addition to preparing this budget, I also prepared a brief report to the Department of Justice in which I outlined things that have come to my attention in the seven months I've been in office — things that I think should be looked at seriously; various things such as the exemptions under the Act being too excessive and things like that.

One of the main recommendations that I made was that, as has been done in Alberta twice in the last six years, is that an all-party committee be formed to review this Act. It's now been in effect for 10 . . . 12 years, and frankly I think it's time that we had a look at it and had some public input on it.

Alberta has done this. They just completed their second three-year review of their Act. They had an all-party committee. They made . . . they asked for representations from various public organizations, get public input, as a result of which they had a total of 125 submissions made to them, resulted in that all-party committee making 63 recommendations with regard to the changes that should be made to that Act. And that's only after a three-year period.

I think that we should be finding out whether or not the public thinks the Act is working and whether or not the media thinks

the Act is working. And so I've mentioned that because there's nothing in this budget to provide for those costs, so I just . . . That's a matter of policy, of course, that I have nothing to do with but it is one of the main recommendations I made to the Department of Justice, and that would have to be that there would have to be a financial consideration if that was in fact to take place. So I just mention that, as I say, as a sidelight which I think is important.

Now as to that, since the government agrees that this role should be expanded, I guess there really isn't much more for me to say except to answer questions about the actual amounts that I'm asking for.

The Chair: — Very well, and thank you.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well first of all, Mr. Chair, I do want to say thank you to Mr. Rendek as the commissioner both for the service that he provides to the people of Saskatchewan and also for your advice in terms of how we move it forward — to move the office forward — to respond to the realistic needs that we feel are important and legitimate in the context of what we see necessary at the office to deal with at this point in time.

I think as we look at this budget, and I appreciate very much that you have given us the September 30 annual . . . September 30 breakdown because I think it would be irresponsible of us to be approving a budget that we clearly know is in excess of what it's necessary in order to meet the obligations of the office. I don't know that we're in a position at this table today to define the appropriate starting date for a new commissioner.

I do want to say how much I appreciate that you've given serious thought to what the office needs, and the role that you play in that, and have concluded that it's not your professional preference to take on the commitment required of a full-time commissioner for five years, but at the same time have committed to being a part of the process of making a selection that puts the new full-time commissioner into a position where he or she can start from a position of assumed integrity, which is extremely important in this kind of office, and that enables the selection process to act in a well-informed kind of way.

It would be my sense, Mr. Chair, that when we come to our motions later regarding that, we would want to look at a budget in budgetary terms that would provide . . . that would come into play halfway through the fiscal year of October 1, and leave to another time the important question that the commissioner asked for in terms of firming just when it is that the new commissioner would come into play.

I say that because as I think through the logic of the process involved, there does need to be time taken to act, to advertise, to review, to interview. I would think that the chances of — after having made a selection and having the opportunity to confirm that selection — of the successful candidate being available on ready notice shortly after that is probably not all that high, and that realistically probably October 1 . . . October 1 is probably realistic, maybe a bit on the optimistic side and budgetary-wise we want to provide for the ability to do that.

I'm sensitive to the fact that you thought perhaps the end of the year may be more realistic and perhaps as we look at the

process, we may find that we budgeted for a time that's longer than the office actually needs because October 1 isn't the realistic correct date. But I think we can accurately assume that it's not an earlier date than that.

Mr. Rendek: — Well that would assist me, as I say, just for my own personal plans. And even if you put in a time frame and said the appointment to be effective between October 1 and January 1, that would satisfy me. I could make my plans accordingly. So I throw that as a suggestion.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. I think we're not able . . . the Board of Internal Economy is not able at this time to . . . and I don't know that anyone is in a position because we need to, with the input of the commissioner, establish the logistical lines of selection and that whole process.

But I think for budgetary purposes it's wise for us to assume the office will expand October 1. And I think the target that the commissioner suggests of sometime between October and January 1 are probably pretty realistic.

Mr. Rendek: — Yes, that's what I think.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I think it would be all of our objective that the sooner the better. And so we'd be striving for the October 1, if at all possible, but having to at the end of the day be bound by the availability of the successful candidate that . . . and then look at moving forward in the office.

It may very well be that the appropriate time to look at a review of legislation is in the context of, under the direction of the new full-time commissioner. The new commissioner as well would want to . . . I think probably we'd want to leave the new commissioner the opportunity to kind of shape his or her own office in terms of personnel and to also bring some recommendation to the public process of legislative review.

So there's much consultation. We can take some suggestions I think from the commissioner, take advantage of his wisdom and insight. And at the same time I think we do, would want to leave for the new commissioner then the door open to oversee the information and privacy exercise here in Saskatchewan.

I don't as I . . . I don't think I need to have a line-by-line commentary as to what grounds, Mr. Rendek, that you changed the figure from the 367.5 to the 306. But knowing the source of the calculation, I trust that it's as sound as we're going to get and I trust that. And I think we're hearing very clearly then that in the context of the budget what I would interpret is that our operational request here today then would be in the amount of \$306,000, which would be a sufficient budget to do the job and to proceed this year as we would hope to do.

Mr. Rendek: — That's correct, sir, with the understanding that of that amount, 58,000 are one-time costs, just so you know.

The Chair: — Are there any questions at this time about the budget itself?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Rendek, your budget, as you mentioned yourself, this proposal has grown roughly by three times what it was in the past. And the government has agreed

that there is a need to change the structure of the office, to go to a full-time commissioner. Your request is also for a full-time investigative officer and a full-time secretary-receptionist.

I wonder if you could outline the changes to us that have happened in your office over the past year since . . . your office has been in place you said for 12 years operating basically the same as a half-time commissioner or part-time commissioner with contract staff as need be, basically.

Mr. Rendek: — That's right.

Mr. D'Autremont: — What has changed over the last year that has mandated the necessity . . . this change to be requested?

Mr. Rendek: — Well I'll try. It's not just the past year. I think you'll notice from previous reports by Mr. Gerrand, annual reports, that the workload has been increasing steadily over several years. But it's in the past year or two years that the privacy area, as I indicated, has mushroomed to such an extent.

I just don't have time to do investigations, and privacy complaints require investigations. And this budget is geared to . . . the increases are pretty well geared to the privacy area. As I indicated earlier, I can handle the freedom of information stuff on a part-time basis, as could my predecessors. But the privacy matters are just mushrooming to such an extent.

And you know, an example is the recent hard drive theft that we're all aware of. And I have been conducting my own review under section 33 of the Act which is to . . . I have the authority under the Act — although that's even being questioned by some — I have the authority under the Act to investigate any matters that I think might result in the Act not being carried out or the Act being violated. And basically that is, is personal information being protected?

So under that section of the Act, I've been having meetings with the various government agencies that were involved one way or another in that information, that personal information being stolen. No evidence yet that it's been disclosed.

And my review has nothing to do with criminal law; I'll make that abundantly clear. My review is to ensure that the Act is being complied with and personal information is being protected.

And so, what I've done in that area is . . . I haven't completed that review. I still have several Crowns or a few Crowns and other government agencies to visit. But what I have received from another jurisdiction is a very detailed set of guidelines, a very detailed set of guidelines as to when you are tendering out or when you are contracting out these services — information services, including the storage services — what specifications do you put in your tendering documents as to what will they do about security, what will they do about this, what will they do about that, and whether or not they've tendered it out or just contracted it out without a tender.

What I've also got in these guidelines is guidelines that . . . for instance, guidelines that in the province of British Columbia, government institutions, local authorities, whoever falls under the Act — guidelines as to what they should have in these

service contracts, what clauses they should have in there, what protections they should have in there for security and other matters. So that's just one example of how the workload is increasing.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So if I can interrupt right there.

Mr. Rendek: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — You envision your office then reviewing those contracts . . .

Mr. Rendek: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — . . . prior to their inception or after their inception?

Mr. Rendek: — Well right now most of them are in force. Where I've gone, I've looked at their contracts. I've asked every one of the agencies to give me a copy of their contract. I've looked at it with the guidelines here and say have they covered this off, have they covered this off?

My intent is to do a general report once that review is done to indicate whether or not these corporations did their due diligence. Did they do their homework and ensure that my mandate of personal information being protected, have they ensured that? If not, what do I think they have to do to make sure that, wherever possible, this type of incident doesn't happen again?

Now theft is theft. You know, theft is always going to happen. But what you want to establish is that these various agencies, government institutions, took all the necessary reasonable steps to ensure that personal information was protected.

Now that's a long answer to a short question. But just to give you an example of some of these costs. I'm operating right now exactly the same as Mr. Gerrand was. And that is I retired from the practice of law when I went to the airport four or five years ago, but I've contracted with my old office to give me an office space and I contract out some secretarial service. That just isn't working.

And it, as a matter of fact, it's to the point where because you're contracting out the secretarial service, every time I need something done it's a different secretary. Well I'm violating my own privacy rules probably, you know, in having too many people looking at everything.

You've got to establish a credible office so that to make sure that if nothing else you maintain your own standards that you've set for everybody else. So all those costs . . . like they need a stand-alone office with a stand-alone receptionist. We need a . . . I'm using the law office's computer system and I don't know how well protected that is. We need our own computer system, etc. So that's basically where I'm coming from.

Mr. D'Autremont: — When you do the investigation or the review of, say, a department's IT services and information, and you comment that it's good, bad, or indifferent, who do you make that comment to then at that point?

Mr. Rendek: — Well as an independent officer of the legislature I am . . . my understanding is that I'm responsible to the Speaker. And, as you know, I make an annual report through the Speaker to the House.

Mr. D'Autremont: — To the Speaker or to the legislature?

Mr. Rendek: — Through the Speaker.

Mr. D'Autremont: — To the legislature.

Mr. Rendek: — To the legislature. And I would . . . I have been trying to figure out myself whether or not I just want to do a special report to the Speaker on this review or just include it in my annual report. I think my druthers were I'd just put it in my annual report and have it as part of that.

I don't necessarily want to deal specifically with each Crown or anything. I want to say, generally this is the situation. There were situations where they could be improved and they've agreed to improve it. In fact some of that's happened already.

But aside from that example I gave, the number of calls, complaints I'm getting regarding violation of privacy is just increasing steadily — just steadily increasing. And it's very difficult because some of these questions are very unique questions that I'm being asked because of electronic age and what's happening and I'm not all that literate with it to start with.

Somebody . . . we have to get . . . This, I've called it a privacy officer, his role will deal almost exclusively with privacy issues. And somebody that is maybe a little more conversant in the technology, frankly.

Mr. D'Autremont: — There was a report just came down here about two weeks ago I believe, within the last two weeks anyways, dealing with recommendations for security and maintenance of privacy of government information, individuals' information in government files. Have you looked at that and have you looked at incorporating those recommendations into your reviews of the government's information that they have?

Mr. Rendek: — Well that's a very good question because no, I haven't looked at it because I wasn't aware of it. These things have been . . . sometimes one hand doesn't know what the other hand's doing I think and I think that a lot of that happened out of the reaction to, out of the reaction to the theft . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well actually it's related to the distribution of information by civil servants about a year or a year and a half ago.

Mr. Rendek: — Oh, the one where . . . the sale of information?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right.

Mr. Rendek: — Yes. No, I haven't seen the report but, like my predecessor Mr. Gerrand, I stayed away from that because criminal charges were involved and he took the role, and I agreed to it, that you can't interfere in a criminal investigation. This investigation I'm doing is not an investigation as such. It's a review of systems.

Mr. D'Autremont: — But the report that came down was a recommendation on how to deal with systems and how to improve the security for privacy there. So that's why I was wondering if you had . . .

Mr. Rendek: — Well obviously that would dovetail with what I'm doing. They should complement each other, I would say.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Your recommendations, your reviews, what kind of a time frame would you be looking at to carry out the reviews and hope to see some implementation of any recommendations?

Mr. Rendek: — The reviews that I just talked about, you mean, with the Crowns?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right. Yes.

Mr. Rendek: — As I say, I would think that my report and review — I would hope — would be in my annual report which means that we're talking the end of March.

Mr. D'Autremont: — End of March this coming year.

Mr. Rendek: — Yes. That's, you know, and the report might not get out till April but that's the period . . . my annual report deals with the period to the end of March.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The need for a full-time investigator, how do you see that need developing? Is the need there for one full-time investigator? Is it for a part-time investigator? Is it for two investigators? How are you making the evaluation as to what is appropriate?

Mr. Rendek: — All I have done . . . I didn't want to appear presumptuous because it's not really my role, but what I have done in support of my budgetary request, I have requested and received from other jurisdictions job descriptions as to the people that hold that position in other jurisdictions. And I've got them from Ontario and Manitoba and also, coupled with that, I've got an indication from them of what it costs to get these kinds of people. And that's what I'm basing it on is the job descriptions that I've got that say, here is the role, here's what has to be done, here's the type of person you need, here's what his qualifications should be — he or she — and here's what they should be paid.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well how does our Act compare with other jurisdictions? Does our Act call for more or less the same level of activity as other jurisdictions? Do other jurisdictions call for more or less . . . How do we compare in that sense with other provinces and the need for staffing?

Mr. Rendek: — Well I would say that generally speaking — and bear in mind that I've only had seven months experience at this — but generally speaking, I would say that the various freedom of information, privacy Acts throughout the country basically — with some notable exceptions — but basically are the same. I mean they . . . First of all they have the same spirit and philosophy in all of them, and that is that subject to the exemptions in the Act, government shouldn't have secrets. That's the basic philosophy behind this type of legislation. And that's prevalent through all of these Acts and that all follows

sort of a similar pattern.

Then it gets into a matter of volume as much as anything. And you know, obviously, some jurisdictions have taken on a greater role in this whole area of access to information and in the whole area of privacy. Our role has been, frankly, very minimal. All I'm saying is this will sort of get us up to scratch. And it . . . Another example might be — I mean there are differences in the Act and that's part of what I said — I did this report to the Department of Justice that I spelled out where I think we're deficient.

One area, just to give you an example, is I have no powers to make an order. I can't order anything, all I can do is recommend it. Most of the other jurisdictions the commissioner can say, I order you to disclose that document. Well, that sort of makes the commissioner here a toothless tiger. And it also creates a difficulty in that if somebody makes a request for access to information and I say, I agree with you — I've reviewed everything, I agree with you — and then I put at the bottom, I therefore recommend that this department disclose that information, the department head can say, well we don't care what he says, we're not disclosing anything.

Now the unfortunate thing is if they take that position, then it's the applicant who was successful, he's the one that has to appeal. You know, it's the only instances I know where the successful party is the one that's appealing the decision or the recommendation. So I find that to be unfair, because if he has to appeal then there's a cost involved, and there's time involved, and so it discourages appeals.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The Surface Rights Board's the same way.

Mr. Rendek: — Okay. And so I think the, you know, there could be a greater role there if the Act were changed. And that would mean again, more work.

Anyhow, those are the reasons from your initial question about why I think that this is a bare minimum.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I find the government support for this somewhat surprising.

Mr. Rendek: — And refreshing, I might say.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The last couple of budget cycles we've gone through on this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Surprising is good enough.

Mr. Rendek: — Okay, whatever.

Mr. D'Autremont: — They have opposed any changes to this for the last couple of years. And I'm surprised that all of a sudden it's going from a fixed amount over the last two years, three years to tripling. And . . .

Mr. Rendek: — I think I can tell you why. Because I've been nagging and bugging them for the last six months or so.

Mr. D'Autremont: — You're saying you're more persuasive than your predecessors?

Mr. Rendek: — What I'm saying is that if you don't do something, I'm out of here. How's that?

No, I must say I wasn't aware of what the government was doing in the past. All I know is when I took on the position, they made a commitment and I'm pleased to see they're carrying it out. That's all I can say.

Mr. D'Autremont: — That was my questions.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Any other questions on the budget item? Comments?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Just a couple of wrap-up questions if I may, Mr. Rendek?

It certainly has been my impression that before your predecessor left that there were discussions about the expansion of the office. Is it accurate to assume that the proposal that you bring forward here now would be consistent with the kind of thoughts about what the office needs that would have been also shared with your predecessor? It's my impression that that is the case.

Mr. Rendek: — Oh, yes. And you'll notice that in my report, I quote his . . . I quote out of his annual report where this is basically he's saying what has to be done.

And it got . . . As you know, he found the workload too much. And I think that was a decisive factor as well. The fact that you know, that he just couldn't handle both positions any more.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, yes. Well I don't want to put words into his mouth but I think . . . As I had discussions, my impression was that it required more than he wanted to . . . than he wanted to be . . . Both had the capability with budget obviously, but also then was wishing to . . . And be personally involved . . . (inaudible) . . . was recommending that — not necessarily for him — but that the systems had changed and discussions . . . Then I think that was implicit when you came to the office and it brings us to . . .

Mr. Rendek: — Well there's no question I had several discussions with him before I took on the position and that correctly reflects what we discussed. It's just, as I say, I have no personal axe to grind here because I'm not going to be applying for the position. It's just something that I think has to be done.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes. If there aren't any more questions then, Mr. Chair, again with appreciation to the commissioner and his offer to be a part of the process of proceeding to the full-time office and so on, I think . . . I don't know, do we have any other . . . I think we're probably ready to proceed then to deal with the process of selection.

The Chair: — Selection process. All right let's proceed on to that item then. And now with respect to this selection process and recruitment process, we might invite you to help us out on this. There might be one or two questions.

Now did you want to present that, Mr. Rendek, or would you prefer that the Clerk present that?

Mr. Rendek: — Well I worked this out with the Clerk and the process we set up I think that she can explain it or I can explain it. It doesn't . . . I'm just looking . . .

The Chair: — Well perhaps then if you wouldn't mind, you have some suggestions as to how this could be done.

Mr. Rendek: — Yes, I'm just looking for my notes in that regard.

The Chair: — It should be . . . Referring to what members have in their tab 6 in their . . .

Mr. Rendek: — Yes. I'm not sure I have that decision item. I think it's in front of you under the decision item, item 6(b).

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. Rendek: — I think we could probably skip right down to the recommendation on page 2, which is option no. 3, that this board appoint a panel of senior officials which would be the Clerk of the Executive Council, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Chair of the Public Service Commission, and myself to hold an open, national competition; to develop selection criteria and I've been, as I indicated, working on that; to screen and interview applicants.

And as I discussed with the Clerk, I would, as I have done in other situations, I would prepare a matrix for scoring of candidates and then have the selection panel do their own scoring and then eventually to come up with a recommendation to the board, this board.

Now you know there are variants to that. As indicated, there are other options. The board could do this process if they wanted, which I would question that they would. And I would . . . Again I don't know if the board wants to be involved in any stage in the interview process at all or whether or not, as in most of these cases, the . . . this selection panel do the preliminary work, do the interviews, do the scoring under the matrix, and then make a recommendation to this board as to who the successful candidate could be.

That's basically what the process would be and then, as indicated in this report, in this decision item report, it would be . . . I don't think this could be done in time for the spring session for the appointment to be made, depending when it is of course. But, you know, there's a fair amount of groundwork to be done and then there's the advertising, then there's all the interviewing that has to be done, etc., which is why in this report the September 30 date was suggested as the date for the time frame. And we've already discussed that, and I suggest that period between then and the end of the year as being the actual time within which you'd want to get the job done.

So I think that's sort of the general process that we had come up with, which I think is workable.

The Chair: — Good, and this would be a good time to question . . . Mr. Hagel?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the recommendation that Mr. Rendek has made and in looking at

. . . because there have been a variety of processes used to select officers of the Assembly. But it . . . this is really built on the precedent of the selection process for both the Ombudsman and the Children's Advocate, which strikes me, of the officers of the Assembly, as the one that most closely parallels the Information and Privacy Commissioner. So I think the process recommended is sound.

I'm just wondering, I'm not sure if this is a question for the commissioner or perhaps for the Clerk. As the commissioner correctly points out that at the end of the day the only formal way of making the appointment is through the approval of the Assembly, as an officer of the Assembly. And given that today is the end of February and the darned groundhog has not come through and it's still cold out there, that these timelines alone may or may not permit the ability to come to a firm conclusion by such time that the spring session of the legislature is still in place.

So my question is: if that should occur, is there a . . . is there precedent or process that permits for an interim appointment to be made and then later ratified by the Assembly, with some confidence that the Assembly would be . . . would hold that view. I think there may . . . we may have some precedent for that, but perhaps that's a question for the Clerk.

Mr. Rendek: — I can assist you somewhat because I did ask Justice. I asked Justice about this very fact because when I had my discussions with Justice about the process, etc., they had said to me well — and that's one of the reasons I picked that time frame that I mentioned, was to the end of the year — because they said, you know, this appointment has to be made by the Legislative Assembly.

And in my discussions with the Clerk, we didn't necessarily agree with Justice's opinion in that certainly my acting appointment was done, you know, by order in council. It never went . . . Because the legislature wasn't sitting when I was appointed. So I think we came to the conclusion — and Gwenn, you correct me if I'm wrong — but we came to the conclusion, we thought that an interim appointment such as the one I had, even though it's full-time commissioner, you could still make an interim appointment by order in council then have it ratified by the Legislative Assembly.

The difficulty is, is that I think that . . . I really think that from the point of view of the public perception — and it's very important about the position of the freedom of information and privacy commissioner — that it is, rather than having the legislature ratify an appointment, it is the legislature that's making the actual appointment.

And I think it's just a perception matter that's different. Instead of the legislature saying we have considered this and we are making this appointment, instead they're saying we're just ratifying something that's a done deal. And I think that's the difference.

But I think . . . I actually think myself that an interim appointment could be made. I think the Clerk would agree that that's the conclusion we came to.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, I think it, I think it is. The Act is fairly

clear there. And I think the perception problem could perhaps be alleviated by the board making the recommendation for the acting appointment. And then the board still would submit that name to the Assembly in the normal way when the House does sit and ask it to be formalized for the official appointment.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Chairman, in light of the discussion and the recommendations that have been made, I'd be prepared to move the recommendation to proceed. The wording would have to be sorted out with respect to the motion concerning the makeup of the committee for the selection process and so on. I think that's pretty much laid out here, but again in the interest of time and getting the process underway . . .

The Chair: — I would just interrupt you for a moment then, Mr. Osika, because we did have a request by the committee members that we go in to camera first before making any . . . and then come back and vote the decision items.

Now unless the committee wants to veer from that . . . You've stated your opinion, that's fine. But unless I get a direction from the committee I think I'll follow with the same process.

Mr. D'Autremont: — What would happen in the case of a commissioner at the present time who resigns or for whatever reason the position becomes vacant? Is there not a provision already in place to appoint an interim?

Mr. Rendek: — Yes, that's how I was appointed. Mr. Gerrand resigned and I was given interim appointment.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So what's the problem? There isn't one.

Ms. Ronyk: — The appointment is by Lieutenant Governor in Council and so it would maybe be better to have the board make that recommendation to them to preserve the independent perception.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well since we're on perceptions, when I look at the recommendation for the selection panel, why is the Clerk of the Executive Council on there?

Mr. Rendek: — I think the only answer I could give is that when I met with the Clerk we took the Ombudsman appointment and looked at their criteria and picked the same criteria, frankly.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, that selection process has been in place for a while and it has been changing since then. The later selections have either been done with . . . in the case of the Electoral Officer, was with two representatives, one from either caucus. Other appointments have been done with no representation from caucuses or what could be viewed as partisan institutions and have been done by the other officers of the Assembly.

Because when you look at this, the Office of Information and Privacy Commissioner generally is looking at the government, small "g", government entities. And now you're going to have a representative of one of those small "g" government entities, the Executive Council, sitting on the selection process. And I think there is a potential perceived problem there.

Mr. Rendek: — It's not my decision to make, sir. But I would have no difficulty in that position being deleted from the panel committee. You don't need a panel of four; three can do it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Four makes it complicated.

Mr. Rendek: — Yes. Well, you can have tie votes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes.

Mr. Rendek: — But as I say, we just took it from the Ombudsman one. But from my point of view, if that one position was deleted from the panel, that wouldn't bother me.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, then what I would ask is perhaps, if the Clerk of the Assembly could comment on the proposed makeup as well.

I think there is a difference here between the selection of the Information and Privacy Commissioner from the Chief Electoral Officer. The Chief Electoral Officer had direct input in the process from both sides of the House because the Chief Electoral Officer was going to be dealing with the whole implementation of legislation related to The Election Act, and providing for the knowledge and sensitivities that come from the main participants and that being the political parties themselves.

And so I think, in that case, it was thought that the expertise that would want to be understood in the selection appropriately had that. I don't interpret the Clerk of the Executive Council as being a partisan position. So that would not be the perception that I would have about that.

But I'd welcome the advice of the Clerk of the Assembly in bringing forth this proposal based on practice and experience.

Ms. Ronyk: — Certainly, I'm pleased to do that. Mr. Rendek is right; we basically looked at the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate processes and first said well, we'll suggest that.

I think Dan is right that legislatures across the country are moving to more legislative-based processes for the selection of legislative officers. In fact many jurisdictions have a legislative committee or a special committee of legislators that sort of heads up this process for all of their independent officers in terms of their selection. And I think we'd like to suggest that the Assembly should move in that direction over time here. And perhaps an interim step would be to keep it more in the legislative arm of the Assembly.

The Chair of the Public Service Commission is there for a very practical reason, that we need their staffing expertise and would expect to have the assistance of one of their staffing experts at staffing at a senior level that our HR (human resources) people aren't quite confident that they're there yet. And they want to monitor the process and develop that expertise so down the road we will be able to staff that sort of search internally as well.

Again I think the size — a committee of three is probably a little more manageable than four and certainly I think the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate processes worked fine. The people worked with the interest of selecting the best person

in mind and I think it could work again, but I think it's a decision for this committee to decide which direction you want to be moving in.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So I take it you're not recommending your recommendation.

Ms. Ronyk: — These are just some of a number of options here — other process, perhaps.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well we're responding to a recommendation that was made, that came to us as developed by the Clerk and the commissioner. But I don't personally see Clerk of the Executive Council as a partisan position, but if you feel that it adds to the integrity of the process because at the end of the day it's the integrity of the process. What we're doing is engaging in the process of selecting people who are . . . who must be independent of all parties of the legislature and therefore report to the Assembly and no member of that Assembly . . . as you say, through the Speaker, but to the Assembly.

So if you're changing your recommendation, I guess that's my question. Certainly prepared to endorse the recommendation. If you're changing your recommendation, then to strike that. I guess that's the . . . (inaudible) . . . of the commissioner and the Clerk.

Mr. Rendek: — I don't know if I'd call it a change as far as myself is concerned. I'm quite happy with either way so all I'm saying is the recommendation could be that way or deletion of that one position. I'm quite . . . I think there is, I think there's a merit in the argument that it . . . that from the perception point of view, that perhaps that position should be deleted from the selection panel. That's my own personal view.

Ms. Ronyk: — And then recalling that this panel reports to the board and the board members will have the opportunity to vet the recommendation and apply any criteria you wish to it.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — No, and I think that does provide perhaps then the necessary integrity that also does protect for ourselves the ability to proceed if it should be concluded at such time that the Assembly is not in session.

Well I guess I would look across the table to see if that would be your view as well. That given that the recommendation here is that the recommendation . . . The recommendation is that the board itself — this board — would receive the recommendation. And that would put us in the position that if we were intersessional that we could proceed fully, counting, assuming accurately that the Assembly when it next met, would engage in a process of ratification rather than approval.

Would that be a status that would be shared by the opposition members of this board?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I think first off I think the government could call a fall session. Not doing that or that failing to happen, the board could proceed to hear the recommendations and further them on with either approval or rejection to the legislature.

The Chair: — Are there any other clarifications needed because I think we are getting actually close to decision making here and I want to . . .

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Chairman, I'll go back to . . . I'm prepared to move that we accept the recommendation as altered, as amended, and proceed.

Ms. Hamilton: — I think the budgetary portion may be worth discussing later on but this type of decision making wasn't within that category and I would . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — I would tend to disagree with that. You have to approve the budget to determine whether or not you're hiring a full-time commissioner.

The Chair: — I would go along with the request if it were unanimous but I find that we're working on . . . I'm conducting the meeting according to a motion previously passed and so unless we have . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chairman, we're in your hands. Clearly the government side intends to approve the \$306,000 request of budget. But if you want to postpone this decision because you see it as consequential, then we'll just delay it until later.

The Chair: — Thank you. Thank you very much and I will do that. Thank you then, Mr. Rendek, for the work that you provided to us over your term. And I can see that it's going to be extended for at least another few months. And thank you for preparing the budget and for willing, indicating your willingness to serve on this recruitment process.

Mr. Rendek: — Yes, it's a good thing this happened because we're clicking into full-time salary here.

The Chair: — Would the members like a five-minute break before we move into the other part? Recess for . . . till 2:25 by that clock.

The board recessed for a period of time.

The Chair: — Well I'll call the meeting back to order, members. The item before discussion then, we go to item 7 which has parts (a) to (d) on it. It, in general, is a review of the 2003 and 2004 budget for the office of the Legislative Assembly. We'll be going through the Legislative Assembly's strategic plan and we'll be reviewing the budget document, and we have some B-budget request items. We will need motions to approve both budgets later on and I expect what we'll do is, after discussing it, we'll delay the decision items till later.

So at this time I want to bring to your attention a document labelled item 7(a) and it's in with your booklet, it's called . . . referred to as the legislative services strategic plan. One way that this budget differs from previous budgets is that, prior to establishing the budget, the staff of the Legislative Assembly Office and actually the entire Legislative Assembly staff has been involved with the making up of the strategic plan. It's something that is, for the Legislative Assembly Office it's . . . parallels what government has been doing in various departments. It follows the auditor's request for us to do so and

there are other legislatures which, in Canada, which are at different stages of establishing their own strategic plan.

This is our first draft and I . . . we, as we're working on it, we are taking that view that it's not an article that is frozen in time, that a fluid document, it'll change from year to year. Perhaps it even should have a, sort of a . . . it should be considered something that'll be continually rolling on because a person's plans do change from year to year. And it's mostly forward oriented, not necessarily dealing with day-to-day operations.

It's something that we're learning on the go and I want to, at this time, recognize all of the staff members who have been, who had input into it throughout the last two years and maybe longer in some cases.

And maybe before we go any further, we've got most of our staff members here now, and I would ask the Clerk just to . . . We'll just take a minute with introductions and also to make comment on this. And then I'll also ask Gwenn when she makes the introductions to just give us a little bit about the process that was involved in this document.

Ultimately what the board . . . what I would like to be able to pass on to the personnel from Saskatchewan's legislative service is that the board approves of the directions set out in this.

That doesn't mean that I'm expecting the board members to look at every word that's in here, but I think if we're going to use it as a guideline for planning into the future we . . . Certainly if there's items that members disagree with, we should take them out of here and not make it part of our planning. And I guess so that we can have a direction which we think we should be going in. And we want to make sure that members have an opportunity to voice opinion on it.

So with that I'll turn it over to Clerk Gwenn Ronyk. Perhaps first for introductions and then to follow up on some of the detail.

Ms. Ronyk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I think you're all very familiar with the managers of the various branches and services of the Legislative Assembly. But I'm very proud to have them all lined up. They look just wonderful. I'm just like a proud mama with her brood here. I'm very proud of them so I want to get their names on the agenda and on the *Hansard*.

Of course assisting Mr. Speaker is Margaret Kleisinger. Along the side here I have Deputy Clerk, Greg Putz. Beside me, Marilyn Borowski from financial services. Next is Linda Kaminski, director of human resources and administrative services. Meta Woods, Margaret Woods, Clerk Assistant of everything. Next, Marian Powell and Pat Kolesar, Legislative Librarian and deputy librarian. Down next is Viktor Kaczkowski our Clerk Assistant, procedural. Guy Barnabe from our information services branch. And Ken Ring from the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk office providing legal services. And Patrick Shaw, our venerable Sergeant-at-Arms. And Lorraine deMontigny, the only person who's been around here longer than I have. We both look extremely young. Right, Lorraine? Yes, I think so too. And over next is Gary Ward, director of broadcasting. And another member of the Speaker's

office, Linda Spence, at the door.

And if you're ready, I'll go on?

The Chair: — I think so. I think that there's . . . I haven't mentioned the goals in here or anything like that so . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — Well I think some of you have been aware that we've been working on strategic planning for a very long time. I think it practically started in 1991 and got set aside for a variety of reasons for a number of years. We resurrected it in earnest over two years ago, in 2000, and we have been working on it since then and we're pleased that we finally, I think, come up with a good, a good start.

Doing a strategic plan is a very difficult thing to do but really it's based on some very simple questions. And I think those very simple questions are — that inform and infuse a strategic plan — is we have to look at where are we now, where do we want to be, and how do we get there. Those are the three simple questions, but they do translate into a fair bit of work.

And what we end up with I think is a document, a living document as the Speaker said, that should help the Assembly staff identify the directions that there are to go, and it helps us to be guided by the Board of Internal Economy, and to decide which of those things should be priorities in which years.

So the plan itself is a fluid thing, but it certainly will help us make the strategic decisions when they have to be made. And as the Speaker said, we did involve all of the staff because if there's not buy into a plan, it's just going to sit on the shelf and it's not going to be meaningful.

So the plan itself is a broad overall guidance that establishes our vision for the future, which is the overall goal that we will never reach, but that's what will always drive us to try to reach that goal. Our mission is really what we do; it's an expression of what we, as the legislative service, do. And then our values are the way we do our work and make our decisions, and they're based on those values.

The second page is a summary of the goals and objectives that the staff have come up with. And this was done initially with a facilitator at the management group level, and then we had meetings across the . . . staff wide. We've had e-mail wars where we wordsmithed and we've brought versions and various parts of it back and forth to small groups, to large groups, and so on.

And I do want to particularly thank the planning group or the overall steering group, our two people in human resources, Linda Kaminski and Iris Lang; and Greg Putz and myself sort of did the direction and the guidance on the project.

What we wanted in creating the plan was a very open process involving management and staff. We recognize that it's an ongoing process, but the most important thing is that it's only a start.

What the plan is, is the first stage in a more or less a three-stage process. The planning part is where we articulate our goals and objectives, and sort of set out some steps to achieve them. The

second phase is performance management, and that's measuring our process towards achieving these goals. And the third stage is reporting, where we have to report on our results.

And if this plan here that's proposed is approved for the fiscal year 2003-2004, then the board would expect to receive a report based on what we had achieved according to this plan in the next fiscal year. And in the meantime we will need to be working on measurement and performance measurement processes.

I think that's pretty well all I do want to say. I'll maybe just take one example. You'll find a loose sheet that was handed out; that was because the second page of goal 1 was missing in your handout and it should just be added. There's four objectives under goal 1.

But to show you how we work from the very high-level vision down to lower level plans, and the strategic plan basically gets you into looking at . . . Under each goal you have objectives and under each objective you have actions. And these are still organization wide.

And even below that then the branches will be doing their own branch plans. Some of them have already been working on them; some of them are done. Some of them are going to be more formal; some less formal. But eventually it gets down to individuals having . . . employees having work plans.

But we'll just take an example of looking at perhaps goal 2, first page. You'll see the first objective there is to improve the use of information and communication technology, to improve quality and timeliness of information advice to members.

And our actions for this year — and some of these are, you know, three-, four- and five-year-long objectives that will have a variety of actions over the years to reach them — we'll start by surveying members' needs. A survey of member satisfaction levels and needs is something we have done several times in the last legislatures. We'll be doing it this spring before the end of this legislature because we see that we have members with four years of experience and we can get some good advice and information from them.

We are evaluating information and communication technology to improve our services. Some things that we want to do is improve access to our publications and improve access to information such as legislative precedents and that kind of thing.

And one of the items that you'll see under the action column there is the development of the members' internet portal for delivery of electronic services to members. And you saw a little demonstration of that at the lunch break today.

And we've taken a first stab at identifying, in the final column, our success indicators. What we're trying to achieve here is something we can measure and that's sometimes very . . . is difficult. But a survey of members' levels of satisfaction is one way we can measure, you know, how well we're doing and whether we are able to meet the needs that members have.

So that's just an example of how the broad plan then focuses

down to actual concrete work done by the branches and by the employees of the Assembly.

And what the auditor expects us to do, and all government agencies to do, is to enunciate what it is we plan to do and then to report on whether we've achieved it. And this is the first step of that process.

And the budget plan is . . . The strategic plan is a broader thing and the budget is our financial plan, sort of as a subset of the strategic plan.

Any questions that you might have, I or any of the staff would be happy to answer. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. I think at this time any comments . . . I would invite any comments or questions on the strategic plan.

Ms. Hamilton: — Yes, in the auditor's suggestions he was talking about meeting certain performance goals or evaluations. This is something that he would view as a valuable first step and then we monitor how those are met in subsequent years. This is where that recommendation would take us?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, that's our understanding, yes.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chairman, when you introduced the strategic plans, what was the context for our dealing with it today? Just to receive it as a matter of information. Is that our context for today's meeting?

The Chair: — What we'd like is some kind of feedback. Now I don't know if we need to actually have it approved but we need . . . we'd like to get some feedback on it so that the board feels . . . we want to feel that the board understands where we're going and is satisfied with that.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — In that context, I think what we have here is . . . I agree is a good start. Just at first glance I would . . . I've just been going through here and noting some things that I think can be more specific.

At the end of the day, one of the toughest things to do in a strategic plan is to arrive at the appropriate specificity. It's really easy to use words like more or less, better, that sort of thing. And I see a whole lot of better through here, which although a noble objective is . . . it's hard to . . . makes it difficult to actually use the strategic plan effectively.

And so I think it's a good start. At first glance, there aren't . . . I don't see any glaring absences and I don't know that anything jumps out at me as inappropriate inclusions. But I think . . . And I think we will want to adopt the strategic plan at some point in time. I don't think today's the day. But before we do that, I think we'd want to have a significant period of time to walk through it and to have some discussion of the board. I don't, given the timelines, I don't think this is the day for doing that, but would be worthwhile us doing.

Because it's a service-oriented organization, it sometimes

makes it . . . I appreciate the challenge of being able to get specific about objectives that you're wanting to reach there. Well it's a good start, and I would recommend that we find ourselves looking at it in a more detailed way at a later date, and in such a way that we can collectively give recommendations to support the continued development of it.

Inevitably I've never seen a strategic plan that comes close to being bang on first time round, so it's not a criticism of where we're here. I think we're off to . . . it's off to a good start, and it's got a fair amount of work left to it.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just would appreciate some clarification as to . . . I understand . . . to the need of this. I understand the Provincial Auditor's most likely asking for more precise accountability, basically, to use that word as sort of an overall word to ensure that things are being extricated properly and that money has been used properly.

But when I look at, for instance, the page on goals and objectives, and under the heading, sustain and enhance the institution of parliament, I look at those and . . . those four points and I look at the fourth point, enhance members' professional development opportunities. And I, as a member, see that that's already being done through the Speaker's office, and so I'm wondering why there has to be sort of a special initiative here, or whatever it may be, to . . . like where must we go or what needs to be done in addition to what's already been done by the Speaker's office?

Ms. Ronyk: — If you want to turn to the detail on that in goal 3 . . . This is just as an example, I think. You just need to look at, in goal 3, the second page of goal 3, it's the fourth objective there in the left-hand column, enhance members' professional development opportunities. And for this year we see three areas of action there: prepare for CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) 2004 is when we're hosting a international Commonwealth parliamentary conference in 2004 in Canada. It won't actually be in Saskatchewan but we have a role in hosting that, and we're also needing to be preparing this year for hosting the MLC (Midwestern Legislative Conference) here in 2005. So those are the kinds of things we're talking about there.

And the bottom, the very bottom action there you see is, develop a parliamentary association coordination strategy. As we're getting larger and we're dealing with more inter-parliamentary associations, we just need to look at whether we're managing it properly and . . . we're sort of scattered and we need to look at whether we're delivering these services in the best way that there is.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you. I just think back of the province of Saskatchewan hosting the CPA conference a few years back and I think it was done, I understand, through the Speaker's office primarily and with the assistance of course of other offices in the legislature. But it went very well and I thought was coordinated and expedited very efficiently and professionally. And so I'm wondering if that will remain the same, that it would be the Speaker's office that would be continuing to be responsible for those things, or if there . . . if now with this strategic plan there's going to be a completely different unit doing that?

Ms. Ronyk: — No. The Speaker's office is part of the strategic plan. It's, you know, it's just one of the . . . all of the other branches that provide program and services so it is part of it. These . . . many of these things are delivered by the Speaker's office, for example some of the other topics here that talk about . . . on goal 4 for example, the . . . oh the outreach, I'm not just sure which one that is. There's the one that talks about the Speaker's outreach — they foster awareness and knowledge of the legislature.

Goal 3, the second page of goal 3, and one of the agendas there is the . . . the action's continuing to expand partnerships for public education and outreach by 2003. Now this has been in the works for a year here. So I think the key one there was the Speaker's office worked with the new journalism institute and it's . . . We're identifying these major initiatives because they do take a lot of time of the various branches that are doing them.

The Chair: — I think the CPA conferences have generally been organized largely through the Clerk's office but however the MLC, the Midwest legislators' conference, has been organized to date largely through the Speaker's office because it was a new initiative.

Now we're coming to the stage where we're going to be hosting, actually hosting a conference. The Speaker's office itself doesn't have the personnel to be able to do the whole thing so now we have to rethink how we're going to organize this with not only the Clerk's office but also with Intergovernmental Affairs because they've got a stake in that to some extent as well. So it's going to take considerable thought in the whole organizational structure.

And for example, with the l'APF (l'assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie), we're also partnered there I believe with intergovernmental because they pay part of the shot.

Ms. Hamilton: — Well I know my colleague, Mr. Hagel, has talked about we're going to have to take some time at a later date. But my understanding of how this document is sort of formulated and what the auditor is asking of us is that you've taken what you do in all of the areas and look at how they fit into a goal or established a goal and a reason why you are doing those activities, and then establishing a dollar amount to either do them or to continue to do them.

So I'm understanding that this is the first year in our budgeting process where you are organizing yourself to have the budget foster the goals that are provided in the document.

So I'm thinking that somehow for next year, we're also going to be asked by the Provincial Auditor, did you meet or exceed or not meet certain goals and why or why not? And this is difficult now in the way it's been formatted because where we have an objective — say, for example, goal no. 4: effective, responsive organization; continued implementation of planning; performance management; and reporting in the Legislative Assembly, and then all of the work that flows from that — that is within the different areas. May or may not be highlighted how much you're spending on that and what you intend you make certain you do to accomplish that.

Maybe I'm wrong thinking . . . But by next year, then the auditor's going to look at . . . You've got your strategic plan you presented to us in this way. The budget's formatted around reaching the goals that you've established. And then we will all be judged performance-wise by the auditor on how we meet or exceed or do not meet and why we don't meet those objectives.

Is that . . . my understanding correct? Because then what we're saying is, well we'll go through these areas but it doesn't highlight you're doing a program overview in a certain area, which goal or objective it's designed to meet.

So I think in further years, we're going to have to somehow format that we can judge whether we've completed that or it's ongoing or it's something that's met and we move on to the next objective to be met.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, you're right. We've got a lot of work to do. You will notice in the appendix to the budget, there the branches have identified their achievements . . . (inaudible) . . . for this year and their goals and objectives for the next year within the context of the goals that have been identified in the plan.

Now another thing that we've wrestled with and we don't exactly have a solution yet and I don't think anybody does, but the strategic plan is basically not everything you do. Everything you do is not in that plan. The strategic plan are the initiatives to get from where you are to where you want to go to. So it's trying to use their existing resources better to achieve more, to achieve better, to do some new initiatives, to do your work better.

So in this document you won't see all of the work that goes on day to day in, for example, let's say human resources, where they're processing all of the personnel transactions — 500 and probably about 1,000 a year that they process. Well they're not . . . You know, I don't know that we can just go in there and link that directly to a cost, other than to the cost of the staff that are doing it. But the plan is . . . this plan is the overall strategy to get to a better place than we are now.

But we also . . . You can see the auditor's remarks. He wants to see operational plans that the board would approve and say okay, this is your plan; this is how you're going to do election preparedness this year. And you know, it would be far more specific to particular work and jobs that have to be done to achieve that goal, and then it's easier to say whether or not we've achieved it. And they're more measurable because they're smaller, they're more precise, they're more concrete.

And that's the difficulty with the broad plan, because we're an organization that has 12 different branches doing different things. We're not sort of like one group that's sort of dedicated to one goal in terms of what we do, what we produce. We do a variety of things. So when we get down to the detail of all of the branches, I mean we don't expect to ever have a plan that sort of incorporates everything we do on a day-to-day basis or we'd be planning forever, writing forever. But we do want what we do to fit within our broad goals and we need to identify that.

We want the vision and the mission and the values to help guide us and help us make decisions about whether the things we've

always done are the things we should continue to do, or whether we should stop doing some of them or do them differently. And to that sense the goal, the plan, will have an impact across all that we do.

Ms. Hamilton: — But my understanding will be in . . . when we make a final deliberation and approve this, we're basically approving your strategic plan because the budgeting fits into that area. And this is how you intend to meet your strategic plan or work towards the objectives that you've outlined.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, yes.

Ms. Hamilton: — And so by next year it will be interesting to see the auditor's comments on how you present that to us and whether or not we'll be able to as a committee, presented the information, be able to follow that and say whether or not we're assisting in our decision making in meeting that.

Ms. Ronyk: — That I think is more likely to come in our annual report. Our report will be not the same document as the budget. The budget will be more the forward plan. The annual report will be assessing, well did we meet last year's plan or not? And if we did, how well did we do? If we didn't, why not?

Ms. Hamilton: — All right. Thank you. That helps.

Ms. Ronyk: — So those two you will work together with.

Ms. Hamilton: — Yes, good.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. I think it's a good start. I always have difficulty with these things.

Ms. Ronyk: — So did we.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I just want to get the work done. On goals and objectives, I think to me one of the weaknesses on this page is that it doesn't identify short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals. And I think that would be of value.

You provide a strategic study, I would . . . a strategic paper probably every year, unrolling every year. And so you would have room in there to provide those things that you see happening in the next year — short-term goals. There would be room in there then for planning purposes, your medium- and long-term goals.

And there is . . . all of these are here, but they're not broke down that way. And you have the things that are long-term goals mixed up with the short-term goals and, you know . . . and so to me it seems a little disjointed. And I would prefer to see something that outlines the short-term goals, you know, which would be the budgetary items basically for the next year.

Ms. Ronyk: — And that is sort of in the front of the budget .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. But in your strategic plan here that's not the way it's laid out. And then obviously you're not going to have budget acceptance for your long-term goals yet, but you'd be able to start down that road if . . . in a strategic plan if the Board of Internal Economy approves that strategic plan.

And so you may not reach that long-term goal on the first year, but at some point in time it becomes a short-term goal and is implemented. And so I think it would be of value to have it broke down in that kind of a manner as well.

Ms. Ronyk: — Maybe we need to do it in several ways. You know, the way we've set it up in this format is that once you get into the detail under the goals, the action, the second column is where we are specifically saying we're going to do this specific thing. And where we can, we put a date on that; we put a year. If there is no year, then it's the long term.

So what we could do is sort of have another document that sort of breaks out the short-term, the medium- and the long-term. The overall goals themselves probably won't change. The broad things that are listed there on the second page, the fostering effective legislature, that will stay the same. But the things we do to achieve that will change.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, the specifics.

Ms. Ronyk: — The objectives.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, even on that page — the second page — fostering an effective legislature, meet the requirements of House and committee reform. Well if we implement our current reform package, then next year that might not be a long-term goal expressed in that manner. That's why . . . like to me, that would fit into a, probably right now a medium because we haven't got approval to go ahead with the committee reforms, House and committee reforms.

And so I think Glenn was saying that, Mr. Hagel, that he was concerned about things being too specific . . . not specific enough. I am concerned in some of these cases that they're too specific for what I can see — what is to me a strategic plan rather than a tactical plan.

Ms. Ronyk: — Well we wrestled with those same things. Is it a long-term plan or is it a strategic plan; is it tactical; is it operational? And we've been doing this ourselves without really any expertise.

Many organizations have a strategic planning officer or office and they develop a lot of expertise and they do a lot of the writing. And we're just struggling along with learning as we go. And we've got a ways to go but it's still been a useful, very useful exercise for the staff as a whole. It's a team-building thing to do.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'd like just to direct a question to you. When the Provincial Auditor asks for a strategic plan obviously he was talking about, like I said, a detailed and accountable plan for different activities that go on as a result of the legislature. You, as the Chair of the Board of Internal Economy and the Speaker of the House, I would imagine the Provincial Auditor was referring his recommendation to you as far as this strategic plan, was he not?

The Chair: — That's right, I think his report deals with the entire budget of the Legislative Assembly Office which is a budget approved by this board of which I am Chair. So yes, he addresses it through me.

Ms. Julé: — Okay. So, you know, my thoughts just go here, I'm wondering why — this is my first meeting so you'll have to forgive me if I'm not filled in on what has transpired so far — but why then was, as the Chair of the Board of Internal Economy, why was the request of the Provincial Auditor not brought to the board for suggestions about strategic planning. It was?

The Chair: — That's right every letter or piece of information I get from the Chair is shared with the board, and ultimately like in his case, it's, it is actually tabled in the legislature. So it . . .

Ms. Julé: — Okay, thank you.

The Chair: — . . . it's an ongoing thing.

Ms. Julé: — Okay, thank you. It's my first meeting so . . .

The Chair: — That's quite fine.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Stay tuned, you'll get used to it. Then I recognize that this has been an ongoing request of the auditor.

I guess I would, just to wrap up, because my sense is we're moving along, we've received this for information for now. I would express the view that maybe I . . . I don't know that I share the same view as the Clerk that the strategic plan is focused, if I understood correctly, predominately you're in — I don't think she said it entirely — but predominately on actions leading to change. Because it would be my impression that a good strategic plan will certainly encompass that, but a good strategic plan defines what you're doing on an ongoing basis to provide . . . to respond to the responsibilities that you have.

And I say that because it's in that context then that a good strategic plan enables you to make effective and efficient decisions about changes in your budget, either increases in your budget or reductions in your budget, because you have a pretty clear idea what your priorities are. And priorities aren't just to do with change; priorities are to do with ongoing. And in fact I think a strong argument could be made that, that in probably most cases — certainly in many cases — one would . . . we would be unwise to implement change at the risk of jeopardizing the effectiveness of what is ongoing responsibilities.

And that's why there is, in my mind, such a close link between strategic plan and budget. Because strategic plan is what we're doing, what we want to be doing to be more effective. That's part of it for sure. And then budget is the resources in order to carry it out.

And so that's why I think it's most appropriate that we're touching the strategic plan now. I think we do have some more work. I think this is a draft that has come to us for attention, which is exactly how that should operate, and that what the board needs to do — because ultimately the letter isn't to the Speaker, the letter is to this board collectively — and it is our obligation on this board to give strategic advice. Ultimately through the budget has been to date our way of doing that for the Legislative Assembly to carry out responsibilities in a variety of ways.

So again, I think it's a good start. And I appreciate too that it's been a lot of hard work and that it's been developing expertise. I'm sure it gives great . . . it's a source of great discussions over Scotch around midnight, that we'll be particularly insightful in dealing with strategic plans — and probably occasional headaches and for those who are capable, a little bit of hair pulling at times as well.

I look forward to us coming back to this in some, in substantially more detail at a later date.

The Chair: — I'll just mention that preparing a plan for the legislative service is a little bit different I think than preparing a strategic plan for a department because a department has certain programs that they're trying to fulfill, whereas here it's a service that the legislature is trying to provide. So the . . . It's easier to identify what we are doing than to take it all the way back and to put it into sort of a strategic plan with values and goals and objectives that all tie into the mission.

It becomes a fairly complicated process. And it requires a different kind of mental action on all of our parts to get it all together because we're used to doing certain things that we're doing and we can do them quite well. But to actually sort of make a big picture conscious of the whole big picture and how all the small parts fit in. So it's been quite valuable and I thank you for your advice on this. And I guess we'll proceed on unless somebody's got more comments or questions.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — . . . Legislative Assembly is because effective evaluations are in the context of the feedback that you get from the members and our offices. And we're a changing body and we change sometimes in our makeup and over a period of time, we change too. So it requires a high level of responsiveness in order to evaluate that the Legislative Assembly is working effectively.

The Chair: — Then what I'll do is proceed to reviewing the budget document and you've all received this document, legislative estimates 2003 for 2004. I just want to bring to your attention a little bit about the organization of the document itself and point out where the summaries are and what our end result is. Then we perhaps might go straight into questions that will help explain parts of the document.

So first of all, the goals are on page 6. Pardon me, the vision and the mission and the values are restated. There are some factors which affected our operating environment for 2003-2004. Items like election preparedness and what the fiscal outlook was and some of the outside forces; for example, the transition to MIDAS (Multi-Informational Database Application System) and the fact that we're planning for, well, a provincial centenary and usually the Assembly is involved in all of our celebrations and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right too. And that we have to keep some of these things in mind, so those are identified on page 7.

The more specific goals specific to the budget are itemized starting on page 9 and 10.

Ms. Ronyk: — And if I might mention, Mr. Speaker, to Mr. D'Autremont, on page 9 there, we've noted the short-term goals for this fiscal year under the goals. So that is what is planned to

do in this year and within this budget.

The Chair: — Then the estimates themselves on page 12 and 13 is what I'd like to spend a little time on. This . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, at this stage. And you will also have a handout of a update to that, to page 12 and 13 which is . . . update is a three-page document.

Oh, while you're looking at 12 and 13, I might just get you to reference one other thing which will be handy for you to have, and that's a total summary. What page is that on? Oh yes, pages 28 and 29 have got sort of the same numbers in a different format. That's the . . . by subvote.

And I'm going back now to pages 12 and 13. And I'll first go through page 13 and just look at some numbers there, and then we will refer . . . I'll refer you to this more recent handout.

When this was first produced there, all decisions had not been made. Some . . . there were decisions that have been made since this document was produced so the result is not exactly as on page 13. But it's more closely estimated on these first two pages, but . . . so that page 13 is consistent with everything else that's in the booklet.

We started by looking at what the status quo estimate would be for keeping all the operations and personnel in place as it was done . . . as was in the previous year and those expenditures at that time came to 6.2677 million. We then reduced it by 2.05 per . . . or took the total number of expenditures that we felt we could . . . we needed to have in place, so we were able to reduce it by 2.05 per cent. And the request was from the budgetary part of the budget, \$6.139 million, which was 2.71 per cent above last year's request. Now that is for the budgetary items which we have, this board has jurisdiction over.

There are the statutory estimates which are prescribed by law which comes from this budget, but they're enshrined in the law and the only way to change that would be to change the legislation. The estimates were 12.145 million, which were an increase of 3.41 per cent. So the total estimates in this booklet were \$18.284 million, which is an increase of 3.18 per cent.

Now a more recent update on this piece of . . . on the handout that you've received which is labelled 1, 5.2 Legislative Assembly 2003 budgetary estimates status quo. Now on the second page of that — just go through that for basis of comparison — the estimate has been updated to . . . the total is 6.167 million and that increase came out as a result of a decision that had been made for the total cost of broadcasting our proceedings via television.

The information that we'd received prior to the printing of this book was that it was going to cost us that \$28,000 less. However, this . . . the SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network), who was our provider, had been negotiating a contract in the East and just in recent days we received this information so in order to accommodate that is one of the reasons we brought this . . . bringing in this addendum. So that's why it's 20 . . . I believe \$28,000 more expensive.

Now also is a request from the Rules Committee in the preparation for . . . in the ongoing discussion with respect to

implementing the new rule . . . pardon me, a new committee procedure. There is a box at the bottom of that page which refers . . . has a couple of B items on it.

One is the estimated cost of the committee. Implementing the committees would be \$50,000, which has an additional percentage effect of point two seven. I gave you the wrong number here, sorry. The committee reform is the \$44,000 . . . pardon me \$44,400, which is point two four per cent. And an additional B-budget item which we had put in originally as a B item as well was an item which was generated from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, an item of \$50,000 to be added to the budget.

In view of the fact that we have to meet a quota from the Parliamentary Association to the 2004 conference, national conference which is being hosted by Canada, every province has a budget, a quota allotted to it. And also in view of the fact that we will be needing some funding for hosting the MLC 2005, it was the recommendation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association — I believe every member has received that letter by . . . or that advice by letter — that we, instead of waiting till those years come, that we start putting some money away from our yearly budget into the fund to meet those anticipated expenses.

I think I'm going to stop there and we'll throw it open to comments or questions at this time and queries. If there aren't any comments or questions at this time, then what I'll do is maybe can look at some of the details now. And I'll ask Gwenn to take you through some of the things where we've made changes from last year's budget.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Just one question before you start ploughing through here. When moving from status quo down 2.05 per cent, have you summarized somewhere what was changed in order to accomplish the minus 2.05? Is that put together on the same page?

The Chair: — Yes. How to come up with the \$128,000.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes. The hundred and twenty-eight seven.

Ms. Ronyk: — We can do that. It is part of these next few pages where we outline the decreases that . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — It's not pulled together on a single page somewhere?

Ms. Ronyk: — Not yet.

The Chair: — Okay. We'll take note of your question and proceed with this and it might explain itself as we go through these increases and decreases.

Ms. Ronyk: — Marilyn can come back with something that pulls that together in that format.

The next few pages there, from page 15 on to the end of this section, is really the analysis of our estimates and it isn't as long as usual because there isn't as much change as may be usual. But starting on page 15, it pulls together the increases and the decreases and the bottom line — the increases and the offsetting

decreases and the bottom line.

And you'll see that the increases are again very typically the personnel policy factors. Even though we're not asking for any new FTEs this year, there is the usual cost-of-living inflationary increment reclassification pressures on salary. It's the cost of having people. They expect that when the cost of living goes up, they'll get a little increase in their salary and that is of course the way it happens within government and we parallel their policies in those areas.

The other two, you can see again on that page that our increases are broadcasting and commissionaire services. The broadcasting is — and we'll hear from Gary a little more about that in detail — but it is the cost of the decommissioning of our old satellite and moving on to a new satellite and really not having any choice but to go with the increased expenses for the distribution of the signal in order to achieve the same distribution as we have now.

Commissionaire services . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Gwenn, just with the change with the new sheet we've got, do we add in effect . . . bring that up to 128 then?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes. That's 126.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — 126.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes that's correct. That has to come up. And so the bottom lines will change a bit there too. The commissionaire services will . . . There's a, you know, a paragraph that explains that on the next page as well.

In fact, I'll maybe have you flip and start going through the pages starting on 17. The personnel services there, as I've explained, are the cost of living and the personnel changes according to personnel policy.

You'll see on the next page, on page 20, that we're asking for the same number of FTEs overall. You'll see one change there converting a non-perm dollars to permanent dollars. So there's an increase of one in the permanent employees but a decrease, a corresponding decrease, in the non-perm FTEs.

Within the personnel side there are . . . there's one additional FTE request. The Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk is here and can answer questions. What I think I'll do is I'll just run through quickly these few pages with the increases and decreases and then we'll be able to call on the individual managers for any more detail on them.

The Law Clerk asked last year for a very small FTE increase and it was not provided. He's asking again this year and has an arrangement that is being very helpful to him in his office and would like to expand on that just a little bit. It's basically using another person that's employed in the library and we would use more of her time and the library would have to backfill on the work that she isn't doing then. With the impact of committee reform on the Law Clerk's office, this little bit of increase of \$7,000 would be critical in them being able to do it. But of course this was prepared before we knew about committee

reform and it was identified as necessary even then.

There's more detail on the Law Clerk's proposal on page 40 but at this point the Law Clerk's office did make substantial cuts in other codes in order to offset some of the increase for this point three . . . a third of an FTE, a third of a person. And you'll see that his overall budget increase is only 1.4 per cent, even with these dollars in there.

The next personnel item there is information systems on page 19. And this is a request to move the temporary hours over to permanent. The need for the position has been demonstrated. We have only three people in that office and we are providing expanded services and developing our e-services. And we don't foresee having a reduction in the need for IT services as the development of new initiatives in our strategic plan often falls back on using technology to better provide, to provide better services.

In addition here, if committee reform goes ahead, there'll be impact on various staff, but particularly we have some concern that our broadcasting unit may be impacted as there's only three people there and if committees were to meet day and night, then we would have some difficulty broadcasting them from the Chamber with our existing three people, or if one of them got sick or run over by a truck we'd be in trouble.

So we're proposing, with the agreement, agreement between the two offices, information systems and broadcasting, the position here that is asking to be made permanent, we would like to train that person to backfill in broadcasting as a camera operator in the control room just to be sure that if there's any need for assistance on the broadcasting side, that could be provided in-house. It's very hard to go out on the street and find somebody at last minute because one of your three people got sick. In fact, it's impossible to do that. Luckily they don't get sick very often. But even if we were just sitting long hours, it's very difficult to ask three people to do it 12 or 16 hours a day on an ongoing basis.

Mr. D'Autremont: — MuchMusic finds them.

Ms. Ronyk: — On the street, yes. And I, you know, I think we need to understand that broadcasting isn't just the hours the House is sitting or the committees are being broadcast. There is the other work, the maintenance and the support. Our system is getting very old, and our guys spend a lot of time just keeping it together with baler twine — as my dad said, baling wire and binder twine — but anyway. There's work that's done off the actual broadcast hours to maintain and keep the system functioning and upgraded.

Then on page 21 is the broadcast services request. That number again at the top, 98, has to increase to 126. And Gary will come forward shortly to sort of explain that but it is related to the . . . having to go on the new satellite and we really only had estimates. This was explained to the Standing Committee on Communication in June of this year. It's not something new to us but we just didn't have the final numbers until last week, and unfortunately they were a little higher than what we were estimating here in this document when we wrote it.

Page 22, the other major increase that was in that first list, of

the Corps of Commissionaires. Here two factors: one a cost-of-living increase for our commissionaires who do our 24-hour security at the primary doors to the building. And here of course the amount that was removed from last year's budget for security at the Prince of Wales entrance was reinstated partway through the year and now it has to go back into the budget. The purpose is to ensure that access to the Prince of Wales entrance is on an equal basis to access at the main entrance for people who need barrier-free access.

Then all the next lists are decreases and here is where we found some of the dollars for the 128,000. I think probably they're all in there.

Page 22, information technology equipment of \$31,000 — decrease again. We're just stretching out our replacement of hardware and so on and doing with less in terms of the money for the replacement of hardware.

Page 23, committees of the Legislative Assembly. Here we made a real error since our . . . It highlights how difficult it is to plan because, as of Monday night, this has changed, sort of.

As we had looked at the actual work of committees over the last 10 or 12 years and had determined that we were regularly estimating higher than actuals turned out to be, and so this year we did a sort of substantial reduction in the regular work of committees to reflect more in line with actuals. And we did make a \$24,000 decrease in the committees. So the request in the B-budget item that you just saw earlier for 44 is really replacing this 24 and adding 20 new dollars to that.

The bottom of that page, constituency office, equipment, and furniture, directive 24. Again we based the budget on . . . without making an assumption as to when there would be an election. If there was an election this year, if we were assuming an election this year, we would have had to put in the whole new amount for a new term, like a whole new quarter, because the directive 24 has provided for the course of the term. So rather than assuming that, we assumed we would be using up the tail end of an old term in this year and that led us to allow for a \$14,000 decrease. However, if there is an election then we'll be required to provide the funding under directive 24 as per the directive as it now stands.

We did have some significant decreases there in the photocopier leases because most of them were up with their third-year term and we only renewed for one year for the constituency office photocopiers, and it was cheaper because they're older machines. But eventually they'll have to be upgraded to a newer level of machine.

Inter-parliamentary association . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Was that photocopier in the Legislative Assembly or in the constituency offices?

Ms. Ronyk: — No, in the constituency offices.

On page 24, inter-parliamentary association grants, here we say there's a \$3,000 decrease. Again, this was written a little ahead of the executive committee meeting of CPA, but this does reflect the actual operating budget for the Saskatchewan branch,

is \$3,000 less than last year, but the request for the special funding for these two upcoming conferences won't be part of the Saskatchewan branch funds. It will be a separate grant that will go towards those two events.

Page 25, again there's a selection of miscellaneous goods and services that were cut to achieve our target of the minus two of the status quo, including printing — that's across the board in various branches — a total of 16,000. Caucus telephone — well with only two caucuses instead of three we do save a little bit of money there.

Employee development. We did remove some costs for the staff retreat. I just want to say that this year for our staff retreat, instead of bringing in an outside facilitator we did some stuff internally, and we actually had also representatives from the caucuses and from two constituency offices come and speak to us about what they do. And when we did the evaluation, our staff just put those two items on the top of the list as the most useful parts of . . . some of the most useful parts of the day. And we think we can expand on some of these things without bringing in outside facilitators, at least for the next year. We do need to do a variety but that's why that came down.

And then the last item is just again a way to find a few thousand dollars to add to our . . . to achieving our target was the reduction of the provisions for parliamentary grants for organizations that are studying or promoting parliamentary institutions. And sometimes those are the debating clubs or dues for various things, and sometimes it's not always used. It's sort of an on-request basis.

Now just before I finish up, I think I'd like to walk you through the summary on this page because it will give you a . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well before you do that, there's an . . . (inaudible) . . . here that you didn't refer to, Gwenn. The one-time expenditure of visitor services, the 15,000. It's obvious why you have it as a decrease. But my question is, why was that not in fact reflected in a decrease from . . . by reducing the status quo?

Ms. Ronyk: — It was. If you want to look at the page 12 . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes.

Ms. Ronyk: — . . . where we're capitulating the status quo. It starts out with personal services, other expenses, and then less the one-time expenditure of 15,000 for visitor services conference.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. All right. Thanks, I appreciate that.

Ms. Ronyk: — So that's important. One-time funding is . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, one-time funding is not status quo. And then secondly, the legislative internship program, 6,000. Did I miss that?

Ms. Ronyk: — I guess there was no discussion of that. It was an increase from last year's budget because we found we needed . . . we didn't think we needed as many dollars because we bought the computers last year so we don't have to buy

them this year. We are providing a lower grant to the caucus for their computer support to the interns. And also some of the travel we reduced. So it's a \$6,000 reduction.

If you want . . . you want to know the whole numbers, that's what I'll walk through here with you for each of these branches, including the internship and so on.

In fact I think the way to show how each branch has . . . whether they've achieved . . . you know, what their actual increases are which may be . . . or decreases may be of interest to you is to go to the summary and with the subvote and the org or the branch are along your left-hand side and on the column on the far right-hand side you can see the increase or decrease and the percentage of change. And that may be just a good overall view for you.

Board of Internal Economy costs are down 13 per cent. Office of the Speaker is a 2 per cent change; increase there. Assembly administration, which includes visitors . . . Or sorry, Assembly administration includes myself, my salary, plus the central service groups — financial services, human resources, and administration — a 2.69 per cent increase there. Caucus administration, a reduction of 3.2. Constituency office admin, that's directive 24, is an 8 per cent reduction and that's been explained in the other section. Information systems branch, a 4.4. per cent reduction. SPMC services, a 3 per cent reduction. SPMC services to the library, an increase 1.23 per cent. Clerk's office, a 2.3 per cent increase. Grants to CPA, and this is without the B-budget, would be a decrease of 1.9. *Hansard*, you can see the increase there is 3.3 per cent. Broadcasting, and this is with the new money in it, sorry, the extra 128,000 that we need is . . . amounts to a 32 per cent increase. Again . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — What's the figure you have, Gwenn?

A Member: — For broadcasting?

Ms. Ronyk: — Broadcasting? Right across to the far right-hand column.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Did you say 128,000?

The Chair: — The 128,000 is a portion of that 130,000. There's a couple of other little factors there.

Ms. Ronyk: — Internship program there, you'll see the total dollars last year were 82,000; this year we're asking 76,000, for a \$6,000 decrease — a 7 per cent decrease. Visitor services, a 1.1 per cent decrease. Office of Sergeant-at-Arms, again impacted by putting the dollars back in for the Prince of Wales entrance, a 12 per cent increase. Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk, a 1.47 per cent increase, even with the extra dollars for the third of a person. Legislative Library, a 2.1 per cent increase. Committee support services, down 21 per cent; that's the *Hansard* basically for committees. We're assuming fewer . . . we were assuming fewer meetings, that's less verbatim. With a total for the budgetary increase of 3.18 per cent.

And I will call on any of the managers that you wish to explore further. Do you want to hear more detail on the television? I'll leave that up to you to do.

The Chair: — Are there any questions from members at this time?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Questions under Legislative Assembly personnel policy please, page 17.

The Chair: — And okay under page 17. And your question is?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Just what increases were part of this \$126,000 increase? Was it the cost-of-living increases? Was it increases negotiated with SGEU (Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union) or any other union involved? Was it increases due to changes in scale or merit pay? How did that break down?

Ms. Ronyk: — Linda if you want to come and help answer that. I'm not sure whether Linda has an actual breakdown.

Ms. Kaminski: — There isn't an actual breakdown. It represents the total increased cost from last year compared to this year as a result of applying the increases that will be going ahead in government.

And I guess at the bottom of page 17, what we have indicated there is that in terms of the out-of-scope employees, there's a 2.5 per cent general cost-of-living increase that will be applied July 1, 2003.

And then on the next page, page 18, we have an assumed cost-of-living increase of 2 per cent effective October 1, 2003. And the budgetary guidelines that were given to us by the Department of Finance was to include an assumed cost-of-living increase for the in-scope employees to that effect.

The collective agreement actually has expired as of September 30, 2002. They are in the . . . presently negotiating and will reach some sort of agreement. And so the Department of Finance has directed us to assume a 2 per cent cost-of-living increase as they have instructed all the other government departments as well.

So by and large, I don't have a specific breakdown, but the bulk of the changes are a result of applying the cost-of-living increases. And of course there are some employees who would be entitled to some with in-range movement within the ranges; but again, the bulk of the costs are due to the cost-of-living adjustments.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The in-range movements, do you have an estimate of how much that would have amounted to percentage-wise of the budget?

Ms. Kaminski: — No.

Ms. Ronyk: — Generally our steps are 4 per cent increments. And they're what — five or six steps within a range?

Ms. Kaminski: — Generally, generally.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, we went all through that one last year.

Ms. Ronyk: — And once people get to the top though, they

don't get those any more.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. So that's what I'm wondering. Like how many . . . what percentage of the employees would be . . . Let me ask you this way: what percentage of the employees are at the top of their scale?

Ms. Kaminski: — I don't have that information with me today but I know I had it to my last year figures as to what percentage. I could try and find that for you and answer that question but I just don't have it right here at my fingertips at this moment. I have it in my last year's stuff and I can find it, give you an estimate.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I guess and then a secondary question to that would be then: what percentage of those that are not at the top of their scale receive an increase, move up the scale?

Ms. Kaminski: — The cost-of-living adjustments, what they do . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — No, but outside of the cost-of-living adjustment.

Ms. Kaminski: — Oh, outside of the cost-of-living adjustment.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, how many moved up the scale?

Ms. Kaminski: — Okay, you're asking the same percentage in essence — how many people are still entitled to a within-range movement within their range.

Mr. D'Autremont: — No, not everybody may have moved within their range. Right?

Ms. Kaminski: — Yes, sorry I . . . ask the question again?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, so how many . . . what percentage actually moved within their range versus . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — Everyone who had room.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Everybody who had room moved.

Ms. Kaminski: — Right.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. So then I guess it's just a question of how many have already reached the top of it.

Ms. Kaminski: — Correct.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I didn't want to make the assumption everybody had moved.

Ms. Kaminski: — Right. I hear what you're saying.

Ms. Ronyk: — These are the list of out-of-scope aligned employees and all the yellow lines are people who are at the top. So this . . . you can see that there's not many that aren't in the out-of-scope which are the higher level. There may be more of the in-scope aligned, I just don't have that.

Ms. Kaminski: — Yes. I don't have all the information with me, but yes.

Ms. Ronyk: — So we're getting, you know . . . Because most of our managers and that have been around quite a long time and they've generally been at the top, some for a long time.

Ms. Kaminski: — We did have certainly an impact as well, you might recollect, with the new classification plan within SGEU. What happened there is any existing employees who had been in the Assembly for a while, as what happened within government, received the pay equity adjustments. And that really advanced people in their ranges. So people who would have moved along the ranges a little bit slower and had not yet reached their top were severely impacted by the pay equity adjustments. So certainly there were a lot of people who moved up rather quickly who were in-scope aligned.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I think getting a pay increase is not a severe impact.

Ms. Kaminski: — No.

Ms. Ronyk: — The Assembly was.

Ms. Kaminski: — That's right.

Ms. Ronyk: — Our budget was.

Ms. Kaminski: — That's right, that's what I mean — severely impacted by . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — The budget.

Ms. Kaminski: — . . . by budgetary increase, absolutely.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Well if you could get that information for me then if you would, please.

Ms. Kaminski: — Yes, I could give you some general percentages. Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. For broadcast services I have a question. We're looking at budgetary changes because of the possibility of going to new procedures on committees. I'm just wondering what impact that's going to have on broadcast services to be able to deliver those services to the committees.

The Chair: — I wonder if you could just come to the table with Greg and . . .

Mr. Putz: — Dan, would you mind asking that again? I was talking to Marilyn so I missed your question.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'm just wondering what kind of an impact to broadcast services the changes to the new committee structure is going to have. What kind of costs are associated, etc?

Mr. Putz: — Well we weren't assuming any cost increase because of the way the Rules Committee informed us Monday night they envisaged the Rules Committee package to work. But there wouldn't be television in a committee room. We'd be

left with television only in the Legislative Chamber which would double as a committee room once the House adjourned and committee activity went on from that point.

So only one of the two committees would be broadcast. We would use existing resources. And if these things went on, of course, then we . . . the contingency plan was to utilize the services of Marc from information services to be a backup resource for that branch, but with the understanding that without a second committee room equipped with television that we'd use existing resources and then we weren't assuming any costs arising from that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well if the committees took place during the normal sitting hours of the House then there would not be a cost increase, but if the committees sat outside of those normal sitting hours and are now being broadcast, which I think is still being envisioned . . .

Mr. Putz: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — . . . then would there be a cost implication for sitting in the morning, for sitting in the evening, after the House is not sitting?

Mr. Putz: — The agreement that SCN was proposing which has come to pass — which they've informed us of late last week — is that we'd be paying a set fee per month and it would bring us up to . . . we would have unlimited access up to that amount, which is basically \$30,000 a month. But after we're outside that set period then it would be \$500 an hour to broadcast the committees, if it was outside that session that we're contracting for, up to a maximum of 30,000. If we went over that in a month then we wouldn't pay any more. Now I don't know if I got that right. Did I, Gary?

And the problem is that outside of session though, because we haven't bought that \$30,000 block of time, whether we'd get that hour or two for a committee hearing is questionable because you have to book in advance. Because when we're not using the bandwidth on the broadcast system now, others then would be using it because of course being a commercial enterprise, these companies would want to sell that bandwidth to make use of that satellite.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well okay. When is our utilization allowed? We would sit, let's say, on a Wednesday from 1:30 in the afternoon to 5 o'clock in the evening. Is that what we've contracted for or maybe a half an hour on either side of that, or do we have it for unlimited during the day?

Mr. Ward: — It's unlimited. For four months we would pay \$235,000 unlimited use. And those months are not contiguous — you can have two months here, or three months there, one month there. But beyond that, that's when we begin to pay above that \$235,000.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Now that deals with the actual transmission. What about staffing? Would there be additional costs for staffing for broadcasting in the morning, for broadcasting in the evening after hours? Is there any cost associated there?

Mr. Ward: — No, we don't believe so if we're able to use Marc from IT to help us out, you know. And in the unlikely event that one of us does get hit by a truck, which could cause some problems, I'm sure we'd get help from the Clerk's office.

Mr. Putz: — See the issue was, when the idea was to have — which was envisaged in the report to the House — to have two committee rooms so equipped being able to broadcast simultaneously, obviously with three people you can't do that because they can't be at two places at once. So that's where, in that report we made to the Board last year, that's where the staffing cost increases came in.

Now there is of course . . . I mean if the committees meet hour after hour, there's that burn-out factor of course, but we'll have to cross that bridge when we get to it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I believe there was a part of the study that was done and presented to the board last year, an estimate made on providing broadcast services for both committees. Do you happen to recall offhand what that additional cost was?

Mr. Ward: — No, I don't. I'm sorry. I could guesstimate it. Staffing costs only?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well no, because would there also then be . . . Well I shouldn't say that because if we have unlimited time for those four months then broadcasting could be accomplished in that time frame. So I guess it would be staffing costs and equipment to provide the service into a second boardroom.

Mr. Putz: — In that estimate we gave the board last year there was a one-time cost for buying the equipment and installing it. There was also a provision for the hiring of the staff to do it on a sessional basis and those were inserted into that figure. I think the cost of equipment was just under \$100,000 — I'm just going from memory here — to equip a committee room. There is also another figure there. If we were to have two committee rooms outside the Chamber we would have cameras in both of those, use the broadcast booth as one of the production centres for that, but we'd have to have another production panel in the other committee room.

So to answer your answer, there are a number of different options that the board looked at. Each of them had a cost associated and if it was to proceed on the basis of doing the committees in committee rooms with television, then the board would have had some decisions to make as to which route the Assembly went in providing that service.

Mr. D'Autremont: — If the committees were . . . one sitting in the Chamber as what's envisioned currently and one was to sit outside but be broadcast, would that necessitate another switching panel or controller or whatever to do that?

Mr. Putz: — If the committees were meeting simultaneously, it would, and that's what was in that package. If they weren't to meet simultaneously, which kind of defeated some of the purpose of the reform so that you could have two different venues taking care of twice the amount of work in the same period of time, then of course you would only need the current broadcast control room to do that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Do you recollect what that extra controller would cost for simultaneous?

Mr. Putz: — No. But we could get that to you very quickly.

Mr. D'Autremont: — How about now?

Mr. Putz: — How about now. Here it is. No. I think we need the one with the fourth floor committee room. My memory was correct and this document . . . the equipment for that would be just under \$100,000 and that would have included the switching unit, or the control unit, for the second committee room.

Mr. D'Autremont: — If that was to occur, would there be a need for additional human resources, if you were running two simultaneous broadcasts?

Mr. Putz: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — How many new staff would be needed for that?

Mr. Ward: — I believe we quoted two extra staff for that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And what kind of cost would be associated there?

Mr. Ward: — Providing we could hire them sessionally, we could probably get away with . . . I think I quoted 30 . . . I'm thinking it was \$30,000.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So to go to another broadcast room for committees, we're looking at roughly 130,000 then, of additional cost?

Mr. Ward: — No. If we're going to have staff in the broadcast centre, that we have the television control centre right now, and staff in the other one, you're . . . well, staffing is 30,000 and then the equipment was 100 . . .

Mr. Putz: — I have to correct one thing. When I said 100,000, that would be equipping this room, using the control room. Now having another committee room elsewhere with that control facility would be \$180,000. That's buying the cameras, the wiring, and doing everything and the control booth with the production equipment as we have, not to the same degree, for the House.

Mr. D'Autremont: — If you're broadcasting out of the legislature, committee room sitting . . . committee sitting in the legislature being broadcast; a committee is sitting here being broadcast.

Mr. Putz: — Sitting here being broadcast using the present production control facilities in the control room.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Can you do that simultaneously, though?

Mr. Ward: — No, we only have one broadcast. The other one has to be taped and that's why . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, can you tape here and broadcast

from there?

Mr. Ward: — No, not unless we have a small control room set up in here. And that really, we had envisioned that as being in a new committee room where there was really more room to do it. This doesn't . . . this room really wouldn't accommodate it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well what would that cost be if you stuck it in the corner?

Mr. Ward: — You mean if we had the room?

Mr. D'Autremont: — No, if . . .

Mr. Putz: — If we did it in here instead of, say, on the fourth floor?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right.

Mr. Putz: — It would probably be about \$180,000 because that's what equipping the fourth floor room to do all of the things that you need to do to broadcast simultaneously . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Even if it was done here on a temporary basis?

Mr. Putz: — Pardon?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Even if it was done here on a temporary basis, it would still run around 180,000?

Mr. Ward: — Yes, you'd still need the same equipment basically to do it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, that was my questions on that particular area for now.

The Chair: — Thank you. Does anybody else have a question or a comment at this time?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Chairman. In two or three areas actually. While we're on broadcast, let's start there at page 21, which is your tale of woe here.

Is there . . . When you've looked at the, at the cost of delivery of the signal and the . . . Now I guess the increase is now with the adjustment is . . . What's the correct number — 128,000?

The Chair: — 126.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — 126,000. Is there any way that you can see of achieving the objective of broadcasting to the same communities as now at the lower total cost?

Mr. Putz: — We did look into alternative methods of delivering the signal to the exact number of communities that we are providing, and the only way to do that was through . . . We tried doing it via the infrastructure built up for CommunityNet. We involved the CommunityNet folks and SaskTel in that. And we came back with a figure of around \$800,000 to do the same thing that we'd be doing by satellite here. So that just wasn't in the cards as far as we're concerned.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — At a much lower quality.

Mr. Putz: — At a much lower quality.

Now the alternative to that would be not to broadcast and just video stream. People would have it just on their computer. But beyond that, as we indicated last year to the Communication Committee, there aren't many other options.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And if you were to just video stream, what would be the reduction in the cost?

Mr. Putz: — It would be basically the satellite distribution. We'd still have the cost of, you know, of the camera equipment, the staffing to produce the program and that would be basically it. It would help costs.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So video streaming would mean that access would be limited to those that had high-speed Internet?

Mr. Putz: — Basically, in reality, the people with dial-up service could use it but I don't think they'd be too happy with what they'd be getting because they just wouldn't have the capability to watch it.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — But again, what would be the dollar difference in cost?

Mr. Putz: — You'd minus this . . . the total cost for this satellite distribution.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Which is what?

Mr. Putz: — So the total satellite distribution costs, Gary tells me, through SCN is \$249,100 with taxes included.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Does that include the \$100,000 backhauling to Toronto?

Mr. Putz: — That's how you'd get up to the satellite so, yes, that includes the . . . Gary says that's 115 now. That's part of the . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Oh that's part of the . . . Okay. Legislative Assembly Office page 37, the advertising, printing, and publishing figure here represents an increase in the range of \$37,000. Can somebody explain why we would need to see an increase of that amount?

The Chair: — Once again, which page is that on?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Page 37.

The Chair: — Thanks.

Ms. Ronyk: — Mr. Hagel, if you would note there on page 37, that the Legislative Assembly Office here, this summary on that page reflects the expenses for the Office of the Clerk, *Hansard*, broadcasting, legislative internship, visitor services, and the Sergeant-at-Arms. So they're all combined in there, and that . . . those 300 codes for advertising printing and publishing shows that increase because that is where the broadcasting distribution dollars are in those 300 codes.

And so if you'd look at the analysis at the bottom of that page, you will see increase to broadcasting distribution expenses as a result of moving to a new satellite, 63,000, and that is the old numbers so now that would be more like 90. And then you have to subtract . . . that's part of the increase, but then you subtract the other cuts.

The third line there, savings of printing expenses as a result of moving to in-house printing is 8,000. And the very top one, the visitor services conference is also in those 300 codes and there is a reduction there of eleven five. So it's the sixty-three six minus the eleven five and the 8,100 that contributes to that 40 . . . no, \$37,000 change.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And then the equipment and fixed assets, the forty-nine three, up from fifteen two, is that from the decoders?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, that'll be the equipment needed for all the cable companies to receive the signal from the new satellite.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Then moving to page 44, the committees of the Legislative Assembly. The code number 4, travel and business, up last year 1,000 from the year before, up this year 1,800 from the year before . . . from last year.

Ms. Ronyk: — I'm sorry, what page are you . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Page 44.

Ms. Ronyk: — Travel and expenses. This is under the committees support. This year . . . the only two committees that there generally are that have a conference travel are . . . Public Accounts Committee always has a conference. Public Accounts Committees across Canada meet once a year, and the committee Clerk goes to that along with some members. So this is the cost for that.

And this year there is a committee Clerk's conference of committee Clerks from across the country, general committee Clerks. It's only been held once before, three years ago. It's something that happens, you know, periodically, but it's been three years since there's been one.

But it is the growing area of development in most legislatures is the committee work. And this is an opportunity for the committee Clerks to share their expertise and knowledge, and particularly valuable to us if we're getting into expanded committee work. So that's the reason for the increase there. There was no committee Clerk conference last year.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So it's an additional conference then?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay, that's it for now then, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: — Any other queries at this time?

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would like to have . . . put forward a question to the library services please.

The Chair: — Please go ahead.

Ms. Julé: — Good afternoon. There was some commentary made that the Law Clerk would second or use the services of some library personnel for a portion of time. So what I'm wondering is, because there was also in some of those comments an indication that there would be a cost of, I think it was \$7,000 in order to cover the wage of that person, is there a corresponding reduction in the wage of that person for their library services?

Ms. Powell: — Yes, that's right. We're happy to co-operate with the Law Clerk's office on this initiative. It's a professional development opportunity for our staff member. She's gaining a lot of valuable experience and because her normal work contains a number of duties that we had student assistants do as well, we're able to backfill on those hours within the library.

Ms. Julé: — So the question I guess directly is, would there be a reduction in the salary of that staff member? Would there be a reduction in their library, their salary pertaining to their library duties?

Ms. Powell: — What's actually happening is there's a virement between the offices so that part of the hours that she works for the Law Clerk, she's paid out of the Law Clerk's allocation, which is why you're being asked for the additional funding. And we don't have to pay her that amount but we have to pay the students to backfill and actually it's slightly higher.

So we do pay a bit of a cost to assist the Law Clerk in this mission because he's paying a permanent staff member permanent salaries and we're paying a non-permanent staff member a salary that's topped up by statutory and holiday pay.

Ms. Julé: — All right. So I have . . . In response to what you've just said, that does answer my question.

Ms. Powell: — Does that answer your question?

Ms. Julé: — Yes, it does. But I have another additional question in response to the information you've just given me. The students that are in the library, are there any in on voluntary services or are they all paid a certain salary?

Ms. Powell: — No, they're all paid. They're all at the same rank and they're all paid.

Ms. Julé: — Okay, thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just, on the broadcast services, I know that it's a valuable service provided to people who are beyond the reaches of our television stations and broadcasters and I understand that there is some broadcasting that goes through some satellites.

I wonder, Gary, if you could clarify for us just what service providers do we have for the satellite, whatever satellite operations they are which would be far more . . . reach out far more than would just our broadcasting TV stations. So I wonder if you could clarify that for us.

Mr. Ward: — Sure. Thank you. The new provider for us, the

new satellite company through SCN, is ExpressVu. And part of the deal that SCN made with ExpressVu is that our signal would be carried generally to all subscribers for ExpressVu. So anybody in Canada, essentially, that has ExpressVu will be able to receive the legislative service.

The only one problem for right now is all of the people with the old dishes that were trained on their old satellite would only get one service. But now there's two satellites, and SCN is on one of them, and we're on the other one. And so ExpressVu will be bringing forth a new initiative to get all of the either present subscribers to upgrade to the new dish which will pick up both satellites.

So essentially what we've done, rather than just going to the 121 communities that were on our distribution list, we're now getting to anybody that has a service.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Okay, so it's only the . . . there's got to be a cost for that.

Mr. Ward: — To the subscribers?

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Yes.

Mr. Ward: — No if they're . . .

Hon. Mr. Osika: — No but I mean for us to broadcast or for the use . . .

Mr. Ward: — Just that \$235,000. That's all included.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Okay.

Mr. Ward: — But it increased our distribution dramatically. And of course the 121 communities on our distribution list doesn't include the communities that are covered by Image Wireless cable, which is out of Yorkton as well. And of course that goes out to the rural communities as well and anyone that has that service would also get our signal.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — So our outreach program in that respect has really mushroomed.

Mr. Ward: — Very much, very much so.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe I'm on the Communications Committee and I should know the answer to this. However, I've gotten a little . . . I'm finding this discussion has confused me just a little bit.

After we make this change, will we or will we not be using the services of SCN for any of our broadcasting?

Mr. Ward: — Yes we will be using SCN as we had in the past. Our signal will be transmitted from the Legislative Building to SCN and it'll be backhauled from there down to Toronto, uplinked from there.

Ms. Jones: — So the difference then is that we can't beam me up, Scotty to a satellite here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Ward: — That's correct. The satellite that they were using is decommissioned and SCN no longer has an uplink. So their signal also has to be backhauled down there. And of course we've depended on them — you know, their needs as well as ours — to make this economical as a service because if we were doing it alone it would cost considerably more.

Ms. Jones: — Okay. So the only difference is the location of the . . .

Mr. Ward: — Of the uplink.

Ms. Jones: — Of the uplink.

Mr. Ward: — That's correct.

Ms. Jones: — And for that it's an additional \$100,000.

Mr. Ward: — It's \$115,000 per annum.

Ms. Jones: — Okay, but the book says a hundred.

Mr. Ward: — That was the . . . based on the first estimate.

Ms. Jones: — Okay, then there's a revised one. All right.

Mr. Ward: — Right. But another thing to note there is that in the agreement the cost is locked in for three years. So that's the amount that we can expect to pay over the next years, each year.

Ms. Jones: — Okay. And just in follow up, that flat fee of 235 provides us with four months of broadcast service, and then for each additional hour after that you pay \$500 an hour to a maximum of \$30,000 a month.

Mr. Ward: — That is correct.

Ms. Jones: — Now, with the maximum of \$30,000 a month, because you have this broken into like \$30,000 plus \$100,000 for your uplink to make it 233, right — you've got 120, which is 4 times 30. Then you've got 100,000 or 115.

Mr. Ward: — Well, 115. That's how it got bumped up to 235.

Ms. Jones: — Now if we're going over the four months do we pay an additional amount for the backhaul?

Mr. Ward: — No. The backhaul's an annual fee.

Ms. Jones: — Okay, the backhaul is for an annual one and the 30,000 is a monthly one.

Mr. Ward: — After four months.

Ms. Jones: — So many heads nodding back there.

Mr. Ward: — After four months.

Ms. Jones: — Okay . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, I think I do and I thank the officials for their clarification. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well actually Mr. Ward answered my

question before I could ask it so I'm ... if you ... Just to double confirm here, you're saying the arrangement with SCN then, this is a three ... this is locked in at this fee for three years?

Mr. Ward: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — To be renewed. Now given the circumstances of the communications world as we know it now, it sounds as though, (a) we had a reason to believe that when we got to this point we were going to be facing some kind of significant increase because we've been forewarned.

Mr. Ward: — That's correct, yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So, (b) at this point in time do we have some reason to believe that when we get to the end of that third year that there ... I know you probably can't answer with certainty or maybe you can, but if you can't answer with certainty what's your best estimate, Gary, as to where we'll be at for the fee when negotiating at that time? Is there some reason to believe it'll change substantially?

Mr. Ward: — Not to my knowledge. I expect that there probably would be an increase just because, but I really don't have any figures on that at all. I haven't been given any reason to believe that it's going to be a huge increase.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Right, okay. Now and if we are ... Now the four months, this is the four months, do we have to predetermine when that is or with the legislature starting on March 18 does the four-month clock start ticking on March 18? Is that right?

Mr. Ward: — That's right.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay so ... And that varies from year to year depending on the opening day of the spring session?

Mr. Ward: — Yes. They would ask that we give them as much notice as possible but they've also been apprised of the fact that they're likely to get maybe one or two weeks notice at best.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes.

Mr. Ward: — So that's, you know ... And I think the same thing is true if you have committees outside of session. For instance, if we had a week or two, we can probably block out the hours necessary to do that. So if your committee met outside ...

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And that would be 500 bucks an hour.

Mr. Ward: — That's right. And then if your committee was meeting, I don't know, like say three or four hours on a particular day, we could probably just block that time and not worry about going to the 30,000.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — But if you had 60 hours in a given month, then it's no charge after that?

Mr. Ward: — That's correct, yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — No extra charge.

Mr. Ward: — But it still may work out cheaper throughout the year if you could block ... If you knew what sort of hours you wanted, you may only use a few thousand dollars over a period of months if you can give notice for those hours that you want.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Because what does that cost then?

Mr. Ward: — Well that would be \$500 per hour but, you know, if you're sitting for three hours on a committee meeting in one day and then you're not meeting again for another two months on another committee, you know. Who knows, you may only spend 3 or \$4,000, you know — intersessionally.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Right, okay. Yes, but in terms of the cost to us, whether you give them two weeks notice, two months notice, or 10 minute — no that's extreme — but it's no different ... there's no difference in cost if you're giving ... if you're using it three hours every Monday afternoon or ... It just makes no difference whatsoever. As long as it's under the 60 hours, it's 500 bucks an hour.

Mr. Ward: — That's right.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — There's nothing that makes it go up, nothing that makes it come down.

Mr. Ward: — That's right.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay, thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The move to the new satellites — new satellite — necessitates the purchase of 120 new digital receivers. That's to replace the old receivers at each of the 120 communities? Is that what that's for?

Mr. Ward: — That's correct.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I think I'm done.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — My question is a general question, I think therefore to the Clerk.

When we look at the various branches and the fact that it's ... I can certainly understand how some of the services will have an element of unpredictability about the demands. Is there a ... Is part of the strategic plan here involve, in some way, supporting some flexibility within the staff of the Legislative Assembly to be able to move from one branch to another to provide temporary support to deal with overloaded demands?

We talk about broadcast but it could be anywhere. Or are people ... To what extent are people kind of locked into their stovepipe and not able to move to another office?

Ms. Ronyk: — I certainly can answer that, that because we're a small staff and because we're in such different offices, we very often have to back each other up in demand periods. And one of the items in our strategic plan is to use more cross-branch teams to do specific projects and things. And we're doing that now. It's an excellent way for people to get out of their stovepipe if you like, and look at things from broader context.

But do we have people who are not fully occupied that could go and spend half their time or all of their time doing another job like serving a committee? Well no, we don't. You know we have people with some flexibility in some parts of their work that can be, in an emergency, can be pulled in to help. For example, if we're doing a conference, we have people from all across the Assembly helping out in various roles.

As we've indicated here, Marc will be helping back up for broadcasting. That requires some training and so on in order for him to be able to do that. We think it's a good thing to do if it enriches employees' jobs.

In fact, in serving committees in the past that's what we've always done because we have never staffed specifically for committees. They've been served by the Clerk's office primarily but we pull in other help from time to time as we need it. And we most often we second the people from other legislatures or bring in attachments from other legislatures, whether it's researchers or committee Clerks to assist when we can't cover. Those things cost but not the cost of finding a qualified person and training them and paying them on a wholesale scale.

In terms of how well we're able to cope is totally dependent on how much volume of new work that there is and we just don't know that. I'm not sure anyone knows that at the time. So it's very hard to plan for without knowing what the actual take-up of new work in, for example, in the new committee structure, might be.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So at this point, am I hearing you correct, Gwenn, that the only planned flexibility would be between is it, between IT and . . . IT and broadcast services? Is that . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — You're meaning in order to serve new or increased duties?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well it could be increased duties or just the stresses and strains of . . . The Assembly doesn't kind of tick along at the same pace 12 months a year obviously. And obviously when session's in there's the whole *Hansard* team and so on that comes in particularly for that.

Ms. Ronyk: — Certain kinds of work, we can be more flexible. In fact we've got some people who work in four different offices in the Assembly helping out from time to time in various offices; and that's basically what they do, they float around where they're needed. But we are limited there. I mean, we can't have a Journal's clerk providing library services. There needs to be the expertise and the qualifications and the educational background to do many of the specific things that our branches have qualified people to do. Whether it's the technical people in information systems — I mean I'd love to go help Guy but I don't think he'd want me — or as I said library or the committee Clerks.

We can get more flexibility in the support roles, but even there the supporting of legislature is a fairly specialized thing and we can only do so much with the rather, in what I think really are, rather thin resources across the board.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Of course the Board of Internal

Economy's budget in human resources are always thin, I understand that. So what I guess I'm hearing you say then is that you're of the view that the amount of inter-branch flexibility that you have now is about maximum that's possible?

Ms. Ronyk: — I think so in terms of anything that would be specifically helpful in an additional function that we were asked to perform. Now we are doing, as I said, a lot of cross-branch projects and that's the way we're really accomplishing some of the initiatives in the strategic plan. But people are still doing their own job and then they're just doing this sort of on top of it or in between what their own job is.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay, thanks.

Mr. D'Autremont: — This might seem like a very simple question but this budget is based on a full year's service projection, April 1 to March 31, is that right?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, it is.

Mr. D'Autremont: — It's based on the assumption that there will be no election, based on your statement that plan 24 budgeting was done with what was left in plan 24 with no assumption of any new funding.

Ms. Ronyk: — That's correct.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So it's based on the idea that there would be no election. But that you're budgeting as well in certain areas, though planning in case there is an election.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, all the work that we're doing with our existing staff, dissolution guidelines, constituency planning, all of that — orientation — we do with existing resources and we will be doing that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right, okay. I have the impression from the discussion that's gone on, on the proposed rule changes and committee structure, that the whole discussion has been around what would happen during the upcoming session, but no discussion and planning what happens after that point if there is no election.

If we go to the new committee structure, the new rules in the House, and there is no election, then those committees will be functioning as they have been envisioned, able to hold committee hearings outside of session, able to carry on their own investigations at their own direction. That's what's part of the rule process, that they can go out and hold their own hearings. There's no discussion taking place as to providing staffing for those committees if they do meet outside of session.

On the Rules Committee when this was discussed in previous times, there was discussion of staffing those committees with researchers to research for the four committees, so a half-time researcher on each committee. There was also discussion of the need to broadcast all of the committee hearings, not half of them.

And I think that there is a dearth of planning for this if there is an election. If we are to assume that we're going to go through the session and have an election right away, then there would be

no opportunities for those committees to carry on that function outside of the session. But there's no certainty on that either way, so I think that there needs to be some discussion and some consideration given to . . . if these committees are in existence how do they carry on their functions if there's no budgets there.

The Chair: — In the past our experience has been that when the committees have been struck by the legislature the . . . with additional expense — and for example, the special committees that were struck cost an average I think of about \$100,000 each, with the last three committees — that what has happened in those cases was there was . . . either there was enough flexibility in the total budget of the Legislative Assembly Office that there was . . . the committees were able to be paid for.

Alternatively the board would be advised that there is no such money available, and the board would then come back and authorize payment and make a request for a warrant or a supplement to the budget — I'm not sure just how that's called — but a special warrant. So that would be the . . . You can never predict really from here what the Legislative Assembly is going to do in total in terms of committees or how . . . what committees might be struck at any time, and that really ends up to be the safety valve.

In terms of . . . Then in terms of staffing, suppose a committee has to go out as we did in the previous there, the option is open to the Legislative Assembly as to second a Clerk and hire a researcher, after having been instructed to do so through the legislature.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Under the new rule structure though, it won't be a motion or a referral necessarily from the legislature to the committee that would cause them to have meetings outside of session. It could simply be a motion by that committee themselves. And I think what we envisioned on the Rules Committee was that those committees would be properly staffed to carry out those functions.

And I think what we're seeing here in the budget effort is only a half-hearted effort to accomplish what the goals and guidelines were of the Rules and Procedures Committee in their recommendations to the Assembly.

The whole effort was designed to try and open the system up to the public as much as possible, to allow for participation by all members of the Assembly. And if we're going to provide budgets for the proposed implementation of those new rule changes in this upcoming session, I think we have to envision that the committees are going to utilize their new opportunities and carry out their functions and provide for public hearings, and provide for out-of-session hearings on various subjects.

And so we need to budget for staff for those things. We need to budget for broadcasting for those. And I really think that we need to take a very serious look at providing broadcasting of both committee hearings if they meet during session simultaneously.

The public has the right, I believe, if we're going to broadcast committee hearings, to have an opportunity to observe both committee hearings, not simply the one chosen by the legislature. To one individual, committee A may be the

important one to observe. To someone else, it may be committee B.

I don't think that if we are here in an effort to open this up to the public and to provide them access and equal participation . . . We had the discussion today on fairness. To be fair, I think both committees need to be broadcast if we're going to go to the new rules and broadcast them.

The Chair: — Any other comments?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I guess if we were going to provide proper servicing to those committees, proper staffing as recommended by the Rules and Procedures Committee in their discussions, proper broadcasting, what would that bill be?

The Chair: — Greg Putz will provide you with a summary of some of the projected costs under the original package that was envisioned on the committee structure.

Mr. Putz: — Last year you'll recall that the Rules Committee asked the Speaker to come forward with some cost estimates based on different scenarios for the operation of the policy field committees as envisaged by the second report.

And as I indicated earlier, based on the different scenarios, there are different costs associated with that. So if you want, I can go through what those scenarios were and what, a year ago, we had anticipated those costs to be.

What we outlined last year were seven scenarios ranging from the full operation of a policy field committee system to . . . at one end of the spectrum, to a scenario where we only had the operation in any given year of one policy field committee and with no hearings and no television. So that was the range of activity there.

Now a fully operational system, and this doesn't include the capital expenditure for equipping the committee rooms — this is just the nuts and bolts of operating a committee system, as you've said with the researchers and the staffing and that sort of thing associated with a public hearing program outside session and the operation of the committees in session with the *Hansard* costs of transcription, that of operating two systems simultaneously etc, etc. — a fully operational system, all four committees having hearings throughout the year, would be \$709,804.

Limiting those hearings to just two committees having hearings in any given year — and they'd have to alternate through years — would be \$580,320.

A fully operational system, a committee system, but with no TV, would be \$671,404. Again the limited policy field committees, without any hearings intersessionally, would be 478,563. That would include television.

When I say television here, I said that excludes the cost but it's also of the equipment; that's assuming the equipment would be approved. That's the staffing that you'd kind of asked a little bit and we didn't quite answer in full for you, that would be about \$3,200 a month on a sessional basis.

One policy field committee hearings but no TV would be 393,511.

Again the one with only one doing anything intersessionally . . . or one in operation but no hearings or TVs — and I think that, Dan, that was the one that you had suggested, the phase-in approach, try one committee and see how it goes — that kind of a phase-in approach, not just to bring in the whole system all at once, that was \$248,660.

Mr. D'Autremont: — If you bring all four committees up to full operation and having, say, two committees go out and have intersessional hearings, including broadcasting but not including the cost of equipment. Is that right?

Mr. Putz: — Right.

Mr. D'Autremont: — 580,000.

Mr. Putz: — That would be the two committees having hearings in any given year. Yes, that would be \$580,000.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And what would the additional cost for . . .

Mr. Putz: — No, that's the total cost. That's not additional over what we're paying now for committees.

Mr. D'Autremont: — That includes the hardware?

Mr. Putz: — No. If you subtract what we're paying now for committees off of that, then if you're asking for an increase, that's a different number.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. I'll get there then. This doesn't include though equipment costs for new equipment to do . . .

Mr. Putz: — No. That came forward as a separate item to this because those would be seen as one-time costs. It wouldn't be annual costs for the running of the committee system. And that involves . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — And that would be 180,000?

Mr. Putz: — That was the \$180,000 plus the cost of building the fourth floor committee room; or if you just did it in this room, it would be just that 181,000.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And the cost to go to the new committee rooms was going to be roughly what; 780,000 or in that neighbourhood?

Mr. Putz: — The total would be 1,146,505, of which SPMC was willing to pay 743,650, and the Assembly's part of that would be 402,855.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. And then the 180,000 on top of that for equipment.

Mr. Putz: — No that would include . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — That would include the equipment.

Mr. Putz: — That included the equipment. The broadcasting equipment and facility was the 181,000 that we talked about. And that's included in the Assembly's share of that cost.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you. Now how much are we currently . . . would be currently paid for committee structures? So what would the net increase be?

Mr. Putz: — In the comparison of costs in that document provided to the board last year, it was based on the five-year average for committees because we wanted to incorporate what the costs of hearing programs would be because we had over that five-year period a number of special or select committees in operation. So in order to compare a program where you would have hearings with where we were with hearings in the past, that's the basis of the comparison.

So if you're talking about the scenario that you mentioned with the two committees meeting, having a public hearing program in any given year, the difference over the five-year average would be \$333,356 based on the numbers we prepared last year.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. And then you still have the cost for the 180,000 for the equipment and the cost . . . or the 402,000 if you went to the . . .

Mr. Putz: — If you built a new committee room.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you. Well I think that to me indicates what the costs are if we want to implement our new rules in this upcoming budgetary year.

I think we need to take a very serious look at what's the purpose for the implementation of our new rules. Are we looking at doing it haphazardly? We already looked at — and it had been rejected — that we do a trial run of perhaps one or two committees. To go to the full four committees as is being recommended now by the Rules and Procedures Committee, I don't think we can do it in a haphazard manner.

If we're going to do it, I think we need to provide that service as the rules intend it to be provided and that means that we provide for the full use of those committees in this budgetary year. That means we broadcast both of our . . . both of the committee hearings that may be happening simultaneously, that we be prepared to broadcast outside of session as well, and I think we need to take a very, very serious look — if we're moving to this new rule structure in the Assembly — of how we do this and allow for proper public participation.

We have done public participation on the floor of the Assembly with the Health Committee. We have done it with the Agriculture Committee. But I don't think anyone in the Assembly believes that that is a proper method of doing it the way it was done. The public really didn't have good access. They could sit in the galleries but it's difficult to hear what's being said on the floor. The witnesses . . . the Chamber just isn't set up in reality to be a public hearing space and I think we need to take a very serious look, if we're going ahead with these rule changes in this session, that we move towards full and proper implementation. And that means to have the budgets in place.

While we certainly wouldn't be able to have the equipment or

the . . . especially the new committee rooms in place for this session, I think we need to be moving down that road in this budget cycle so that we can have things in place. And if there is no immediate election, these committees may very well be out on the road and need that budgetary support with the staffing and what is needed. So I think we need to take a very serious look at this in the budget.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. I listened carefully to the remarks that Dan has made and I do understand the point that he is making about wanting to go to the full meal deal full-blown as soon as possible.

I think, however, there is . . . we've got two things that we want to keep in balance here. One is the desired change in the rules and the operations, which has been approved by the Rules Committee, and that's got to be balanced with what we think is the prudent fiscal management of that in this fiscal year.

I don't think there's any of us sitting around this table . . . that would be a review that the budget related to the operations of the policy field committees and their work in the next fiscal year will be the same as it is in this fiscal year. I think it's a given that it will be a larger amount and that we'll have, we'll gain some experience as to what the cost implications are. We've got a proposal which deals with some that are obvious. We've heard from broadcasting regarding the cost implications of that end of the budgetary consideration to accommodate there.

And what I guess . . . there is also the potential factor . . . I know as I think it through that there may, there may or may not be — and it's difficult to assess this on the basis of any one single session — but there may or may not be . . . but I would think logic would suggest that there will be some amount of saving in terms of the total length of the legislative session, the number of sitting days.

If you're just . . . Logic would say that if you're doing similar amounts of committee work and you're doing some of that simultaneously, that the grand total number of days over which it's extended will probably be a shorter, smaller number. Now we'll see if that's true or not. What we don't know at this point in time is how members will respond to the committees, what the cost implications will be, and what the times will be.

But I think what we've got is a prudent . . . I don't think anybody would suggest that it's an exorbitant proposal about the prudent costs required to move forward in a . . . in that way. We're not in rich fiscal times, I'll be very clear about that. And nor . . . we can no more in this committee be setting aside responsibility to be prudent managers of the public purse than can departments.

And so I've heard the opinions, I've heard the estimates; we saw them last year. So they're . . . I mean they're not as precise perhaps this year as they were last year but they're probably pretty reasonable kinds of estimates.

And I think it's pretty clear that there is a political will to move forward, and one of the things that we'll be needing to do over the course of this fiscal year is to get a clear handle on what the implications are when we come to what we would consider to

become the status quo or the normal operational cost implications in the '04-05 fiscal year. Related to that as well will be the need to assess costs that are related to SPMC investments in order to accommodate, within the building, the kinds of room structures that we'll need to achieve over a longer run the kinds of settings we want to have on a permanent basis.

So I hear the concern. My judgment is that if we're going to be prudent managers of our finances that what we've got before us I think offers the very real likelihood of it being a realistic expenditure, as has been pointed out; that if there is . . . is something that occurs that's significantly different from that then, as is always the case, there has to be judgments exercised as to whether you make budgetary . . . shifts in budgetary priorities, or you seek board approval to add funds, or engage in some form of special warrant exercise.

So those are options, fiscal options that do exist today. Our obligation is to move forward with the Legislative Assembly budget and with a prudent number of dollars that we believe will accommodate the requirements of the implementation of the new committee structures that was approved by the Rules Committee a couple of days ago.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Well under the current budget structure for the new rules proposal means that there will only be broadcasting of one committee in this upcoming session. But it not only means that there will only be broadcasting of one committee in this upcoming session, it also means there will only be broadcasting of one committee in the next session because there's nothing in the budget to put anything in place before a new budget proposal is presented and so that means it wouldn't be available at the next session as well. So there's going to be two sessions without broadcasting unless something else changes in the meantime such as a special warrant to provide for that funding. But I don't think we have to go down that road of special warrants if we fund it properly now.

If we can't fund it properly now, then perhaps the best thing to do is hold off on these changes until we can do it properly rather than doing a half measure; that we do it at . . . not this session. We approve it at this session for implementation and use at the next session. And that would give us the time and the budget to do it properly at that time when the rules changes takes place.

Ms. Hamilton: — I've been listening to discussion on both sides. I really honestly think that whenever we implement this we're probably only going to do half measure. With the cost that might not be expected or the way operations happen, there'll be a tweaking to this or an adjusting to that. I think when we all agree that this is a system we should go to, we should try within this year to give it the trial that it deserves and to go forward.

There are other ways that we can accomplish some of the things that may occur, and in the future we may have to do the same kinds of things to do that. As we've seen in the past for any kind of committees or things that happen within the Legislative Assembly, such as additional agricultural committee meetings or, you know, committee for health hearings or whatever,

there's always those kinds of things that will arise that we'll have to adjust to.

So I'm in favour of going forward and trying with what we have to see how this is going to work and learn from those experiences. So I don't see the problem in going forward now and seeing how these committee structures will operate.

I think from past experience, members opposite have made many comments about how the structure doesn't work to accommodate democratic principles in certain ways and that there's a lot of time that could be better spent, particularly, in this kind of a format. So I would like to see us do that in this year.

The Chair: — Now we are on item 7. We had a chance to look at the budget and opportunity to make comments. Request that other parts of no. 7 or the actual decision items, we'll delay that until after the in camera session.

Are members . . . And there is one other item associated with this and, at this stage, I would ask Linda Kaminski to come forward and respond to the question posed earlier by Mr. D'Autremont.

Ms. Kaminski: — Thank you. I went to pull some numbers for you. What I have here for you is that during the course of the 2003-2004 fiscal year there will be a total of 48 out of 124 employees within the Assembly that will receive within-range movement or, in other words, an increment. They'll move within their range.

Of the 48 of the 124, 52 per cent of those are our non-permanent employees and it's actually 35 employees. They're primarily our *Hansard* sessional employees, our security employees, some library students, some visitor services guides. As you can appreciate with those particular branches, there is a little bit more staff turnover and therefore that's representative of a lot of new employees within those branches.

In terms of the permanent employees of the total of 48 out of 124, 8 out-of-scope employees out of 32 will receive a within-range movement. So only 25 per cent are still entitled to some movement. And within those groupings that are related to in-scope permanent employees, 5 out of 25 will receive some kind of an adjustment.

Compared to next fiscal year, 2004-2005, there will be a total of 43 out of 124 employees that will be entitled to some sort of a within-range movement. And again, 52 per cent of that representing the non-permanent employees. So I hope that satisfies your question.

The Chair: — One more time or are there any final comments or questions on item 7? If not, I would like to go to item 8. Agreed.

Members you have been given a copy, some time ago, pertaining to the dissolution guidelines. At some stage I think, in order to implement these, the board would have to authorize their implementation.

This has been a great deal of work to put this together but it's

been done through the LAO (Legislative Assembly Office) office and I think it's set up in a way that you can see that the changes — the proposed changes — are outlined on the first page. And then there's a table of contents taking you through each item.

I think probably the most efficient way is simply to ask . . . to give members an opportunity to ask questions on these items, and we'll go directly to issues of concern.

Oh the first copy that you got, by the way, which were distributed in November are not identical to the most recent copy which you have here today. Because I have had some feedback from individual members prior to this, so some changes have been implemented or are being recommended at this stage already . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, okay.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Apparently, it'll be this . . . It'll be the most recent draft, the one we will be needing to make a decision around.

The Chair: — . . . clarify again for members. I think I misspoke myself just a minute ago. There were a few changes that had been made prior to the members receiving this. So the copy that you received in the year 2002, and this copy, are still . . . are the same. There have been some suggestions that have been brought forward to me on it where members have suggested that changes be made, and I suppose this would be a good time for us to discuss that.

And those two items that were brought forward to me were, no. 1, was the signage, that there was a problem with the recommended changes for signage of MLA offices. And the second one was with respect to the payment on rental of offices . . . of residences in Regina. That is MLA . . . There's different payments for members for some . . . for members who are re-elected than there would be for members who are to resign. And so there have been requests that that should be the same for everybody.

A Member: — On the residence.

The Chair: — On the residence. Now we can look at that in more detail. But let's take maybe the . . . Are there any questions or clarifications that members want to ask at this time about this particular . . . these guidelines?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Chair, I think between the total number of members here on the board there is probably four of these that we . . . You had four? Five. It says five in total, two of which I think are common to probably pretty well everyone.

The Chair: — My question is: I think at this stage, do you want to ask any questions to put them on the record at this stage or do you want to wait and we'll go into . . . till we get into our in camera session and then come out?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, I don't have any questions and I think probably our stuff to be dealt with is most appropriately done in camera.

The Chair: — If that's the case then, could I have a motion that we move to an in camera session? Moved by Mr. Hagel and

seconded by Ms. Jones. All in favour that we move into in camera session? Thank you, motion is carried.

The board continued in camera.

The Chair: — The meeting will come to order. Members of the Assembly, I will be presenting motions to the committee, to the board, and I will be following the order of our agenda.

So the first decision item is item 3, which was a review of the budget of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. And the motion that is recommended is:

That the 2003-2004 estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer in the amount of \$811,000 statutory be transmitted to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do I have a mover?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Moved.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Hagel. Have a seconder? Seconded by Mr. D'Autremont. All those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Second item is a recommendation with respect to item 4, the budget for the Provincial Ombudsman. The recommendation is:

That the 2003-2004 estimates of the Provincial Ombudsman be approved in the amount of \$1,564,000 and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Ms. Hamilton: — So moved.

The Chair: — Moved by Ms. Hamilton. Seconded by Ms. Julé. In favour of the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Next one deals with the Children's Advocate office. The motion reads as follows:

That the 2003-2004 estimates of the Children's Advocate be approved in the base amount of \$1,140,000 plus a one-time amount of \$67,000, for a total of \$1,207,000 and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Ms. Jones: — So moved.

The Chair: — Moved by Ms. Jones. Secunder? Mr. D'Autremont.

A Member: — Is the one-time funding the IT or . . .

The Chair: — The one-time funding, no. It's . . . just a minute, to address pressures. To address additional pressures.

Ms. Ronyk: — Staffing.

The Chair: — Did we vote that yet or not? Shall we include that in the motion then, the amount of \$67,000 to address pressures?

So the motion will read that:

That the 2004 estimates of the Children's Advocate be approved to the base amount of \$1,140,000, plus a one-time amount of \$67,000 for staffing to address pressures, for a total of \$1,207,000 and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Those in favour of the motion? Those opposed? The motion is carried.

Item 5, the decision item with respect to the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner:

That the 2004 estimates 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.

Moved by Ms. Julé and seconded by Mr. Osika. All in favour of the motion? Opposed? The motion's carried.

With respect to the Privacy and Information Commissioner, the motion reads:

That the 2003-2004 estimates of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be approved in the amount of \$306,000 and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Moved by Mr. Hagel; seconded by Ms. Hamilton. Those in favour of the motion? Opposed? Motion's carried.

Decision item with respect to the recruitment process for the information and privacy officer. The motion reads:

That for the recruitment process for the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the board appoint a selection panel of senior officials composed of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Chair of the Public Service Commission (it's suggested that we include in there, or designate), the current acting Information Officer and Privacy Commissioner . . .

Sorry.

. . . the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly Office, the Chair of the Public Service Commission (now it's by editorial here) or designate (in other words, the Chair could designate somebody), current acting Information Privacy Commissioner, and a representative designated by the government, and a representative designated by the official opposition, and that the mandate of the panel be: (1) to hold an open national competition; (2) to develop selection criteria; (3) to screen and interview the applicants; and (4) make a recommendation to the Board of Internal Economy.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Was the discussion that you put on the board . . . the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, was the first one you read, was it?

The Chair: — That's right.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, that's good. I was thinking of Clerk of the Executive Council.

The Chair: — Yes. I just rearranged the order from the motion. And the only difference from the discussion being that the suggestion — and whether you accept it or not, it's up to you — that we add in the Chair of the PSC or the designate of . . . or designate.

Moved by Mr. D'Autremont. Seconded by Ms. Hamilton. Those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Ms. Ronyk: — And I ask, would you like Mr. Rendek to chair . . . (inaudible) . . . it makes it clearer then, when we start.

The Chair: — Then we proceed to item 7 and this is with respect to the budget of the Legislative Assembly Office. The recommendation is:

That the 2003-2004 estimates of the Legislative Assembly be approved as follows: budgetary, 6,261,000; statutory, 12,204,000, for a total of \$18,465,000, and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Moved by Mr. Hagel. Seconded Ms. Julé. Those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Motion is carried.

Ms. Ronyk: — We need a decision on B-budget items and we need . . .

The Chair: — That's included, that's included.

Ms. Ronyk: — Is it? Okay.

The Chair: — It's all included.

Ms. Ronyk: — And we need an addition to that that authorizes that conversion from the non-perm to the perm in information systems. There's no dollars on it but the board approves positions and . . .

The Chair: — We need a motion to . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — Well a separate motion would be the best, I think. So it would be that the board approves . . .

The Chair: — Maybe you can write it up and we'll go ahead with the others.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes.

The Chair: — Mr. Hagel, to sign that . . .

Another motion with respect to the budget and that is:

That the revenue estimates for the Legislative Assembly in the amount of 8,000 be approved for the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

That's the revenue, the revenue in the book as estimated. Page 53.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And what is the refund?

Ms. Borowski: — Refund previous years . . . What that is, is if in, for example, in this year if we received a cheque from a vendor because a subscription had been cancelled or something like that. Refunds from previous years always get deposited as revenue. So basically refund of previous years' expenditures, correction of errors, kind of.

Ms. Jones: — Oh well. Gee, no, we don't want to agree with that.

The Chair: — Ms Jones. Seconded, Mr. Osika:

That the revenue estimates for Legislative Assembly in the amount of 8,000 be approved for the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

Those in favour? Motion's carried.

And now we go to the motion on . . . Oh, I have that one motion with respect to the transfer of funding. The recommended motion is:

That the board approve the conversion of the funding for the co-op student in the information systems branch to a permanent position.

Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded, Mr. D'Autremont. All in favour of the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Now with respect to the dissolution guidelines, it's recommended that the motion reads as follows:

That the board approve the dissolution guidelines for the MLA expenses, benefits, and services 2003 as attached.

And we will attach . . . make the changes as discussed. Mr. Hagel. Mr. D'Autremont. Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the board approve the dissolution guidelines for MLA expenses, benefits, and services 2003 as attached.

Those in favour of the motion? Opposed? The motion is carried.

A motion with respect to authorizing payment for health benefits after retiree . . . a subsidy for health benefits retiree plan. The motion would read that effective February 1, 2003:

That a premium subsidy be provided for retirees enrolled in the Legislative Assembly's Extended Health Care Plan for Retirees, known as the Retiree Health Plan; and

That the retiree premium subsidy be on the same basis as executive government's retiree premium subsidy, that being single 9 per cent, couple 7 per cent, family 9 per cent at the present time; and

That the Department of Finance be requested to pay the retiree premium subsidy on behalf of the Legislative Assembly.

Is there a mover for the motion? Mr. Hagel. Ms. Hamilton — seconded by Ms. Hamilton. Those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

And a motion to use the same process with the Legislative Assembly employees as is used in other parts of government with respect to payment of deceased employee's salary. And the motion would read:

That the Board of Internal Economy approve, retroactive to January 1, 2003, the payment of a deceased employee's full monthly salary for the month in which the death occurs. For this purpose a deceased employee would include members, employees of the Legislative Assembly, caucus and constituency employees.

Mr. Osika. Moved by Mr. Osika, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont.

Those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Motion is carried.

That brings me to the end of my list. Anybody have any outstanding motions?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, I think on the two points on the strategic plan. We've received it, but that's the status of it at this point in time. And I would recommend that we consider agendaing it for a future meeting which we can have some . . . in which we would have appropriate time for some consideration of it, the strategic plan of the Legislative Assembly.

But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say thanks to the staff of the Legislative Assembly. It would have been more appropriate I guess when they were all here but the meeting wasn't over yet at that time, and so we'd ask Gwenn if you'd extend it and, Mr. Speaker, if you would, to the staff of the Legislative Assembly in their preparation of the budgets.

I think it's fair to say that the operations of the Legislative Assembly here in Saskatchewan are of high standard in the nation, and that in looking at the budgets that we received today, budget proposals we received today, that they reflect the commitment to good service and quality service, and that that's consistent with the reputation of our staff. And we'd ask that you extend the appreciation of the Board.

The Chair: — My pleasure.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'd like to second to that, the vote of confidence by the member, and that we appreciate the work done by the legislative staff, all of the legislative staff, in all of the offices. They do their utmost to make our work as easy as possible and we appreciate that and wish to express our vote of confidence in their performance as well.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. And I would like to thank all of the board members for the diligent work they put in today. A complete, as it turns out to be, 12-hour day. You get two free meals for that, folks.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Short day for an MLA.

The Chair: — So thank you very much.

Ms. Jones: — I move adjournment.

The Chair: — Motion to adjourn. Motion by Ms. Jones to adjourn. Those in favour? Motion is carried. Meeting stands adjourned until the call for the next meeting.

The board adjourned at 21:00.

