



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 15, 2006

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY
2006**

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Prince Albert Carlton

Hon. Glenn Hagel
Moose Jaw North

Ms. Donna Harpauer
Humboldt

Mr. Ron Harper
Regina Northeast

Ms. Judy Junor
Saskatoon Eastview

Mr. Don McMorris
Indian Head-Milestone

Hon. Kevin Yates
Regina Dewdney

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Room 8, Legislative Building
Wednesday, February 15, 2006

PRESENT**Members of the Board of Internal Economy**

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Speaker, Chair
Hon. Glenn Hagel
Ms. Donna Harpauer
Mr. Ron Harper
Ms. Judy Junor
Mr. Don McMorris
Hon. Kevin Yates

Staff to the Board

Marilyn Borowski, Director, Financial Services
Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Margaret Tulloch, Secretary to the Board

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

Jean Ouellet, Chief Electoral Officer
Dave Wilkie, Assistant Electoral Officer

Office of the Provincial Ombudsman

Kevin Fenwick, Provincial Ombudsman
Gina Alexander, Deputy Ombudsman
Lynne Fraser, Manager of Administration

Office of the Children's Advocate

Marvin Bernstein, Children's Advocate
Glenda Cooney, Deputy Children's Advocate
Bernie Rodier, Director of Administration

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Gary Dickson, Information and Privacy Commissioner
Diane Aldridge, Assistant to the Commissioner
Candace Malowany
Sandra Barreth

Office of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Lenni Frohman, Acting Director, Hansard
Darcy Hislop, Chief Technology Officer
Linda Kaminski, Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services
Pat Kolesar, Assistant Legislative Librarian
Iris Lang, Clerk Assistant (Committees)
Marian Powell, Legislative Librarian
Jeremy Phillips, Information Services Administrator
Gregory Putz, Deputy Clerk
Ken Ring, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel
Pat Shaw, Sergeant-at-Arms
Margaret Woods, Clerk Assistant

AGENDA

Moved by Ms. Harpauer, seconded by Ms. Junor, that the proposed agenda be adopted. Agreed.

MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Harper, seconded by Mr. McMorris, that the minutes for meetings #1/05, #2/05, #3/05 and #4/05 be adopted. Agreed.

ITEM 1**Table Items:**

- (a) **Table Item — Legislative Assembly 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quarter Financial and Fiscal Forecast Reports**

The Chair tabled the reports.

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarter financial and fiscal forecast report for the 2004-2005 fiscal year be received and approved.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1625

(b) **Table Item — Members' Accountability and Disclosure Reports for the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2005**

The Chair tabled the reports.

(c) **Audited Financial Statements, Auditor's Opinion, and Schedule of Fixed Assets for the Government and Opposition Caucuses for the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2005**

The Chair tabled the reports.

(d) **Special warrant funding for 2005-06 as approved by Board Members in January, 2006**

The Chair tabled the documents.

ITEM 2

Table Item: Report of the Provincial Auditor — Memorandum of Audit Observations

The Chair tabled the report.

Mr. Yates requested that discussion of the report be deferred to a future meeting.

ITEM 3

Decision Item: Amendments to BOIE directives pursuant to The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That new Directive #19 — *Board of Internal Economy Indemnity and Expenses*, as follows, be adopted.

DIRECTIVE #19
(s. 67(7), c.L-11.2)

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY INDEMNITY AND EXPENSES

- (1) Subject to clause (5), the Chair of the Board of Internal Economy and each Member of the Board of Internal Economy, excluding Members of the Executive Council, are entitled to be paid a per diem indemnity and to be reimbursed for travel and living expenses incurred by the Member for each day that the Member of the Board is attending to the business of the Board when:
 - (a) the Legislative Assembly is not sitting; or
 - (b) the Legislative Assembly is sitting but the business of the Board occurs outside Regina.
- (2) The amount of the per diem indemnity specified in clause (1) is \$90.
- (3) Claims for Board of Internal Economy travel and living expenses shall be made in the same manner as set out in Directive #3.1 — *MLA Travel and Living Expenses*, but shall not be charged against the Member's annual travel and living expenses provision.
- (4) All claims for a Member's Board of Internal Economy indemnity and expenses shall be charged to the budget for Executive Management.
- (5) A Member who chooses the monthly accommodation option set out in clause (4) of Directive #3.1 — *MLA Travel and Living Expenses* is not entitled to claim for accommodation expenses when the Board of Internal Economy is meeting in the city of Regina or the Member is attending to Board of Internal Economy business in the city of Regina.

- (6) On April 1 of each year the dollar amount of the per diem indemnity set out in clause (2) of this Directive shall be increased or decreased by the annual change in the Consumer Price Index for Saskatchewan and this Directive may be reproduced to include the indexed amounts without further amendment.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1626

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. Harper:

That Directive #17.2 — *Committee Indemnity and Expenses* be amended, as attached.

DIRECTIVE #17.2

(s. 49(3)(l), c.L-11.2)

COMMITTEE INDEMNITY AND EXPENSES

- (1) Subject to clause (5), every Member, excluding a Member of the Executive Council, who serves on a committee appointed by a motion of the Legislative Assembly or pursuant to the Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly is entitled to be paid a per diem indemnity and to be reimbursed for travel and living expenses for each day the Member attends a meeting of the Committee or attends to the business of the Committee, that is authorized by the Committee when:
- (a) the Legislative Assembly is not sitting; or
- (b) the Legislative Assembly is sitting but the business of the Committee occurs outside of Regina.
- (2) The amount of the per diem indemnity specified in clause (1) is \$90.
- (3) Claims for Committee travel and living expenses shall be made in the same manner as set out in Directive #3.1 — *MLA Travel and Living Expenses*, but shall not be charged against the Member's annual travel and living expenses provision.
- (4) All claims for a Member's Committee indemnity and expenses shall be charged to the appropriate Committee budget.
- (5) A Member who chooses the monthly accommodation option set out in clause (4) of Directive #3.1 — *MLA Travel and Living Expenses* is not entitled to claim for accommodation expenses when the Committee is meeting in the city of Regina or the Member is attending to Committee business in the city of Regina.
- (6) On April 1 of each year the dollar amount of the per diem indemnity set out in clause (2) of this Directive shall be increased or decreased by the annual change in the Consumer Price Index for Saskatchewan and this Directive may be reproduced to include the indexed amounts without further amendment.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1627

Moved by Mr. Harper, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That Directive #18.1 — *Speaker Expenses* be renamed Directive #18.1 — *Speaker and Deputy Speaker Expenses*, and be amended as attached.

DIRECTIVE #18.1

(s. 49(3)(h), c.L-11.2)

SPEAKER AND DEPUTY SPEAKER EXPENSES

- (1) The Speaker or Deputy Speaker is eligible to claim travel and living expenses while absent from his or her place of residence for the purpose of attending to the duties of the Speaker's Office, other than as a Member of a committee appointed by a motion of the Legislative Assembly or pursuant to the Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly.
- (2) Subject to clauses (3) and (4), payments and reimbursements for travel and living expenses incurred by the Speaker or Deputy Speaker pursuant to clause (1) shall be made in accordance with the expense provisions payable to Ministers under *The Government Organization Act* as set out in the Financial Administration Manual respecting "Ministers' Travel and Business Expenses".

- (3) If the Speaker or Deputy Speaker has chosen the monthly accommodation option set out in clause (4) of Directive #3.1 — *MLA Travel and Living Expenses*, he or she is not entitled to claim for accommodation expenses when the Speaker or Deputy Speaker is attending to the duties of the Speaker's Office in the city of Regina.
- (4) For travel by private vehicle, the Speaker or Deputy Speaker shall be reimbursed for mileage costs based on the per kilometre rate payable to Saskatchewan civil servants in accordance with the Federal Government's kilometre rate schedule.
- (5) Travel and living expenses incurred by the Speaker or Deputy Speaker pursuant to this Directive shall be charged to the Office of the Speaker.

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

Minute # 1628

ITEM 4

Decision Item: Salary Linkage for Independent Officers of the Assembly

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That effective September 1, 2005 Directive #26.1 — *Chief Electoral Officer* and Directive #20.1 — *Conflict of Interest Commissioner*, as attached, be approved to re-establish the salary linkage for the Chief Electoral Officer and the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

DIRECTIVE #20.1

CONFLICT OF INTEREST COMMISSIONER

- (1) Section 22 of *The Members' Conflict of Interest Act* provides that:
 - 22 The commissioner is entitled to be paid:
 - (a) a salary to be fixed by the Board of Internal Economy; and
 - (b) an allowance for travelling and other expenses incurred in the performance of the duties of the commissioner at a rate approved by the Board of Internal Economy.
- (2) On and from September 1, 2005, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner shall be paid a salary equal to 60% of the maximum of the Deputy Minister 2 salary range.
- (3) The Conflict of Interest Commissioner is entitled to receive economic adjustments that are provided generally to deputy ministers.
- (4) The Conflict of Interest Commissioner is eligible to be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of his or her duties in accordance with the tariff of travel and sustenance expenses provided under *The Public Service Act*, 1998 for out of scope employees in the Public Service.

DIRECTIVE #26.1

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

- (1) Section 4.4 of *The Election Act*, 1996 provides as follows:
 - 4.4(1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Chief Electoral Officer is to be paid a salary in an amount that is equal to the maximum of the senior executive II range established pursuant to subsection 19(2) of *The Public Service Act*, 1998.
 - (2) If there is a change in the maximum of the senior executive II range, the Chief Electoral Officer is entitled to receive any increase to the maximum of the senior executive II range that occurs.
 - (3) If the senior executive II range is abolished, the Board of Internal Economy shall determine the new classification to which the Chief Electoral Officer's salary is to be linked.
 - (4) If, as a result of the circumstance mentioned in subsection (2) or (3), the salary of the Chief Electoral Officer would be less than the Chief Electoral Officer's previous salary, the Chief Electoral Officer is to be paid not less than his or her previous salary.
 - (5) The Chief Electoral Officer is entitled to receive any benefits of office and economic adjustments to the salary range and to the salary that are provided generally to deputy ministers.

- (6) The Chief Electoral Officer is entitled to be paid an allowance for travel and other expenses incurred in the performance of the duties of the Chief Electoral Officer at a rate approved pursuant to *The Public Service Act, 1998* for employees of the public service.
- (7) The salary of the Chief Electoral Officer shall be paid out of the general revenue fund.
- (2) On and from September 1, 2005, the Chief Electoral Officer shall be paid a salary equal to the maximum of the Deputy Minister 2 salary range.
- (3) If there is a change in the maximum of the Deputy Minister 2 salary range, the Chief Electoral Officer is entitled to receive any increase to the maximum of the Deputy Minister 2 salary range that occurs.
- (4) The Chief Electoral Officer is entitled to receive economic adjustments that are provided generally to deputy ministers.

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

Minute # 1629

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Ms. Harpauer:

That the Board recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that the salary for the Information and Privacy Commissioner be set at the maximum of the DM 2 salary range as follows:

On and from September 1, 2005, the Information and Privacy Commissioner shall be paid a salary equal to the maximum of the Deputy Minister 2 salary range.

If there is a change in the maximum of the Deputy Minister 2 salary range, the Information and Privacy Commissioner be entitled to receive any increase to the maximum of the Deputy Minister 2 salary range that occurs.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner be entitled to receive benefits of office and economic adjustments that are provided generally to deputy ministers.

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

Minute # 1630

ITEM 5

Decision Item: Salary Range for Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That Effective September 1, 2005:

- (1) That the Clerk's salary be linked to the average salary of Deputy Ministers plus 5%.
- (2) That Directive #29 — *Clerk of the Legislative Assembly*, as attached, be approved.

DIRECTIVE #29

CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

- (1) Subject to section 2 and 3 on and from September 1, 2005, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly shall be paid a salary equal to the average salary of all deputy ministers and acting deputy ministers of the Government of Saskatchewan plus 5% calculated as at April 1 in each year.
- (2) Any benefits or payments that may be characterized as deferred income, retirement allowances, separation allowances, severance allowances or payments in lieu of notice are not to be included in calculating the average salary of all deputy ministers and acting deputy ministers pursuant to section 1.
- (3) If, as a result of a calculation made pursuant to section 1, the salary of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly would be less than the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly's previous salary, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly is to be paid not less than his or her previous salary.
- (4) The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly is entitled to receive any benefits of office and economic adjustments that are provided generally to deputy ministers.

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

Minute # 1631

ITEM 6

Decision Item: Classification Renewal for Legislative Assembly Service

The Legislative Assembly Classification Renewal proposal was presented by Ms. Linda Kaminski, Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services.

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

ITEM 7

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Budget for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

The Estimates, in the amount of \$122,000, were presented by Ms. Marilyn Borowski, Director of Financial Services, on behalf of Mr. Gerald Gerrand, Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

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

ITEM 8

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Budget for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

The Estimates, in the amount of \$949,000 were presented by Mr. Jean Ouellet, Chief Electoral Officer.

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

The Board recessed for a period of time.

The Board resumed public meeting at 11:00 a.m.

ITEM 9

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Budget for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

The Estimates, in the amount of \$660,000, were presented by Mr. Gary Dickson, Information and Privacy Commissioner.

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

The Board recessed for a short time.

The Board resumed public meetings at 1:03 p.m.

ITEM 10

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Budget for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman

The Estimates were presented by Mr. Kevin Fenwick, Provincial Ombudsman, as follows:

Budgetary: \$1,662,400
Statutory: \$ 153,600
Total: \$1,816,000

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

A communications package request was presented by Mr. Kevin Fenwick, Provincial Ombudsman, and Mr. Marvin Bernstein, Children's Advocate.

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

ITEM 11

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-1007 Budget for the Office of the Children's Advocate

The Estimates were presented by Mr. Marvin Bernstein, Children's Advocate, as follows:

Budgetary: \$1,141,200
Statutory: \$ 153,700
Total: \$1,294,900

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

ITEM 12

Decision Item: Proposed Budget for the Independent Commissioner to Review MLA Compensation

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That the Board of Internal Economy request the Lieutenant Governor in Council to appoint a commissioner pursuant to sub-section 65(2) of *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005*, to review the MLA basic indemnity authorized under Section 47 of the above Act.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1632

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Ms. Harpauer:

That a proposed budget, in the amount of \$20,000 for the independent review of the MLA annual indemnity be approved, and that the Board of Internal Economy authorize that the funding for this review be paid from the Legislative Assembly appropriation.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1633

ITEM 13

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Budget for the Office of the Legislative Assembly

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

Budgetary: \$ 6,961,000
Statutory: \$12,777,000
Total: \$19,738,000

(b) **Decision Items: B Budget Requests**

i. Chamber Lighting Upgrade

The Chamber lighting request was presented by Mr. Greg Putz, Deputy Clerk, and Mr. Darcy Hislop, Chief Technology Officer.

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

ii. Video Monitor for Government Lounge Hallway

The video monitor request was presented by Mr. Darcy Hislop.

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

iii. Cumberland Gallery Gift Shop Proposal

The subsidy request from the Royal Saskatchewan Museum Associates was presented by Ms. Jackie Schmidt and Ms. Jacquie Messer-Lepage.

The Board agreed to meet "in camera" at 2:43 p.m.

The Board resumed public meetings at 4:25 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Harper, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That effective April 1, 2006, Directive #7.2 — *Caucus Resources* be amended as follows:

In clause 3(a) and clause 3(b),

Delete the amount “\$177,296” and replace with the amount “\$300,000”.

And further, that the indexing provision specified in clause (8) not be applied on April 1, 2006, to the \$300,000 amount specified in clause 3(a) and 3(b).

And further, add new clause (6.) as follows:

Where a caucus terminates the employment of a caucus employee, the amount of money that is paid as severance to the employee in accordance with guidelines approved by the Board of Internal Economy shall not be deducted from the amount of that caucus’ annual grant that is determined pursuant to clause (3).

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

Minute # 1634

Moved by Ms. Junor, seconded by Ms. Harpauer:

That effective April 1, 2006, Directive #6 — *Constituency Assistant Expenses* be amended as follows:

(1.1) The amount specified in clause (1) is intended to fund the vacation and statutory holiday pay entitlements for constituency assistants that are entitled to vacation leave of three weeks. If a constituency assistant is entitled to vacation leave in excess of three weeks, the individual Member’s allowance shall be increased by the amount that is required to fund vacation leave in excess of three weeks.

That Directive #6.1 — *Constituency Assistant Benefits* be amended as follows:

In clause (6):

Insert the words “except for the benefits specified in clause (1)” after the words “The cost of the provisions outlined in this directive.”

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

Minute # 1635

Moved by Ms. Junor, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

Effective April 1, 2006:

That Directive #24 — *Constituency Office Equipment and Furniture Provision* be amended as follows:

(1) That clause (2) Definitions for technical support be deleted and replaced with:

“technical computer support” means remedial technical support that includes on site assistance, software/hardware troubleshooting, installation and removal of software/hardware and the design/maintenance of MLA constituency websites.

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

Minute # 1636

Moved by Ms. Junor, seconded by Ms. Harpauer.

That, effective April 1, 2006, the non-permanent position of Human Resource Advisor be converted to a permanent position.

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

Minute # 1637

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

That, effective April 1, 2006, the non-permanent position of Procurement/Support Clerk be converted to a permanent position.

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

Minute # 1638

Moved by Mr. Harper, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

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

In clause (3.1), delete the amount of “\$5,000” and replace with the amount of “\$7,500”.

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

Minute # 1639

Moved by Ms. Junor, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That clause (12) of Directive #31 — *MLA Travel and Living Expenses* be amended by deleting the reference “(c)(ii)”.

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

Minute # 1640

ITEM 6 (cont.)

Decision Item: Classification Renewal for Legislative Assembly Service

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That, effective September 1, 2005, executive government’s Management Classification Plan with a modified “Impact” factor be applied to out-of-scope aligned positions in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly Service, and

That professional classification assistance be obtained to developed modified “Impact” factor for the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly Service that reflects the type of work in a parliamentary environment.

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

Minute # 1641

ITEM 7 (cont.)

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Budget for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Moved by Mr. Harper, seconded by Ms. Harpauer:

That the 2006-2007 Estimates of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner be approved, as submitted, in the amount of \$138,000;

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

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1642

ITEM 8 (cont.)

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Budget for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Moved by Ms. Junor, seconded by Ms. Harpauer:

That the 2006-2007 Estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer be approved in the amount of \$882,000 (Statutory).

And further,

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

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1643

ITEM 9 (cont.)

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Budget for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That the 2006-2007 Estimates of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be approved in the amount of \$599,000;

And further,

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

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1644

ITEM 10 (cont.)

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Budget for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman

Moved by Ms. Junor, seconded by Ms. Harpauer:

That the 2006-2007 Estimates of the Provincial Ombudsman be approved in the amount of \$1,816,000 as follows:

Budgetary to be voted:	\$1,662,000
Statutory Budget:	\$ 154,000

And further,

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

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1645

ITEM 11 (cont.)

Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Estimates for the Office of the Children's Advocate

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

That the 2006-2007 Estimates of the Children's Advocate be approved in the amount of \$1,295,000 as follows:

Budgetary to be voted:	\$1,141,000
Statutory Budget:	\$ 154,000

And further,

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

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1646

ITEM 13 (cont.) **Decision Item: Review of the 2006-2007 Budget for the Office of the Legislative Assembly****(b) Decision Items: B Budget Requests**

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That B-Budget items be approved as follows:

Chamber Lighting	\$70,000
Video Monitor	\$ 2,000
Gift Shop	\$ 6,000

And be included in the 2006-07 Estimates for the Legislative Assembly.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1647

ITEM 13(c)(cont.) **Decision Item: Motion to Approve Budgetary and Statutory Expenditure Estimates for the Legislative Assembly**

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

That the 2006-2007 Estimates of the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$20,198,000, as follows:

Budgetary:	\$ 7,146,000
Statutory:	\$13,052,000

which includes \$43,000 of capital acquisitions;

And further,

That the 2005-06 amortization expense for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$104,000; and

That the 2006-07 amortization expense for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$112,000;

And further,

That such Estimates and amortization expense be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1648

ITEM 13(d)(cont.) **Decision Item: Motion to approve Revenue Estimates**

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That the 2006-07 Revenue Estimates for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$6,000;

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

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

Minute # 1649

**ITEM 13(b)(iii)
(cont.)** **Decision Item: Cumberland Gallery Gift Shop**

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That the management of the Cumberland Gallery Gift Shop be advised that for planning purposes, the grant for 2006-07 fiscal year is approved at \$21,000 and it is the Board's intention that the grant for the 2007-08 fiscal year be set at \$18,000.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1650

The Board adjourned at 16:52.

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
Chair

Margaret Tulloch
Secretary

[The board met at 09:00.]

The Chair: — Well good morning everybody. I ask that the meeting come to order. The first thing I want to do is welcome everybody here, day after Valentine's. I see in some cases the faces have got smiles on them; in other cases, the people are quite mellow. But I don't see anybody very aggressive here at all, at least so far. I'm very pleased about that.

A special welcome to new members on the board: Mr. Harper, Ms. Junor, and Ms. Harpauer. And welcome of course to the veterans: McMorris, Yates, and Hagel, who will . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . oh so I guess in the case of Ms. Junor, it's welcome back to the board. Welcome back to the board. Right.

You have before you a rather onerous agenda. I propose what we do is go through these in the order that they are set up unless during the meeting at some time you choose to amend them. And I think we could be flexible on that, in the order, but otherwise I'd go through them in the order that they are presented.

I'd like to know if anybody has any additions to the agenda or any amendments to the agenda items as is now. And if not, would somebody move approval of the agenda. Moved by Ms. Harpauer. And the seconder, is there a seconder to the motion to approve the agenda? Ms. Junor. Those in favour, please raise their hands. Any opposed? Motion is carried.

Minutes have been distributed to you previously — minutes for meetings 1, 2, 3, and 4 — but we do need to approve these minutes, and this is the first opportunity we have had to really take a look at them and approve them. I'll provide a moment here just in case somebody has a question on any of those minutes. And I will be asking for a motion to approve minutes 1, 2, 3, and 4.

I see nobody wanting to ask a question on anything to do with the minutes. A motion to approve as tabled then. Mr. Harper, motion to approve. A seconder? Mr. McMorris. Those who favour the motion, please raise your hand. Any opposed? Motion is carried.

Item 1 dealing with the tabling of items, the first thing I wish to table is the Legislative Assembly first, second, and third quarter financial and fiscal forecast. This needs to be officially received and approved.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I'll move we receive and approve it.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Yates that the financial and fiscal forecasts be received and approved. Is there a seconder? Mr. McMorris. Those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

Item 1(b) members' accountability and disclosure reports for the fiscal year ending March 31, these have been tabled in the legislature, and the requirement is that they also be tabled with the board. Do we need a motion for this . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No. So that's just for information purposes then.

Item 1(c), the audited financial statements, the auditor's opinion, and the schedule of fixed assets for the government and opposition caucuses for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2005, once again these have been tabled in the House, and the requirement is that they be tabled with the board members as well, no decision required.

The special warrant funding for the year 2005-2006 is approved by the board members in January. Members were asked to sign off on this individually because there was no board meeting and all of the documentation is hereby tabled with the board.

Leads us to item 2 — report of the Provincial Auditor and the memorandum of audit observations are also hereby tabled with the board. This could be discussed now, or it could be discussed at a later time or even at a special meeting and direction taken if members wish. Is there any wish to discuss that at this time? Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — No. Mr. Chair, thank you very much. I think that this would be an item that we should move to a later meeting for further discussion.

The Chair: — Are we in agreement on that? Okay, thank you.

Item 3, here we have a decision item, and the first decision item is to amend the Board of Internal Economy directives pursuant to The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005. This is under tab labelled item 3. Following the new Act . . . and I have been advised that is sort of the desire of members to have all committees' remuneration for expenses and per diems for all committees the same.

This committee used to set its own indemnity which was not always in line with what other committee members were getting. So that's what directive 17.2 is designed to do, is to set the per diem the same as other committees. What members are asked to look at is directive 17.2.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I would move that we approve new directive 17.2.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Yates that we approve directive 17.2. Is there a seconder? Oh sorry. Oh pardon me. The motion would be like this, that the new directive 17.2 . . . okay. The motion would be then, Mr. Yates:

That the new directive #19, Board of Internal Economy indemnity and expenses as attached be adopted.

Are you okay with that?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I move that.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Yates. Do we have a seconder? Mr. McMorris. Any discussion? Those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? Motion is carried.

The second decision item. There has been a change — and I'm on item 3, meeting 1/06 — there's been a change to when members who attend committee meetings can claim the committee indemnity and reimbursement for expenses.

Previously the indemnity and expenses could only be claimed if the committee meeting was held outside of session.

Under the new Act, the committee indemnity and expenses may now be claimed when the Legislative Assembly is sitting if the business of the committee occurs outside of Regina. And directive 17.2 reflects that. The suggested motion would be:

That directive 17.2, committee indemnity and expenses, be amended as attached.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Yates. Seconded by Mr. Harper. Those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? None opposed. The motion is carried unanimously.

Previous to this, there has not been any provision for payment of expenses to the Deputy Speaker should he or she have to substitute for the Speaker at these meetings. So the proposal is that directive 18.1, Speaker expenses, be renamed — the renamed directive 18.1, Speaker and Deputy Speaker expenses — and be amended as attached. Moved by Mr. Harper, seconded by Ms. Junor.

And Mr. McMorris, question on that? Question, Mr. McMorris.

Mr. McMorris: — What are we looking at? Like how often . . . I don't have any idea how often the Deputy Speaker is going to be out on tour. I mean if they had been before, I don't think it was very much.

I guess I am wondering what are we looking at here. How often is that going to happen?

The Chair: — By past practice it has happened rather infrequently, not as much as I had originally anticipated simply because it is not practical. Usually there's other duties on the part of the Deputy Speaker. But there was one time I think when the Speaker was unable to make it due to weather and had to take the Chair for a while so that's what we want to provide for. But I don't anticipate it to lead at this stage to additional expenses. It would be substitute expenses.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay.

The Chair: — Thank you.

Ready for the question? Question then about this directive:

That directive 18.1, Speaker expenses, be renamed directive #18.1, Speaker and Deputy Speaker expenses, and be amended as attached.

Those in favour? Agreed? Motion is carried.

That takes us through to item 4, decision item, salary linkage for independent officers of the Assembly. Following the recent decisions to changes in the salary levels of deputy ministers and the reclassifications thereof, we've had to visit the question of salary levels for our independent officers. Members may be aware that there is a linkage for three of these offices. That is, the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate office and the

Provincial Auditor are all paid according to statute at the average level of deputy ministers' salaries. So the ones we have to look at is the office of . . . the payment level for the Chief Electoral Officer, the Information and Privacy officer, and the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. And also linked to that is another item which would be the salary level for the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

We've looked at a couple of options. One option would be to link the Chief Electoral Officer and the Information and Privacy Commissioner to the new deputy DM [deputy minister] 2 level, and another option would be that these . . . pardon me, and the Conflict of Interest be set at 60 per cent of that level. Another option would be that the salaries of all full-time, independent legislative officers be the same, and that would mean that they would all link up to the average level.

You have the budgetary implications there for you and also the copy of two directives. Is it your . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — My desire at this time to move a motion that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be paid at the . . .

The Chair: — Could we just wait with the Clerk for a minute so that we can do this in order. We're looking at the Chief Electoral Officer, Privacy Commissioner, and the . . .

Hon. Mr. Yates: — And the Conflict of Interest . . .

The Chair: — Conflict of Interest.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I would move:

That the Privacy Commissioner and the Chief Electoral Officer and the Conflict of Interest officer pro-rated at 60 per cent be paid at the top of the level of a DM 2.

The Chair: — That which basically is our option one as provided on the decision . . . is the motion of Mr. Yates. Do we have a seconder for that motion? Mr. McMorris. Just want to make sure we have everything clear here. That's an acceptance of option one.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — And yes, it will be retroactive to September 1, 2005.

The Chair: — I'll read the motion as it's been printed here:

Effective September 1, 2005, directive #26.1, the Chief Electoral Officer, and directive 20.1, Conflict of Interest Commissioner, as attached be approved to re-establish the salary linkage for the Chief Electoral Officer and the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

I just have a question here. Why doesn't that include the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh separate motion. Yes that's right.

I would just like to clarify that for the record. We're separating . . . We're going to need two motions because the board has the authority to set these two that we've included in this motion, but the board only has the power to recommend to Executive Council to set the salary level of the Information and Privacy

Commissioner.

So the motion, once more, is:

Effective September 1, 2005, directive 26.1, the Chief Electoral Officer, and directive 20.1, Conflict of Interest Commissioner, as attached be approved to re-establish the salary linkage for the Chief Electoral Officer and the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

Are we ready for the question?

Ms. Ronyk: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the board would give me permission to speak very briefly before.

The Chair: — I would ask the Clerk to make a comment.

Ms. Ronyk: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I did want to make a plea, I guess, for the board to consider dealing with this matter and getting it settled in a final way for all instead of leaving it again at the different levels for different independent officers, because it will keep coming back.

I think all the independent officers have advanced and grown in their responsibilities, their mandate, their statutory mandates, and their responsibilities, that there's no longer really any need, any necessity, to consider them as different from one another, and that there is a strong reason to suggest that they should be treated equally to each other.

And that is to ensure that there's no message being sent that we have two tiers of independent officers, that they all speak with the weight of the Legislative Assembly behind them, that they all have equal need, responsibilities to assist the Legislative Assembly in its carrying out its accountability functions, and that they are able to do that with equal weight when they're dealing with critiquing executive government and dealing with senior executives and deputy ministers in government.

And I just make that plea that it should be considered that they all be made the average of deputy ministers at this time so that we can lay this thing to rest. That's all I wanted to say. Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's important to put on the record, from my perspective at least, why we would have two levels of pay for independent officers just as we have more than one level of pay for deputy ministers of government.

We do not pay all the deputy ministers of government the same salaries or at the same salary level. And we don't pay them all at the same salary level based on the size of the organization, based on the responsibility, based on the impact on the public. But the independent officers, like deputy ministers, have varying sizes of departments, varying responsibilities, varying number of employees to supervise, different impacts. So we're simply moving to a system that will treat independent officers in a similar manner to treating deputy ministers in departments of government.

Deputy ministers of small departments receive less remuneration than deputy ministers of large departments, and so we're simply dealing with independent officers in the same manner in which we deal with deputy ministers of government. And it's been consistent with our long-term practice to do that. And that's all we're attempting to do here is create the same fairness in the independent officers that was created with the new classification plan for deputy ministers.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any further comments? Members ready for the question?

An Hon. Member: — Question.

The Chair: — So with respect to the motion by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris, are we agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Motion is carried unanimously.

I would like at this stage to read into the record the wording of a motion that would put into effect the same sentiments with respect to the Information and Privacy Commissioner. And the motion would read as follows:

That the board recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that the salary for the Information and Privacy Commissioner be set at the maximum of the DM 2 salary range as follows:

On and from September 1, 2005, the Information and Privacy Commissioner shall be paid a salary equal to the maximum of the deputy minister 2 salary range.

If there is a change in the maximum of the deputy minister 2 salary range, the Information and Privacy Commissioner be entitled to receive any increase to the maximum of the deputy minister 2 salary range that occurs.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner be entitled to receive benefits of office and economic adjustments that are provided generally to deputy ministers.

Is there a mover? Mr. Yates. Is there a seconder? Ms. Harpauer. Is there any discussion? Ready for the question?

An Hon. Member: — Question.

The Chair: — Are we agreed upon the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed unanimously. Motion is carried.

Our next item is to deal with the salary range for the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. The Clerk has excused herself for the discussion on this item, and this is under item 5 meeting 1/06. The background information is supplied along with comparisons of what other clerks are getting. I guess there are several options, but on page 2 there are three options that are clearly identified, one being option one that the Clerk's salary

range be at the deputy minister 1 level.

Another, option 2, would be that it be at the deputy minister 2 level, which would be the same as the ones we've just passed for the Chief Electoral Officer and the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

And the third option would be that the Clerk be linked to the average of all deputy ministers, which is a slightly higher level than a DM 2 level, and that would put her in the same category as the auditor and the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman.

That's open for discussion. Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would move at this time:

That effective September 1, 2005, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly's salary be moved to the average at the deputy ministers plus 5 per cent.

The Chair: — We have the motion. I'll just . . . do we have one that's printed out that means sort of the same thing? Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm moving:

That effective September 1, 2005:

That the Clerk's salary be linked to the average salary of the deputy ministers plus 5 per cent; and

That directive 24, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, as attached, be approved.

Mr. Speaker, if I could, I'd like to speak to the motion.

As with other independent officers, we have reviewed what would be an appropriate salary for the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly based on the fact that senior executives of the government in the new management classification plan salaries were set and approved. We feel that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly is the highest officer of the Assembly and as such should be paid a salary above any of the other independent officers because in fact that position has more responsibility and authority.

So in light of that, we are moving the Clerk of the average of the deputy ministers, which is the highest salary paid to other independent officers, and giving her an additional 5 per cent for those additional responsibilities that she has as the Clerk of the Assembly. So:

That the Clerk's salary be linked to the average salary of the deputy ministers plus 5 per cent; and

That directive 29, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, as attached, be approved.

And I so move.

The Chair: — We have a mover for a motion. Is there a seconder, which I should have gotten earlier? Mr. McMorris. Is

there any further discussion?

Mr. McMorris: — Just one question.

The Chair: — Yes, Mr. McMorris.

Mr. McMorris: — When that was looked at — and I'm just trying to recall — but how does that compare with the salary range of Clerks in other provinces? We were certainly an awful lot lower, I know, going in to this readjustment, but . . .

The Chair: — I think if you look at the last page of item 5, it brings into . . . We have the comparison there. This salary level that we're talking about would take us very close to the 149.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — That would bring us around 156,000, put us in the middle of the pack across the country. The salary ranges are, as you will notice, are not all right up to date. The numbers I have are . . . When I did my own survey last week across the country, it's slightly different than this. There was some increases in other jurisdictions. But this puts us in the middle of the pack.

The Chair: — I've looked at this myself, and I would like to make a comment. I have discussed this with the Clerk, and first thing I want to say is that I think that it's overdue in terms of her getting her pay increased because we've had . . . It just has been something that has not been dealt with, and we've gotten behind considerably. And when I posed this to her, she did express to me that she felt very comfortable in being equal to the range of the others. She would prefer to stay in the range of the average and certainly is not requesting a higher salary.

But I also recognize the expression that I've heard here in terms of responsibilities of this particular independent officer. And I would concur that this independent officer I think that we often ask . . . The duties that we ask of her are often over and above the responsibility of the other independent officers.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. When looking at how we should set the Clerk's salary, we need to look at a number of factors, where the Clerk sits in comparison to other senior executives of government, because we've always had a linkage between our independent officers and the senior executives of government. But then we also need to look at what they're being paid in other jurisdictions, and just to read in the record some examples: the Northwest Territories, a much smaller jurisdiction, \$197,000, just about \$198,000, is their top of pay; Nunavut, 175,000; Ontario, 199,000; British Columbia, 180,600; Alberta, 200,000.

Now we were previously at 115,000. And so even with this — what may seem like a large increase — we are bringing our Clerk of the Assembly only into the middle of the range. Now there are some jurisdictions that are smaller. New Brunswick was at 138,000. But the majority are far in excess even of the 156 that this represents for the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in Saskatchewan.

And I have to remind people that we are going to be in a position in very short order here, within the next couple of years most likely, in a recruitment situation. And we have to be competitive. And we had to look at all those things, Mr. Chair,

as we were looking at what the salary should be.

I am grateful that the Clerk would have been satisfied with slightly less, but we do have to be competitive, and we do have to be consistent with our application of senior executive salaries across the piece. And this creates that fairness, and that's how we arrived at this particular salary for this particular position.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any other comment?

The motion before the committee as moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That effective September 1, 2005:

(1) That the Clerk's salary be linked to the average salary of deputy ministers plus 5 per cent; and

(2) That directive #29, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, as attached, be approved.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Are we agreed on the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? The motion is carried unanimously. Then we can proceed to item 6, classification renewal for the Legislative Assembly Service.

I'm going to ask Clerk Gwenn Ronyk if she would please give us a little briefing on this request, and just to look at some of the options so members can be familiarized with the issue that we are faced with within the Legislative Assembly.

Ms. Ronyk: — Mr. Speaker, can I ask Linda Kaminski to do that?

The Chair: — Oh sure, okay.

Ms. Kaminski: — Just to briefly outline, the item we have identified for you is the executive government implementing a new classification plan, the MCP [management classification and compensation plan] plan September 1, 2005, and the Legislative Assembly Service has linked its classification of its employees to executive government classification plans.

And so presently we have a group of employees within the Legislative Assembly Service who are linked to the in-scope class plan, and we have a group that's linked to the out-of-scope class plan. So as a result of the new MCP plan being implemented September 1, 2005, the Legislative Assembly undertook to review its out-of-scope classifications.

We had difficulty in looking at the executive government out-of-scope plan because that particular plan was designed to directly measure the delivery of programs and services to the public of Saskatchewan. And we find that there's a very major fundamental difference with the Legislative Assembly Service in that our work is to directly support the Speaker and the

members of the Legislative Assembly. And as a result of the difficulty that we had in trying to apply the MCP plan, particularly one factor of the MCP plan, the impact factor — and the board item goes through and describes the impact factor — as a result of our difficulty, we came to the conclusion that this very specifically designed executive government plan was very difficult to apply in our legislative environment.

And so we prepared three options for the board. The one option, option no. 1 on page 2, indicates that we obtain some classification assistance to review other parliamentary service classification systems and we adapt such a plan for all of the positions within the Legislative Assembly Service. Option 2 is that we implement MCP with a modified impact factor for out-of-scope aligned positions in the Legislative Assembly Service and that we have a consultant assist us in modifying such an impact factor. And option 3 is to retain the existing management and professional class plan within the Legislative Assembly service as it is more of a generic type plan and it's already been modified by the Legislative Assembly Service.

We have outlined some cost options on page 3 of the decision item, and I'm just going to skip over those for the time being and identify to you our recommendation on page 4. Our preferred option, option no. 1, which would provide the best results for the Legislative Assembly, is if we were to obtain a generic classification plan that would be applied for all positions within the Legislative Assembly Service. So that is our preferred option 1. And our alternate option no. 3 is to maintain existing management and professional class plan.

Now having said that, I'm not sure if the Clerk wants to add any comments to that or if we want to look at the cost summaries or if there's any questions by the board members.

The Chair: — Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have a number of questions but my first question is, currently all positions in the Legislative Assembly, both in- and out-of-scope, are aligned in comparison with those in the same classification systems as the civil service of Saskatchewan, correct?

Ms. Kaminski: — Correct.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay. And a new independent classification system for the Legislative Assembly would replace that alignment.

Ms. Kaminski: — There wouldn't be as of a direct alignment. Certainly in a new classification plan, what consultants do is they do market surveys, and obviously the biggest market survey here in Saskatchewan is the executive government. So certainly the public service would be a major pool or a major market factor for us. But the other things that a market survey would look at would be not only executive government but private as well as across the country.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay thank you. And option 3, as you have put forward as an alternate, would retain an outdated classification system which would no longer have direct linkage to the current civil service plans as well. Is that true?

Ms. Kaminski: — That would be correct that it would be not directly linked any longer because it is an outdated plan within the civil service. That would be correct.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay. So only option 2 would retain some linkage.

Ms. Kaminski: — Only option 2 would obtain the most direct linkage, yes.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay thank you. Those are my questions.

The Chair: — What is the advantage of option 3 then?

Ms. Kaminski: — The advantage of option 3 is that the existing management and professional classification plan was designed to evaluate a wide range of positions. At the time it was designed back in the '80s, and implemented in the early to mid-'80s, there were many more positions within the out-of-scope public service. And what has happened more recently in the last five years approximately is there was a scope review done within government.

And as a result of the scope review, many positions moved from the out-of-scope classification back into the union or into the in-scope classification. As a result there's much fewer positions. I believe off the top of my head — and I might be not totally accurate — but about 2,000 positions remain out of scope compared to 6,000.

So the scope review occurred within government. They designed a new classification plan, and so the new classification plan is measuring those more at the lower levels of the MCP plan and those at the higher levels, but it really wasn't designed with the intention of having too many positions at the mid-levels whereas the existing management and professional class plan certainly was designed as a tool to adequately measure all levels more reasonably.

The Chair: — Mr. Harper.

Mr. Harper: — I have one short question here. Options, in your opinion, does option 3 address the government's initiative to achieve pay equity?

Ms. Kaminski: — No it does not. The MCP plan was designed to achieve pay equity. So gender basis as well as working conditions, safety, hazardous occasions in work. So indeed MCP plan is a pay-equity-based plan.

Mr. Harper: — Just so I get this clear, it does not meet the government's initiative to reach pay equity whether it be . . .

Ms. Kaminski: — The M and P plan [management and professional pay schedule] was not designed with pay equity, so no. Only MCP.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Any further discussion on this?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — We'll return to this issue later in the day.

The Chair: — Are we agreed on that then? We're going to come back to this later. Thank you. Decision on that item is postponed until a later time in the meeting. And we then go to item 8 . . . oops 7, item 7.

Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

The Chair: — Now members may recall that item 7 deals with the proposed budget for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

Members may recall that last year Mr. Gerrand requested if we would just present his budget on his behalf. Members agreed and he has done so again this year. It saves him coming to the meeting. His budget is very straightforward, and so I've indicated to him that we would be prepared to present it on his behalf and . . . So do you want to have a little presentation from . . . or are members satisfied? Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I'd simply open the floor for questions, Mr. Speaker. My question is, in light of our just recent motion adjusting and aligning the independent officers with the new out-of-scope executive pay schedules, what is the new dollar figure request for 2006-07? It would be greater than the 122,000 requested. Could I get that new figure please?

The Chair: — The new figure would be 138,000.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay so a little bit . . . Thank you. And so his new personal services will move this request from 75 to . . .

The Chair: — Ms. Borowski, could you just . . . is that possible for you to answer that question?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — It moves to 91,000; I'm aware of what it is. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — That's his or that's the personal services total?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — That's his new remuneration.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Ninety-one.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Ninety-one.

The Chair: — That would reflect an increase of 16,000.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Sixteen thousand which is 60 per cent of the . . . [inaudible] . . . yes okay, thank you.

The Chair: — Are there any other questions with respect to item 8? And I'm assuming that members are — item 7, pardon me — are looking at this stage for discussion and asking questions and are not prepared to make decision items at this moment.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — That's correct; we'll review all these later.

The Chair: — Okay. Any further comments on the proposal for the budget of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner? None. Then we will move then, thank you, we'll move to item 8.

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

The Chair: — Item 8 is the review of the 2006-2007 budget item for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, and I invite our Chief Electoral Officer, Jean Ouellet, to the table. And I invite also him to bring anybody he may wish to have seated with him. And you all have the item before you and I would, Mr. Ouellet, I would at this stage invite you to introduce us to your officials.

Mr. Ouellet: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, members of the board. With me this morning, I have, to my left, the assistant Chief Electoral Officer, Dave Wilkie. And to my right behind me, I have Brent Nadon, the manager of election finance and . . . the manager of election finance, I shouldn't give him another title. Then I have to my left, Pam Scott, the manager of elections operations and communications.

Thank you. I have a brief presentation, and I'll be glad to take your questions after. You've probably all received the reports on plans and priority, which is our estimates for 2006-07. This is a new format for us to provide our budget estimates. This report focuses on our most significant priorities and the benefit that Elections Saskatchewan intends to provide to the people of Saskatchewan.

We're committed to achieve and maintain a state of readiness to deliver electoral events whenever they may be called and to improve on the delivery of electoral event as well. Our aim is to institute a culture of change and modernization in the conduct of electoral events, in Saskatchewan, through a made-in-Saskatchewan electoral process that responds to the need of all our stakeholders.

In the past, the Provincial Auditor has urged the office to link its annual report to outcomes and results. In June 2005, the office approved a strategic plan for 2005 to 2011. In this manner, this and future reports and plans and priorities will also directly be linked to the strategic plan.

So our priorities for 2006-07 includes developing an information technology strategy, implementing an election finance recording system, and preparing a plan to implement a permanent electronic voters list. The office is also responsible for providing public education and information programs, as well as support on electoral matters to the public, members of the legislature, political parties, candidates, and other stakeholders.

This role is particularly relevant in light of recent amendment passed by the legislature in May 2005 and we understand will soon be proclaimed in force. So our priority on the education side for 2006-07 will focus on setting up a contact centre to be operative through the next general election and planning outreach efforts targeting youth, as well as Aboriginal electors.

On page 3 of the reports on plans and priority, you will find the office's resource requirements for fiscal 2006-07. The office's cash requirements for 2006-07 amounts to 949,000 of which 75,000 is to be allocated to the acquisition of capital assets — and I'll address that in a moment — leaving a total expense of \$874 for the year . . . 874,000 for the year, I should say, which represent approximately 83,000 increase or 10 per cent over the

current year.

The growth is explained as follows.

An increase of approximately \$58,000 results from changes in the compensation of the office staff. In July 2005, the provincial government approved new compensation plan for senior executive and other non-union management, professional employees. The new out-of-scope plan was the final stage in the government's commitment to equal pay for work of equal value in public service. A market lag was identified as being the greatest for high level managers and executive positions . . . [inaudible] . . . 15 per cent for managerial positions and from 15 to 40 per cent for positions in the senior executive group. Upon allocation to the new plan, classification level and salary for out-of-scope employees have changed. The impact on the office's budget is approximately 14.8 per cent when all implemented.

An increase of approximately \$6,000 results from changes made to the schedule of fees paid to election officials. The last time a revision was made to the schedule of fees was 1999.

Should the next electoral event take place in 2007 as frequently speculated in the media, the amount of fees paid to election workers would have experienced an eight-year lag or approximately a 20 per cent loss in purchasing powers. This would make recruiting election workers even more difficult for returning officers. Also worthy of note, some of the fees paid to election workers through the current schedule of fees violate the minimum wage announced by Minister Higgins at that time that were effective on September 1, 2005. This is why the office recommended a review to the regulatory schedule of fees. This change will be effective upon the proclamation of the amendments to The Election Act.

For the board's information, these changes increases most fees by an amount of change in CPI [consumer price index] since 1999 which is approximately 16 per cent. They were published in part II of *The Saskatchewan Gazette* of December 23, 2005.

Finally, an increase of approximately 18,000 is as a result of the need to enhance training to our returning officers because of upcoming technological improvements to be made in the delivery of electoral events.

In April 2004, our Premier appointed an all-party staff committee to review the electoral law and propose changes to it. In putting forth its proposal for amendment, the committee recognized that some of the change would require increase to the staffing, training, and resource of Elections Saskatchewan.

With respect to the \$75,000 to be allocated acquisitions of capital assets, these assets need to be put in place to support the implementation of a made-in-Saskatchewan permanent register of electors.

At the time of second reading of the amendment made to the electoral legislation, Mr. Justice stated that one of the most significant recommendations of the committee was the development of permanent electronic voters list. Under the Bill, regulations will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to establish a process to ensure that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate

voters list. With about a year and a half before the next general election, we now must put in place the infrastructure required to support this initiative.

I thank you for your time and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair: — Well thank you very much for the presentation. And yes, members, this is an opportunity to not only take a look at the budget but anything related to it. Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have a number of questions I guess. One is, when I go through on page 17 of the base year estimates . . . and you wouldn't have had the benefit of knowing this, but just a few minutes ago we set salary ranges for the independent officers and your submission is 16,000-and-some dollars I guess short of what the range was set.

If you were to get the budget as you presented, would you be able to absorb that \$16,000 in your existing budget I guess is one of my questions.

Mr. Ouellet: — When the budget was prepared, we took the best estimates we could have. We were rather delicate in our estimates with respect to the officer's salary. We took the first level which is a DM 1 which seems to have been reasonable at that time.

The answer is we will have to absorb it. We stand by what we request.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay thank you. Going to now page 2 or page 18, the second page of the base year estimates, in your request for legal services it appears that there's a \$10,000 annual request that's been submitted for the last number of years, but the actual utilization is significantly less than that.

Is there an anticipation that your legal requirements are going to be greater this year than previous years or . . . I'm just looking for some explanation as to what your request is.

Mr. Ouellet: — Sure, sure. I can tell you that for fiscal 2005-06 we have used up that allocation and more because we presently have matters before the Human Rights Commission that will now go further to the full tribunal at this time. So we will use that amount this year and the subsequent year as well.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay thank you. Further down the page under systems consulting, it would appear that we actually used nothing in '04-05, request in '05-06 at thirty-seven five, and this year requested 36,500. Can you give me some background on that particular item and request and why at that level?

Mr. Ouellet: — The previous year, you may recall, you remember of that board, and I did come with a request for \$30,000 in excess of the 75 that used to appear there before, for the purpose of studying the possibility of implementing an electronic candidate return which is reporting of the candidates' information electronically. And that has been in use this year. We're working on the development and will be used as well next year, as we will be able to conduct focus groups with stakeholders so that we don't impose them a system but that we

develop together a system.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you. I just have two or three other questions, Mr. Chair. Page 19 under communication development costs, again we had an estimate 2004-05 of \$10,000, no utilization in that year. Last year we had a request for \$10,000 and this year a \$10,000 request. Could you give me just a little bit of background on this particular issue?

Mr. Ouellet: — As you may recall I came in to the post very late in 2004-05. So the previous CEO [chief executive officer] did not use the allocation. We are using it to develop a new website. Since we have had amendments to The Election Act, we have to change our information to comply with the new provisions. And for next year, as indicated, one of our priorities is obviously to outreach young voters as well as Aboriginals. And we can do that through, you know, our returning officers, and that's why the money's still there.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — All right. Pardon me, I missed one item just above that. Under general contractual services, we have a request in 2005-06 for \$75,000; this year a request for 30; in '04-05 request of 10,000 and a utilization of 30,000. Could you just give me some reference where we are in regards to that as well?

Mr. Ouellet: — This particular item coded 529000 is sometimes confused with the top one on page 18 as well which is specialized technical services. It's sometimes very difficult to make the distinctions between the two, what is professional versus a general contractual. So we've allocated the amount to the two. If you add the 30 and the 42, you come up to the 72, 75. And we will require these funding because of the project that we're trying to put into place, an electronic voters list.

We don't intend to develop any software ourselves. Those are fairly costly usually, and we don't have the technical in office at this time, in our office. So we've had offers from other jurisdictions, Canadian jurisdictions — we even had an offer from Ontario, for example, from Alberta, as well as from British Columbia — to make use of their intellectual property when it comes to software.

We have commissioned a study to see what would be the best fit for Saskatchewan since we want to implement a made-in-Saskatchewan project. And we're at this time studying the report from that study, and we'll be able to implement. So we need, I would say . . . There's nothing that will fit perfectly. There will always be a certain amount of customization that is required because legislation between jurisdictions all have a different twist. And so, you know, those are the monies that would be allocated to that task.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you. Under code 531800, duplication services, we have a \$10,000 request this year. The year in which we have some reference to utilization would indicate about a \$3,700 usage. Is it anticipated to . . . And we have no idea what last utilization was, I guess. Do you have any idea what . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — Well we've had a certain impact inasmuch as not all our forms are printed. Some are produced through high-speed duplicators. And we have had amendments,

substantial amendments, to the absentee provisions of the Act. And we have had to reproduce . . . Some of the forms which were already on the shelf, you know, will have to be changed and these are the amounts.

Offhand, do we have, Brent, what we used this year?

Mr. Nadon: — I don't have any exact numbers, but it's quite a bit higher than the 4,000 last year.

Mr. Ouellet: — Right.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 20 under general travel code, we had a request in 2004-05 of \$17,500, a utilization of \$230 and a consistent request for \$17,500 each of the last two years. Could you give me an update what our utilization was last year and what's anticipated and the need for that great a travel budget in the upcoming year.

Mr. Ouellet: — Sure. This particular item in the budget is allocated solely for returning officers, basically their travel and any expenses for training and so on. Last year, which is for this current year, we were able to limit travel. I did meet the returning officers, but we did not have to bring them overnight, for example. We set our meetings so that we were able to see them all in an afternoon.

Next year we intend to give them at least three days of training since we're going to put into place some election management systems, so we need to train them as to how to use them. And therefore this particular item is strictly for their travel, their accommodation, their meals, and that's why it's still there.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay, thank you. And the most significant new item, I guess, is the computer hardware capitalized at \$75,000.

Mr. Ouellet: — Correct.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I know you gave us some background on this previously. My question is a little different, I guess, from that. What would the impact be if you didn't receive that \$75,000 in this fiscal year?

Mr. Ouellet: — Well every time we make changes in a process of an electoral event there's a risk. There's always a risk of creating chaos down the road. So what you try to do is you try to manage that risk by having a lead time and some time for testing purposes. Usually by-elections will allow us to do some of that testing.

If the equipment or the assets that are required — those would be basically servers — would be changes, minor changes to the office to accommodate the servers' wiring, and also customization of certain software packages, if they're not in place now where we have still a year and a half, as speculated in the media, before the next election, if we don't get them until next year, it's half a year. So then it becomes more dangerous to make the change without testing and without being able to properly train the returning officers on it. So there is impact.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — So just a quick follow-up question. Before the next election this hardware is required, period.

Mr. Ouellet: — That's correct. That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you.

Mr. Ouellet: — And the longer the lead time, the better it is.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Yates. The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome, Mr. Ouellet. Good to have you here. I was interested in some of the things related to the requirements flowing out of the legislative changes that were made and then as we look ahead to the electronic voter system.

Just a general question first of all. Related to the changes to the elections Act, how is your office progressing on those matters which will require changes in procedure or format?

Mr. Ouellet: — And forms and so on.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes.

Mr. Ouellet: — We were proceeding on the basis that we were anticipating proclamation early in 2006 and that's what we've been getting ready for. And for all intent and purposes, we have a couple more forms that are coming on the deck, on our deck, next week. And that's it. We're ready.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So you're not entirely but very, very close then.

Mr. Ouellet: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay, good. Now going to page 17, the bottom line, the returning officers. What is the adjustment? I'm assuming this is the funds required for the retention of returning officers. Am I correct on that?

Mr. Ouellet: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes. And what's the adjustment that's taking place there?

Mr. Ouellet: — Under The Election Act returning officers are paid a stipend every year.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Right.

Mr. Ouellet: — It used to be 550. And with the new tariff of fees this will be . . . used to be, sorry, seven . . .

A Member: — Seven sixty-eight.

Mr. Ouellet: — It's going up to 768. What was it before?

A Member: — Six sixty.

Mr. Ouellet: — Six sixty. Sorry.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Oh okay.

Mr. Ouellet: — And it's going to 768. And what is in that particular sixty-seven nine forty-four is the three days of training with their stipend.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. So that's the retainer plus training.

Mr. Ouellet: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. But not travel because that's a different . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — Travel is in the . . . further in general travel code.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Right, okay. And how did you get from 660 to 768? What was the formula you used to move to the 768?

Mr. Ouellet: — We used the CPI which was exactly 16 per cent.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. So that's what it was. All right. Thank you.

Mr. Ouellet: — We have not basically increased stipend. We've just transferred it into 2005 dollars basically.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Thank you. Now on the electronic voters list, I'm interested, I guess I'm interested understanding the readiness of the system to accommodate the needs of an election. Can you just briefly describe to me then where the information is inputted in . . . inputted from, I should say, and how current you would anticipate the electronic voters list to be as compared to the reality of who is living where at a given point in time when a writ is issued.

Mr. Ouellet: — I guess register 101 is . . . Basically a register is three modules. You would have a geography which would tell you where the polls are. You would have a database of address which would link to geography as to where someone at a particular address votes. And then you have a third part which is the list of names and address and birthdates and whatever else which links through all the other modules as to who lives at a particular address. Generally addresses don't move; voters move. So those are the parts of a register of electors.

In Saskatchewan there is not a single database of address that exists. ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] has a fairly solid database of addresses for some part of the provinces. Cities themselves — Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw — have database of their addresses, and then . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — In those four cities, how current would their databases be?

Mr. Ouellet: — They are very current. They are very good because we keep receiving new plans and new streets and new locations from Saskatoon and from Regina as well. So there is no single database of address. So that would prevent us, for example, to borrow the federal register of electors and just populate our databases. We could not do that because we wouldn't know where the people vote because of the link that

does not exist.

The best approach to making a register of electors then is the one that was taken by most jurisdictions that have gone to a register of electors, i.e., the last enumeration that is done. And ideally it would be better to do it outside an electoral period, because if you do it inside an electoral period, you have 10 days; you have really to rush it. If you do it outside an electoral period, then you can do a much better systematic population of your databases.

However, on the other hand, what is the best time to do that last enumeration? Well the closer you are to an event, the better it is. But we do not have fixed election dates. So ideally it's within six months. If you go beyond six months of an electoral event, then your database is about 20 per cent out of date. You have people that have died. You have people that have moved. You have new entrants in this province. You have exits from this province. And so the closer to the event, the better it is done.

We have looked at the systems in BC [British Columbia], the systems in Ontario, and the system in Saskatchewan . . . Alberta, sorry, for Saskatchewan. And all in all the registers basically contain the same information: name, address, you know, birthdate, telephone numbers, whatever.

Some are more sophisticated than others. They are linked . . . For example, some have geographical links, some do not. How the system operates: BC's system, for example, operates across a government network which, you know, is not necessarily our case here. The Ontario system operates totally remotely from everything. The returning officer has no control.

Then we have the Alberta system which to us is very attractive because it's, you know, in terms of the province, it's very similar geography, very similar two or three major cities and then some smaller communities, and it also operates over technology — the Internet technology — which is a much better approach inasmuch as data would be entered locally by the enumerators or by the returning officers and . . . [inaudible] . . . central system. And everybody is connected in the central system. If one part fails, we can still operate from head office the same system on behalf of the returning office through either communications such as fax or whatever. So to us we are more sort of, feel more closer if you wish, to the Alberta system than any other system. But we are, as I said, we are in the process of studying the recommendations and we will make a decision very shortly.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Now when do you see, by what date do you see Saskatchewan having a functioning electronic database system, the voter database system?

Mr. Ouellet: — Well if we put the infrastructure in place, any time thereafter, after customization, with minor customization, we can be operational. However as indicated I would certainly prefer to have it closer to the election through our last enumeration and that would be my recommendation, certainly.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — At this point do you have a date in mind?

Mr. Ouellet: — We're looking probably in the summer of

2007, somewhere around there either before or shortly thereafter. That would be the best time.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — How far in advance would you have to make the decision in order to have your electronic registry in place?

Mr. Ouellet: — Well the returning officers have to be in place obviously. As indicated, if it is done outside an electoral period there's a little more time to do a much better job in terms of collecting the information. So early in, you know, the beginning of the fiscal year I guess.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — What is your source of identifying a specific voter with a specific address?

Mr. Ouellet: — That would be door-to-door enumeration, our last enumeration.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — You're not drawing from any, any existing databases at all?

Mr. Ouellet: — No, no. Because what we start with is, as you indicated, an electronic voters list.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Right.

Mr. Ouellet: — There's a further step after the next general election which will be transforming that electronic voters list into a permanent registered elector. Because then we will have to negotiate agreements with potentially Health, vital statistics, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] to get sources of information to be able to make the changes to the records because, as I indicated, people change addresses; addresses do not. And so therefore generally people in this province will change their address with Health and with SGI if they have a driver's licence obviously. And we'll get information, we'll try to negotiate information with Immigration Canada for new Canadians, new citizens and so on.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. One of the areas where voters lists in Saskatchewan have been infamously poor has been on First Nations communities. What do you intend to do to ensure that First Nations communities will be accurately enumerated and what will be done differently to, not just to improve it, but to substantially improve it?

Mr. Ouellet: — We'll certainly recommend to our returning officers outreach initiatives with the leadership of First Nations and Métis so that, you know, the effort is made to obtain greater accuracy in our information.

You know, it's not necessarily just taking a list that is published at Indian Affairs. As we know, most of the people don't live on the reserve in these instances. And then we have areas such as, for example, we have Regina Elphinstone-Centre which in the last election showed an enumeration of 6,000 people where it should have been at least 10 or 11. So we have a lot of work to do. We have some time to do it and we'll certainly train better our ROs [returning officer] to outreach with respect to that.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So it would seem then beginning the enumeration process substantially in advance of the anticipated

writ period is something you'll intend to do.

Mr. Ouellet: — Is ideal.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And see producing much better results than we've historically had.

Mr. Ouellet: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Now the remunerations for enumerators, is that in here somewhere?

Mr. Ouellet: — I have the tariff of fees. No, it's not. It appears in the tariff of fees. Currently enumerators receive . . . Okay. They receive the basic fee of \$100. They have training of \$30. And they have 30 cents in an urban context for each name; 45 cents in a rural context for each name, and they usually set one-day revision for \$30. That's the current fees. The new fees which probably should attract more individuals, I would think, their basic fee goes to 120. In an urban area, they get 40 cents a name, in rural 55 cents a name. When they sit on revision day, they will get \$50 and \$35 for school and instruction. So it's a much more attractive fee. And we also . . . It has been difficult in the past to obtain enumerators or poll workers as well.

One of our concerns, and we have to write to the minister on that, is a lot of our workers are individuals that are on social assistance. It certainly helps them, you know, tie the end on that particular month. However they suffer. Their benefits are reduced because of the amounts that they do earn through this particular process. So we want to write to the minister of Social Services . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Community Resources.

Mr. Ouellet: — Community Resources to obviously exempt these particular . . . [inaudible] . . . which he has the power to do. It certainly would help us in the recruitment of individuals.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. And the category then . . . I'm assuming that First Nations communities would fall into the category of rural, the enumeration.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes hopefully. There's . . . I don't think there's too many urban reserves. There might be . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — There will be some.

Mr. Ouellet: — There might be one in Saskatoon and one in Yorkton I believe.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — But I don't know if they're . . . I'm not sure if there are residents if attached to that.

Mr. Ouellet: — But you're right; they're generally rural areas.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Well I thank you very much for your responses. I wish you well, and I particularly wish you substantially increased success in the enumeration in those communities which have traditionally suffered from very, very weak enumeration.

It's in nobody's best interest and in everyone's worst interest to

not have people enumerated, to be missed because unfortunately I think the past practice will tell us that in the number of those areas also people are therefore . . . are also consequently hesitant to come forward on the election day for self-enumeration in order to vote. And their voice simply just gets missed in the democratic process, and I appreciate your important attention to that. Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Hagel. The Chair recognizes Mr. Harper.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, sir. I think you've already answered this question, but I just want to ask it for clarification purposes. On page 20, code 550100 credit forms, you had estimated 51,000; the actual was 91,905. Could you tell us what transpired to cause this?

Mr. Ouellet: — You said on page 20? I'm sorry.

Mr. Harper: — Yes page 20. Printed forms, under supplies and services.

Mr. Ouellet: — Okay. Normally the restocking of forms for election readiness purposes is done over a longer period of time. Following the November election in 2003, which resulted in a majority of two seats, then you have to accelerate readiness of the election. And that is the purpose why so much was spent versus what was originally requested. You have to replenish because you have to conduct an election at any time.

Mr. Harper: — It's a case of readiness.

Mr. Ouellet: — That's correct.

Mr. Harper: — Okay. Just a little further down in the same category, code 555080, miscellaneous, and it was estimated at 2,000. The actual was 29,000.

Mr. Ouellet: — That's correct. Those would be pens, sticky notes that we have to provide to the polling places, and so on. So it's again a replenishment of the supplies that are required to conduct the election. And same as the form, it is done immediately as opposed to being done over time.

Mr. Harper: — Okay. And can you give us a fairly accurate number of your current level of expenditures, where you are currently?

Mr. Ouellet: — We're right on budget right now. Our forecast is not to exceed.

Mr. Harper: — Can you give us a figure, a dollar figure that would reflect that?

Mr. Ouellet: — Seven hundred and ninety for . . .

Mr. Harper: — Is that what you anticipate being at on March 31?

Mr. Ouellet: — That's correct.

Mr. Harper: — But could you give us a figure of where you're at today? An approximate figure of where you're at today?

Mr. Nadon: — About 690,000.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. The Chair recognizes Mr. McMorris.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just one quick question. I was interested when you said about you could be up and running probably in the summer of '07 with the electronic system. If an election was called beforehand, then you'd just rely on what had been done before. Or how would you deal with that situation?

Mr. Ouellet: — We could certainly be ready before that. It's just that we might accelerate certain processes and trainings. It's just that you try to forecast as close as you can to the event because you wouldn't like to conduct an enumeration a year ahead of time because 20 per cent of . . . will be changes.

Mr. McMorris: — Yes. So there will be an upcoming by-election, you know, sometime in June-July, in that area, probably June. The process then . . . what does the process then . . . it won't be an electronic record at all. It will just be the old format.

Mr. Ouellet: — It would be an enumeration as it is now. There is no regulation in place in as much as to be able to create a register. There is a provision in the Act, section 33, 30 I think I believe, where you can conduct an enumeration outside an electoral period. But that's where it is. It doesn't give you the tools to amend or to change that particular list. It doesn't tell you what to do with it either. So we have to obviously await the regulations. We will certainly offer advice on the regulations, and that's where we're at.

So the potential by-election that will take place in Weyburn-Big Muddy, should the seat become vacant at the end of February, then will be conducted with an enumeration during the electoral period, the first 10 days.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay just one last question then, for my own knowledge then. This spring of '07 would be very tight for an election call, but probably could be accommodated.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes, that's correct.

Mr. McMorris: — Great, thank you.

Mr. Ouellet: — If there's no federal election.

Mr. McMorris: — Order the signs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — Thank you very much, members. Mr. Ouellet, I do want to state on the record that we certainly do value the integrity that our electoral system is held in. And when we listen to the news on a daily basis of what's happened to electoral systems in other parts of the world, I think we feel very comfortable that the tradition we've established here and that you are asked to continue is very, very highly valued.

But also in that context I want to just bring to the members' attention a little historical vignette from the election that was held 100 years ago — the first election for the province of Saskatchewan.

And particularly from the area that I come from in the area of Prince Albert, there was, during the course of the election the local electoral officer appointed three . . . he deputized three people to go out and to conduct a vote in the remote areas north of Prince Albert and sent them out four days before the election day without notifying one of the candidates. Apparently when the vote was counted — these people did not return that quickly — and the first vote was counted; candidate A won by 50 votes. After ten days when these votes were returned, there was about 150 votes returned that were added to the total. Candidate B was given a victory by something like 70 votes. And what followed after that was a considerable dispute and was actually taken before a judge. And all the judge could do was count the ballots and couldn't decide on anything else. The member that received the additional quote "votes" eventually resigned, and I guess some people paid some heavy fines.

The question I have is, is there still authority for a local electoral officer to deputize somebody four days before an election day to go out and collect votes?

Mr. Ouellet: — No. I mean, our process is well in tune now whereby there's always that element of security attached to it which is the observance of candidates' representatives, and generally nothing is conducted without either the presence of those representatives, if they are there. If not, there is provisions whereby electors become witnesses to the whole process. And so we have integrity in our system now.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, it just kind of reminds me of one thing, one more question if I may to Mr. Ouellet. Once you've established the first electronic voters list — obviously that'll become the basis from which you'll move forward — do you ever anticipate Saskatchewan being at a point in which there is no live enumeration taking place, that the voters list is constructed purely from information from other sources? Or do you see the — I suppose it would be the confirmation, largely confirmation — but additional updating as being a permanent part of the election preparation and preparation of the voters lists?

Mr. Ouellet: — Right. Those are two different processes. For example, you have Alberta, our neighbour, where every three years — in the third year of an election for example — they will go door to door to confirm or change information in the register of an elector. That's one possibility; that's one process.

There's another process whereby the information is updated, you know, sometimes very successfully, sometimes less so. But if we'd look at, for example Quebec, Quebec has access to information from Health — the non-medical information, strictly just addresses and names and so on — and they achieve an accuracy of about 96 per cent on the list, which is even better than enumeration. So if we can have access to good data in order to update our information, we would not need to do any further enumeration, and that's where the savings would start

kicking in at every election.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well not only savings I hear you suggesting but, even more importantly perhaps, the accuracy.

Mr. Ouellet: — Correct, yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks.

Mr. Ouellet: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Are there any further questions of Mr. Ouellet? If not then thank you very much for appearing before this committee. And I ask members whether they anticipate whether they may have further questions or would be prepared just to contact Mr. Ouellet by phone if necessary. Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I think it's adequate to contact by phone if necessary if there are further questions.

The Chair: — Then in that case, thank you very much to you, Mr. Ouellet, and to your officials for attending here this morning.

Is it the pleasure of the members to have a brief recess?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Yes, 10 minutes or so.

The Chair: — We will then adjourn for a 10-minute recess.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

The Chair: — The meeting will come to order once again, and I invite to the table the officer of the information and privacy commission, Mr. Dickson. And I invite you to introduce your officials and proceed with your presentation.

Mr. Dickson: — Thanks very much. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and members of the board. With me this morning is our office manager, Candace Malowany. And one of our portfolio officers to my right, Diane Aldridge, and then right behind me is Sandra Barreth, our newest portfolio officer who started just November of last year. And I should just mention a portfolio officer is the job title for somebody in our office who does investigations and undertakes training and training programs.

Mr. Chairman, this is the third budget that I've had the privilege to present as Saskatchewan's first full-time Information and Privacy Commissioner, and it occurred to us since we've given you a great deal of written material to review, since the board has some new members, I thought it would be useful to try and highlight our key messages and see if we could compress our message by using a few PowerPoint slides.

So with your permission, Mr. Chairman, what I propose to do is . . . we have a handout, a hard copy handout of the slides. I don't plan on spending very long with them, but I think they help to make our message.

I'll tell you that since this is clearly not a stand-pat budget, in

fact I'm going to try in the next 10 minutes to make them 10 persuasive minutes and attempt to make the case for a 35 per cent increase in the budget for the Information and Privacy Commissioner office.

Members will recall that our office oversees three important provincial statutes: The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or the FOIP Act; the Local Authority FOIP Act; and then the third one is the new law, The Health Information Protection Act, or HIPA.

And I remind board members that we presented to you in January 2005 a three-year business plan that would take us through to 2008 and that identified five core business areas and approximately 50 different key performance measures. The business plan is at the back of the book that we've distributed, and our assessment of our performance measured up against that business plan are set out in pages 2 to 6 of the booklet.

Now when Ms. Junor introduced Bill 29, The Health Information Protection Act back in the Assembly in April 1999, she moved second reading and she said something very prophetic. She stated and I quote:

The Health Information Protection Act is a result of many years of work and of extensive consultation. It is an important piece of legislation that will take health information practices forward into the next century. It protects the privacy of individuals [and I stress the following] while at the same time providing enough flexibility to ensure information is available when needed.

We've recently been reminded in this province of how important it is that health information be shared where that is appropriate to ensure timely access to necessary health services. Last month there were a number of articles, and what you see are the headlines from the *Leader-Post* and the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*. The story reported a doctor in Moose Jaw needed to provide an antidote to a patient who had overdosed on prescription medication. To give the proper amount of the antidote, the doctor needed to know how much of the drug had already been given the patient. The patient was unconscious, and family members couldn't give the information required.

Now we're awaiting a preliminary report from the Five Hills and the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, and there apparently is some issue with some of the facts as they were reported in the media. But I give you the headlines because I think what it does, in a powerful way, is it underscores the serious consequences when health providers don't have a comfortable understanding of the privacy laws. When it comes to health information, misunderstanding and ignorance of legal requirements can have genuinely catastrophic consequences.

As I reported to you, members, early in January, our offices toured four different health regions, and we found that although HIPA was proclaimed more than two and a half years ago, many health care workers still do not have a comfortable understanding of what personal health information they can share. Consequently we've made HIPA a major priority of our office, but I must tell you we don't have the resources to adequately meet our statutory responsibility. You will see in schedule 2 there are over 2,000 trustees and trustee

organizations in Saskatchewan. For us to be able to effect meaningful oversight of their compliance with the statute, we would need additional resources.

Now moving away from health care for a moment, last spring the Canadian Newspaper Association did a cross-Canada survey to determine the extent to which local authorities met their statutory obligations to provide access to public information. And the findings on this slide represent what the result was in the Western Canadian provinces.

You'll see Alberta with a 93 per cent, Manitoba with a 88 per cent, British Columbia with a still respectable 71 per cent. The response in Saskatchewan was 44 per cent. In our experience, that 44 per cent in fact may flatter us and may exaggerate the degree to which local authorities in this province are meeting their statutory obligations under the LAFOIP [Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy] Act. The survey identified specific problems, and it was interesting that in our experience in our office we see exactly those same problems in school divisions, in regional health authorities, in rural municipalities, in large urban municipalities, and in universities and colleges.

This led us to, in our last annual report we included an action plan with six key areas for remedial action. We called that plan "Privacy and Access: A Saskatchewan Roadmap for Action." And it was designed to remedy the kinds of problems that were identified here.

Some may question why a low level of statutory compliance is a problem. What's the big deal? I talked about HIPA, but now we're talking about FOIP and LAFOIP. I think what's key is to recognize the Supreme Court of Canada has said these are special laws. They define core democratic rights, the right to access public information, the right to have your personal information protected when you give it to public bodies. They're quasi-constitutional. That's why the law has a paramount supervision, and it trumps other laws that come in conflict with it.

And I just remind you it was an access request that triggered the events culminating in the Gomery inquiry. In his second report in February 1 it was interesting, I think, that Justice Gomery underscored the importance of a law like FOIP or LAFOIP in making government accountable, and interestingly his suggestions for reform of the 22-year-old federal access law mirror quite closely our Saskatchewan roadmap for action that was included in our last report.

There's no reason, Mr. Chairman, and members, why this province cannot minimize the risk to patients. There's also no reason why we cannot ensure the statutory rights to access and privacy are fully met. It requires two things: it requires a clear plan and appropriate resources for our oversight work. We've outlined the plan to you in our last annual report, and we're now here requesting the resources to achieve that goal.

Now of the . . . There's a number of slides that follow and you will find these also in your material. Let me just highlight a couple of things. If you see in the bottom right-hand corner, these are the requests for service that come into our office. If you look at the 9 per cent, this is a good news, bad news story.

The good news is that we now have health regions and school divisions coming to us. They've downloaded our privacy impact assessment from our website. They've completed it and they're coming back asking for comment and advice, and so this is an excellent good news story.

The problem is, in our experience it's taking us five to six months sometimes to get back to them, to be able to turn it around. And they report to us, thanks, but this is just way too slow. We're not able to integrate that as we're rolling out new programs. We need a faster turnaround for this thing to work. The next slide please.

If you look at this slide, it indicates the demand for our services last year. The spike was no aberration. There continues to be substantial demand for accurate information about the three laws. Now this chart only takes you to the end of December. The number as of today is, on the far right-hand bar, is actually 1,136 in terms of inquiries. We expect we'll exceed the number from last year before the end of the fiscal year. This just sort of gives you a general outline of the areas and the laws that attract questions. Thank you.

And this talks about formal files we've opened for breach-of-privacy complaints. I think what's important to note here is this doesn't reflect individuals coming to us. One of those files last year represented the cervical cancer screening program where we had over 100 Saskatchewan women contact our office. Our practice is we'd open a single file for that, not the 100 files. And so when you look at that, those are the files we've got, but it doesn't track into individual Saskatchewan residents with issues.

Of particular concern on page 9 is that we still have two active files from 2003, and I'm certainly not proud to tell you this. We have 43 active files that were started in 2004, and then we have 76 files not completed from 2005.

I'm happy to tell you that we're moving to about an 81 per cent successful mediation rate, which I think is really important. That's what we're trying to do. We don't want to have to issue reports, but it becomes the challenge. I might just say it was February 26, 2003, when I reviewed *Hansard*, when Mr. Hagel was speaking to my predecessor regarding the board meeting, and he was reporting at that time the government's position. And he said, and I quote:

... 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.

Well you clearly have the full-time commissioner now and I am grateful for that decision. But I am here to tell you that we don't have the resources that, in our office's view, reflecting on our first two and a half years experience, to be able to meet what is a very broad statutory mandate.

And then the next slide simply summarizes what we need and what we have to be able to do. We just cannot keep pace with these kinds of requests. This is over and above people who make formal breach of privacy complaints and over and above people who are coming and asking us to review access decisions made by government institutions and local authorities.

And so what we've identified is a need, is two additional portfolio officers, one administrative support person, and then there's some consequential costs. And as I say, that would represent — and this is all I should say — net of any adjustment to my salary when we did this material. So we were talking about, this would work out to a 35 per cent increase in the salary we've got.

Now I mean, I think that you have the material in front of you and the breakdown in terms of costs and so on, and I expect you may well have some questions. This slide simply tries to give you a sense of the breadth of the kind of issues that we're expected to deal with.

School^{PLUS}; one of the handicaps and things that's delaying the rollout of School^{PLUS} is we haven't yet solved how to deal with the privacy and confidentiality issues.

The one-stop business registry that's being advanced, great initiative, lots of benefits to Saskatchewan residents, but there are some particular issues in terms of how we square that with the law that really treats each department as a separate entity. And information moving from one department to another is a disclosure.

We're continuing work with the cancer agency on building in the kind of opt-out that we recommended and the then Health minister accepted as a good recommendation.

Identity theft, we still have Saskatchewan government workers. We may be the last province in Canada where the SIN [social insurance number] number is still used as the employee identification number. This is an awful practice in a world where identity theft is the fastest growing crime in Canada. I think that's soon going to be changed, but we continue to work with the Public Service Commission and Saskatchewan government on that.

Video surveillance, frankly, is used in far too many facilities of Saskatchewan who don't yet understand that they're capturing personal information, and there's all kinds of consequences under our legislation.

The morning-after pill, we're wrestling with a series of serious privacy issues involving women attempting to get a drug from a pharmacist and pharmacists wanting to ask a series of very invasive and personal questions in a context where it's often not in any sense a private place. So those are some of the issues we're dealing with.

The USA PATRIOT [Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism] Act. There are still issues with contracting out. Every time a Saskatchewan public body ships data south of the line, there are serious issues, and we found an unacceptable level of risk for some reasons we describe in our annual report.

Cellphones being accessed, SaskTel is in fact a body we oversee. There are some serious concerns that have been identified with access to cellphone records.

And so that's just kind of a survey of some of the current issues on our desk we're attempting to deal with. Anyway I think I

went over my time, Mr. Chairman. Thanks very much for the members' patience, and I'm delighted to answer whatever questions you have.

The Chair: — And thank you very much, Mr. Dickson, for your presentation. Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of questions. Now I heard you say that your requests for '06-07 does not include any increase based on our decisions earlier this morning.

Mr. Dickson: — That's right. We haven't factored that in because we didn't know what was going to be done.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay. Was there any increase in your position factored into the request for personal services in this session?

Mr. Dickson: — No. My understanding there was not. No.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Not even incremental or inflationary?

Mr. Dickson: — No, not for '06-07, Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay. Just wanted to make sure where we're dealing with. Could you just give me an update of what the salary range would be for portfolio officers. I'm trying to understand the increase request and what it means.

Mr. Dickson: — Okay. We have just gone through a reclassification to track what's happened in the public service generally. We hired a consultant to come in and assess the positions. And the positions have been classified as an MCP 7 in the new classification system, and that would be range — as I understand it and as I'm advised — \$4,892 to 6,361. I think this is consistent with the range of investigators in the other independent legislative officers that do investigation work. Is that accurate . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much. My next question has to do with the administrative position you're requesting. What would its pay range be?

Mr. Dickson: — I beg your pardon?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — What would the pay range be of the request for the administrative position?

Mr. Dickson: — I'm advised it would be an in-scope level five in terms of administrative support. And that range is \$2,514.25 to \$3,150. That's what I understand is the range for that position.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you. My next question, Mr. Chair, has to do with what is the dollar figure required over last year's estimates just to deal with the interim motion or the increases as a result of the new classification plan, without these two positions or three positions I guess? What's the increase for this year? Without the new positions, what increase is required just to . . .

Mr. Dickson: — It looks like \$492,939, Mr. Yates. That's

exclusive of my income.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay. That would be the entire budget as it is today. My question is, for the increases as a result of reclassification of the existing employees, what does that represent as a dollar figure in this budget? I had to rephrase it. I'm just trying to get a handle of all the different numbers.

Mr. Dickson: — I'm advised, Mr. Yates, \$525,922 would be with the reclass changes and with what's happened in terms of my salary.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — That's status quo plus those, is \$525,000?

Mr. Dickson: — That's . . . 922, yes.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you. Okay my next question goes to the next area under contract services. The most substantial increase in that is in fact an additional cost for rent. Is that correct?

Mr. Dickson: — Yes, yes it is.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — And that's a full \$14,000 over last year?

Mr. Dickson: — Yes. You may recall that when I was here a year ago I'd reported that the space we had may have been a very nice space, but it was only about 900 square feet, and it couldn't accommodate any growth. And we were able to surrender the lease at no cost, and the space we've moved into is more than 2,000 square feet, and we didn't have to pay a full year at that rate, but of course now going forward . . .

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay, thank you. The next question I have is under travel.

Mr. Dickson: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — There seems to be a substantial increase in request for travel — about \$12,000. Could you just give me an explanation why you anticipate . . .

Mr. Dickson: — That includes . . . We projected travel today . . . What portfolio officers typically do is they are travelling around the province. And that's both giving educational sessions and when we're doing an investigation it is often going to, if it's a government office in Prince Albert, to review records and things. Rather than having them shipped and sent down to Regina, more often what will happen, an investigator will attend there, interview people, be able to review the records and that kind of thing. So we've done a projection in terms of if we had two additional portfolio officers; so four portfolio officers travelling around doing that sort of thing, that's the cost.

Then in addition to that there are training opportunities. The Privacy Commissioner of Canada often will run workshops for investigators in provincial offices across Canada. Last year they held it in Regina at our suggestion and at their cost. This year I think it's going to be in Winnipeg so that's an important training opportunity for our staff, and I'm anxious we do that. I typically attend an annual summit of commissioners from across Canada. This year it's going to be Nunavut which sounds

very interesting. I was shocked to find out the cost to fly there so that's really unusual.

In addition to . . . well I think those are kind of the main kinds of travel items. Much of it is in-province travel of investigators and of me.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much. That's all my questions at this point.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Yates. The Chair recognizes Ms. Junor.

Ms. Junor: — I'm going to refer to page 10 in the book. It's the same as the slide on page 3. And I just have a question and more of a curiosity than anything . . .

The Chair: — Order please. Could you just move that mike down so we can hear you. Thank you very much.

Ms. Junor: — When you say you have 41 requests from a single applicant, is there a process that you have? First of all would those be in your view real or vexatious applications? And do you have a process that deals with someone who has a malicious intent or frivolous or vexatious continual complaint?

Mr. Dickson: — I'm happy to report we have the power in our office to advise somebody that in our opinion, after we do a preliminary look at their material, to conclude it is a frivolous or vexatious request for review, and in fact that's the way we dealt . . . There was one individual in the last fiscal year who delivered well over 100 access requests to a government department and then made a third of those or so ended up as requests for review in our office. After we reviewed them we were able to tell this person we would not proceed further, that we found that they weren't appropriately based, that they were frivolous, vexatious.

I should tell you this is one of the weaknesses in our legislation, though. In other provinces I would then be able to go back to that public body and say, you are excused from having to deal with those requests. We don't have that in our legislation, so I was able to close those files and not spend more time on it. Unfortunately the public body had to continue to process those things because we have nothing in our first-generation law which is now current in all third-generation laws that would allow the public body to stop that waste of effort.

Ms. Junor: — On your direction.

Mr. Dickson: — On the direction of the commissioner. That's the way it typically works to avoid abuse and somebody actually shutting down a legitimate right to request information.

Ms. Junor: — Now this leads me to another question which I wasn't thinking of at the time. But when you're saying this that . . . you did say other provinces or jurisdictions or some other Acts do have it in . . .

Mr. Dickson: — All of the more modern access and privacy legislation allows the commissioner to effectively tell a government body, you need not deal with these requests because we've looked at them and we've made a determination;

they're frivolous or vexatious or it's an abuse of the process.

Ms. Junor: — Now further to that then, how to do you as a commissioner put forward changes to legislation or suggestions to changes to legislation?

Mr. Dickson: — All I can tell you is what we've been doing. They haven't borne a lot of fruit to date, so maybe we haven't found the right procedure. We do a lot of talking to the Department of Justice. Justice is the department tasked with responsibility for FOIP and LAFOIP. Health is responsible obviously for HIPA. We have a great deal of discussion. We have informal meetings.

And then my annual report, both in my annual report two years ago and then this last year, I went on, I think we've listed 50 specific recommendations for things to update our . . . Our law looked pretty neat in 1992. It was one of the early Canadian laws of its type. But it's been hugely eclipsed by more modern legislation as people have learned from the experience what works and what doesn't. So part of our Saskatchewan road map for action was updating our law. And we've listed in our annual report a large number of changes that we think should be made. We've ongoing discussion with Justice, and we move heaven and earth to speak to any legislators any time about how we think we can make the law work better, not just for applicants but for public bodies also, to be more efficient in dealing with the stuff.

Ms. Junor: — I'm interested in seeing something come forward because I think our new committee process would be a vehicle to have a public discussion on privacy which is something I think is overdue. And I think if there was any sort of an Act proposed or even a regulation, something — no it would have to be an Act likely — that we could take this to public hearing, so it would be really good to see us do something but with your recommendations.

So I picked one, you know, to open up the discussion so you could have the public hearings because part of your mandate . . . you're out educating the public, and I think the public needs more than just you going out and telling them because we need to have a public policy debate basically with the public to see that because they do have very limited understanding of what types of things are in place to protect their privacy and what aren't.

Mr. Dickson: — I should say, my report and presentation may have sounded pretty critical and maybe even pretty negative. There are some actually some very positive things happening in the province. The Department of Justice has now done what virtually every other jurisdiction in Canada has done some time ago. They've actually created an access and privacy unit within the Department of Justice. Mr. Mombourquette . . .

An Hon. Member: — Oh, yes, the HIPA guy.

Mr. Dickson: — The HIPA guy has moved over to Justice and taken his wealth of experience dealing with privacy issues. And you will know better than anybody — the toughest, thorniest, most problematic issues with privacy typically occur with health information. If you can solve those, everything else is a whole lot easier, generally.

So they're actually creating a unit. It's fledgling so far; there's just him. There was an ad in the paper the other day for somebody else to assist. And the purpose of that office is going to be training of people in government institutions, developing what other provinces have done, which is typically a 200-page manual with decision trees and flow charts and sample forms and precedent material. That's the kind of thing that people in public bodies in Saskatchewan need to make it.

We obsess about how we make this simple because access and privacy laws never work unless the receptionist, the person working in the file room, all your intake workers really get it, really understand: I must not disclose this; it is appropriate to share that. And we're just quite a long way from reaching that level of understanding. So it's going to take our effort. It's going to take the efforts of people at Justice and Health, and it's not going to happen quickly.

But I think it's fair to say — and I've had this discussion with the Minister of Justice and the deputy minister of Justice — I think in some respects we've not paid very much attention to sort of the access and privacy file for most of the 13 years since the laws were produced by the legislature, and we've got quite a bit of catch-up to do, in my view.

Ms. Junor: — I think HIPA was a bit of a catalyst.

Mr. Dickson: — Clearly it has been. One of the things that's difficult though is . . . I've had some experience in other provinces, and when something like HIPA came along, people in health regions were able to build on their experience with their public sector, their FOIP-type legislation. So they had a notion what the commissioner did. They had a notion about rules around access to information. In Saskatchewan when HIPA came along, there really wasn't much of an infrastructure around FOIP, there wasn't a lot of understanding. So it's been a much steeper learning curve I think for people, health care workers in health regions and that sort of thing, than might have been the case otherwise.

Ms. Junor: — Thank you very much. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Ms. Junor. The Chair recognizes Mr. Harper.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, just a couple of brief questions. Are there any fees involved when an individual makes application for your services?

Mr. Dickson: — Yes and no. There are no fees at all when somebody asks our office to review a decision of a local authority or a government department. There's no fee for that. Some provinces have a charge for that; we do not.

When you make the original access request, what you'll find, Mr. Harper, is that if it's of a local authority there's a \$20 application fee. If you're making the same request of a government institution — so that would be the 76 departments, Crown corporations, agencies, boards, and commissions — there's no fee. There is a processing fee of \$35 that comes into force per hour after the first two hours on the FOIP side. It kicks in after the first hour on the local authority FOIP side.

Mr. Harper: — Okay.

Mr. Dickson: — But I think maybe what you were . . . If you were just concerned about our office, there is no fee for any citizen to come to us and say, I think my privacy's been offended; I want you to investigate. Or I've made an access request; it's been refused. I want you to review that decision.

Mr. Harper: — So does your operation generate any revenue from its activities?

Mr. Dickson: — No. What one of the things . . . We have generated a lot of material. We produce brochures and, you know, we make those available. We produced for example a contracting guide. All of those businesses in Saskatchewan or non-profits that do fee-for-service work for any kind of a public body, local or provincial, need to know what the FOIP Act says about that information they've got.

So we've actually produced a brochure called the contractor's guide . . . what do we call it? The contractor's guide to freedom of information. We just see it as part of our mandate. So we make that available to chambers of commerce and business organizations and groups and United Ways to distribute among their member organizations. We do a lot of that kind of thing but we don't charge. We've done over 300 education presentations in 28 different communities. And once again groups will say, at what cost, and we say, you've paid with it with your taxes so it's on our dime — the transportation of those communities, our accommodation, that sort of thing, so there's no cost to people. And we typically provide the copies of the handouts and things like that.

Mr. Harper: — When answering my colleague's questions, you referred to your experiences dealing with health and health related issues. Have you noticed any other area in which you're seeing an increased number of complaints or applications to have you investigate issues within certain areas?

Mr. Dickson: — Clearly some departments attract more attention than others. I mean, that's experienced in all Canadian jurisdictions. Access requests tend to be attracted by departments of Finance, by Environment departments, by Justice departments. There tend to be lots of people interested in Corrections and Public Safety kinds of issues. I mean those are . . . Learning attracts a lot of requests.

Although one of things we find is that Saskatchewan is . . . I understand there's now a spike in access requests which . . . for a long time we've actually had surprisingly low numbers of access requests. I mean, it doesn't track at all the experience in other Canadian provinces.

Now I'm inclined . . . now it may be because government is just way more transparent in Saskatchewan. We're just doing a way better job of being open and giving people information. On the other hand it may be that people just don't know about the Act, about our office, about the right to access information. I mean, what good does it do to say to somebody in Moose Jaw you've got some rights to access public records if you don't know what forms to fill out, where to go, what the cost is going to be—that sort of thing. So I think as we do more public education, you wouldn't be surprised if I tell you; I suspect that probably it

translates into more use of the tools.

Mr. Harper: — So are you seeing any increase of requests for one department . . . greater increase in one department over another or a government agency over another?

Mr. Dickson: — We haven't been tracking that specifically. One of the things that has to be recognized, we're a degree removed. The Department of Justice produces an annual report every year which will show statistically the number of access requests that have been received by Learning versus Finance versus DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment]. So it will be in their report. Remember, we only get maybe 10 per cent of those requests where somebody is not satisfied at dealing directly with the body, and then they appeal to us. So we are sort of at the kind of the small end of the process in that respect.

Am I being responsive to your query?

Mr. Harper: — Yes you are, very, very much so. My final question is just for clarification, I guess it is. Your graph on page 7, summary advice, 70 per cent, can you explain to me what summary advice is?

Mr. Dickson: — Summary advice is sort of everything that doesn't involve actually opening a file. Summary advice is the employee in a supermarket who phones because he thinks there's a video surveillance camera that's been set up covertly in a washroom or a change area and wants to know can that be done, right, and so on. And typically in a case like that we tell him, in Saskatchewan, you may be interested to know, employees have no privacy protection. Customers are protected under federal privacy legislation. Alberta and British Columbia have enacted a law specifically to ensure that employees are protected, but in Saskatchewan we have to tell them they're not. So I mean that would be an example of a frequent kind of query we get, response.

Often we get calls from somebody working in a government department, and they want to know, can we disclose this or can we not disclose that. And so we provide what's called general, non-binding advice. We always say, at some point we may receive a complaint, and the complainant must be satisfied that the fix is not in, that we're going to base our decision after hearing both from the public body and the complainant or applicant, and make the best decision we can as the law leads us in our precedent and our practice. But we provide a lot of general, non-binding advice.

Mr. Harper: — Your statement a little earlier, saying that in Saskatchewan employees have no protection, can you expand upon that?

Mr. Dickson: — Yes. In fact it was a major part of our last annual report, and in fact I think, when I talked about the six elements of our "Privacy and Access: A Saskatchewan 'Roadmap' for Action," it's item D on page 17. I'm happy to leave a copy of it with you. It's entitled, employees deserve privacy protection too.

We spend the next page making the argument that . . . It's richly ironic, I think, that in a province with such a strong tradition of

being respectful of employment issues and respect for employees that there's protection for customer and client information under the federal law. There's full protection for employees if you work for a public sector agency, local authority, or government department. But if you happen to work in the video store, the supermarket, the dry cleaner, the employment agent — any of those non-government businesses — you're unprotected.

And what's concerning to us is the information that a business has that's usually most sensitive. Customers, it may be a credit card; it may be a name and an address. It's typically your employees where you have health information. You have financial information. You have family information that tends to be more sensitive and more prejudicial. So is it not odd that we'll protect the credit card numbers of customers, but we don't protect health information and that more sensitive information about the employees working in those private businesses?

Mr. Harper: — So you're saying in a private business there is no protection to ensure that the personal information of an employee is protected by the employer. In other words, it could be shared by an employer with whomever.

Mr. Dickson: — With impunity. There are two things that we advise people. We tell them that none of our privacy laws — either the federal privacy law or provincial privacy laws — can assist them except we say, you have a couple of options. Sometimes there's a way of trying to frame this as a human rights complaint, and so that's one option. Typically that wouldn't provide redress in most cases.

The other option is we have in Saskatchewan kind of a sleeper law existed for a long time. It's called the provincial privacy Act, and our office has nothing to do with this. It allows a citizen to go and commence an action in the Court of Queen's Bench if they feel there's been unreasonable invasion of their privacy. The law's been perhaps only used seven or eight times, so that's why I call it a sleeper law. But I often encourage people. I say, if you can't find protection anywhere else, you might want to take some legal advice on whether there would be a basis for a claim. But that goes with the costs and everything else involved with legal remedies. But that's kind of the best shot you would have as an aggrieved employee of a private business in this province.

And what's interesting is that Alberta and BC recognize that that was a gap. They've done, frankly, the heavy lifting. They've created a law — the two provinces working closely together — which provides complete protection for employees as well as customers of businesses. And it's a model that's being looked at very closely by Ontario and some other provinces. And so I think you will see in a fairly short time a number of Canadian jurisdictions taking the Alberta-BC model.

My advice to the Assembly here has been, why wouldn't we be looking real hard at it too? And Justice, I know, has been studying it so . . .

Mr. Harper: — Well thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Harper. The Chair recognizes Ms. Harpauer.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. Perhaps you said it in your presentation and I missed it. How many full-time equivalents do you have in your office?

Mr. Dickson: — Right now we have four. There's me, the office manager, and two portfolio officers. Now we have had a woman doing some part-time clerical work who's not going to be available to us going forward. So it's effectively the four FTEs [full-time equivalent] then.

Ms. Harpauer: — I noticed on page 21 of your report or your submission, through employees and budgetary, we have fallen drastically behind other provinces.

Mr. Dickson: — We're up to Newfoundland and Labrador now that also has four people in their office.

Ms. Harpauer: — It's pretty dramatic the difference between, you know, what your office is given for funding and subsequently what you can afford for employees. Do you have comparisons to the number of case files that you would have as opposed to the provinces that you've listed?

Mr. Dickson: — Okay. Let me . . . And I think some members will recall. We've actually . . . I chatted a little bit about this in last year I think also. Alberta and British Columbia aren't sort of good comparators. And the reason, there's a couple of things. Their provincial commissioner also oversees that provincial private sector law I had mentioned a moment ago, which we don't have in Saskatchewan. And also they're just . . . their offices are so much bigger, 3 million people in BC or, I'm sorry, 4 million people in BC, I think; 3 million in Alberta.

But Manitoba is actually a better comparator because their population is close to ours. They also have a health information law — The Personal Health Information Act — which is equivalent to HIPA here. And though I don't have their annual report here, we spend a lot of time chatting with them, and they have now 11 people doing this and the . . . They have an access and privacy unit within the Ombudsman office in Manitoba.

The Ombudsman herself spends 60 per cent of her time, in addition to the 11 people, doing the access and privacy work. And their case load, as best we can determine, is actually not significantly greater than ours. I mean I think we're . . . I mean there's a reason that we sometimes have to work 50- and 60-hour weeks. And that's just because we have just as many health trustees as . . . Manitoba doesn't have any more trustees than we do. They have roughly the same number of public bodies and local public bodies, so I think workload is quite comparable. But I don't have the specific numbers.

The difference is they're able to turn around files fast. I mean I don't think they have a lot of files that would be from 1994 sitting in their office that they're still wrestling with.

Ms. Harpauer: — Right. So just again — I'm sure you've stated it before — but if your request was granted at this \$660,000 budget, how many employees would you be able to add to your office?

Mr. Dickson: — That would be . . .

Ms. Harpauer: — Or would that include any additional employees?

Mr. Dickson: — That would be, well, the four we have currently plus two more portfolio officers. So we'd then have four people doing investigations and writing reports and one full-time administrative support person.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you.

Mr. Dickson: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Ms. Harpauer. The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and welcome, Gary. I just wanted to . . . I think I'm in the same arena here for my questions as Ms. Harpauer just was.

I note with interest that your request is really right in line with about a quarter of what British Columbia is who has four times the population. So I guess these things can be analyzed different ways but . . .

Mr. Dickson: — Well they can. They can. And sometimes it's, I mean, it's tough to make the comparisons, but I think it is fair to say. I mean we in fact operate a listserv for commissioners across Canada, and so we have a pretty good sense what's going on in other offices. And I think Saskatchewan is seen pretty generally as under-serviced in terms of the breadth of the mandate and the resources we've got to try and do the job. We get a lot . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And I certainly sense that you bring to the table a great deal of pride about what you're accomplishing with the resources you have available.

Mr. Dickson: — Absolutely.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Absolutely. Yes.

Mr. Dickson: — But I say, I mean, I'm not taking credit for that. I mean I've been very fortunate; we've got some outstanding people working in the office.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes and I want to acknowledge that as well. Now when I look at the request before us when, I believe, when factoring in the change in legislative officer remuneration that was approved earlier in the Board meeting, in percentage terms the request would be somewhere pretty close to 40 per cent increase.

Mr. Dickson: — I am advised 42 per cent.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes and so I'm certainly conscious that if that was a request from a line department regardless of what the circumstances were that that just wouldn't . . .

Mr. Dickson: — A non-starter.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, it would just be a non-starter. Now and I don't . . . So when I ask my questions, it is to truly to understand because I live in a world in which, the context of

which that is an absolutely huge percentage increase and therefore needs something that's really quite exceptional to justify it. And I know that you understand that as well.

When I look at the page 15 explanation you have about personnel, because that's really the essence of what you're looking at here . . . is wanting to increase the resources to personnel in the office. Last year according to your business plan, you had requested one additional, one more portfolio officer than was approved in the budget and had given indication at that time that part of the business plan would be then to add in the upcoming fiscal year an additional portfolio officer and an admin support person. So I certainly recognize that what you've done is then you continue with the business plan, and you come back with the original request as you had forecast it.

So my two questions are these. One is if your request is approved, what do you anticipate your business plan will see you bringing for requests in the next fiscal year, in the '07-08 fiscal year? Do you see that it being status quo or do you see it change as you look down the road?

Mr. Dickson: — Well when we came in front of you a year ago and we were asking for kind of the same large bump up we're asking for now this year, our sense was, my best judgment was, in some respects it tends to put us over the hump. I mean it brings us to a point where I think with the kind of skills we've got and the people we've got . . . my sense had been at that time that we would be able to catch up our backlog, to be able to reduce the turnaround on complaint files, and review files to a more acceptable kind of range than where we are at now. And I'm still hopeful that would be the case.

I think we had talked initially in the business plan that there would be then one additional person in the last year but it's the kind of . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — What fiscal year would the last year . . .

Mr. Dickson: — That would be 2007-2008.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — 2007-08.

Mr. Dickson: — But it's the sort of thing, I mean, you have to kind of measure as you go along. I mean I can say with confidence now it's clear we're not getting the job done. And if we were to get two additional portfolio officers and one full-time administrative person, once we . . . And it'll be some training and so on to get them up to speed. But once they're up to speed, I'm going to think that we're then to a point where we have the kind of critical mass that in my view becomes really important to meet the mandate.

If you're saying, well does that mean you wouldn't come back and ask for any more help in successive years, I'd . . . you know, I'd love to be able to give you that kind of reassurance but I'm not sure that would be an honest thing to do. And we continue to kind of monitor caseloads and demands and things like that.

But we're trying to get past that critical point of getting a critical mass and that critical mass I think is represented to

some extent by having four portfolio officers, a full-time administrative support person, and Candace managing the office, and me.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Right, okay.

Mr. Dickson: — Am I . . . Is that all . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, let me just follow up on that. I think we're on the same page here. And I certainly fully expect that what you will do in coming to the board is bring your request for the resources to do the job as you see it appropriate to do. And I wouldn't expect anything different from you on that. Our responsibility is to try to understand that and do the best match of resources that you feel you require with the resources available.

And so last year the request was for two portfolio officers. One was approved, so it was . . . Now was there an administrative additional last year?

Mr. Dickson: — We'd asked for an administrative person.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — But that was not . . .

Mr. Dickson: — And that was not . . . we ended up really with just the . . . We'd asked for three positions, right, two portfolio officers and an administrative person. We received one portfolio officer.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. I'm also trying . . . and I understand why you're back asking for additional personnel this year now, and I'm trying to put this into a context of what, you know, anticipate as best as you're able to forecast down the road from this year. If you were . . . So I gather what you're saying is that if your request for the personnel, additional personnel, was approved this year, you're not sure whether next year you would be . . . at this stage you're not sure whether you would be requesting additional personnel or not. You might or you might not be. Is that . . .

Mr. Dickson: — I think what I'm saying . . . To me, I expect what the board wants to know is really in terms of the job to do and what's getting done and what isn't getting done, I mean what's getting left on the table and what's being properly disposed of.

And I mean that's why in the business plan we've tried to set out some performance measures in terms of saying, this is kind of how we measure whether we're doing what we think the legislature had in mind when they created the office in 1992. And if we were to get what we're asking for this year, then I would expect the board to hold me to account for the performance measures we've set out, and if I'm not making those then I'd expect you to be able to come back, Mr. Hagel, and say, well Dickson, we've given you what you said you needed, so we expect you to be meeting those targets. I don't think it would be fair for you to do that this past year because we didn't get the resources we said we needed. Is that helpful at all?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — . . . I have one last question then. If what was approved this year was one additional portfolio officer as

opposed to your request for two, can you differentiate for me — and I know you've been talking about this and I don't want to belabour the point — can you just succinctly tell me then what would the one additional enable you to do that you can't do now, and what would the absence of the second limit you that you would like to do? Can you draw those lines?

Mr. Dickson: — Well if you remember the slide, I think it was slide 10 we talked about what we need and kind of why we need it. It translates into . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I think what I'm asking you to do is to prioritize, you know, your . . . yes.

Mr. Dickson: — Well and that's interesting because I remember at one earlier visit, one of the members had suggested — I think it would be a question — but are we establishing priorities and so on. And I think there was a suggestion, well some things are clearly urgent and some aren't. And there had been a suggestion, us going around and talking about health and so on might not be as important as responding to a minister or a deputy minister that wanted some advice on something.

But when you look at our mandate, really there were lots of times where providing proactive advice to a department or a public body is in my mind at least as important, in some case it's more important than sitting in the office waiting for another complaint or working on a complaint or an access request. And my view has always been that my performance should be measured on whether I'm doing something reasonable in each of the four core areas of my mandate.

And I don't think I have . . . frankly I don't think the legislation affords me the luxury of saying, I choose not to address this part of my mandate or that part; I'm just going to pick this one because I think what the legislature has said . . . they recognize that providing advice and commentary, doing investigations, dealing with privacy as well as access is all important and all an integral part of what I do.

So I mean if we have, if we have one portfolio officer instead of two, what it means is that it's going to take us longer to reduce the backlog of files that I told you about. It's going to mean that as it is now we're reducing the number of public education presentations we do. More and more people are coming to us and saying, will you come to our conference of RM [rural municipality] people and tell us what LAFOIP means.

And so there are occasions now we have to say, sorry, we're already doing X number of presentations that month; we can't take anymore on without then begging some other part of our mandate. So it reduces the number of presentations we can do. It means when departments come to us with a completed PIA [privacy impact assessment] and say, give us some feedback in terms of whether we're going to be compliant or not, we're going to say, sorry deputy minister we can't do that in the two week turnaround that you want. We're not able to do it.

So it just means kind of a diminution in service in each of the areas we deal with, and I don't know how to be more specific in terms of one and two. I can tell you with two, I can project that I think that it enables us to sort of crack the nut. I think that sort

of gets us to the critical stage where we can move the backlog. One means we'll make some headway, but it's not going to be eliminated, and we're not going to be able to very significantly improve our turnaround performance.

Sorry I'm not sure I can be more specific than that.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — No, I think that that answers the question. Thanks very much, I appreciate it. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Hagel. The Chair recognizes Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. As I've been listening to the questions and the information that came back, it's generated a couple of other questions for me. I believe I heard, and I'm not sure, that the portfolio officer that commenced employment this year, commenced employment later in the year.

Mr. Dickson: — It was November.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay. So April 1, new year, so about six months into the year, seven months into the year, if you were to get additional funds for additional portfolio officers, when do you anticipate, how long a period of time would it take to actually recruit and put in place, based on the experiences that you've had? I know it's limited and the fact that you've only recruited two but . . .

Mr. Dickson: — Well there'd be kind of two pieces to my answer. The one is I think we'd be into . . . we have the space now so we'd be advertising as quickly as possible for the position.

The second part though, and this is the challenge, we've now had a number of competitions. We frankly are not finding within the province people who can step into the role with the experience and with the training to be able to do the job. So our experience has been we're finding the very best and smartest people we can find who are interested in getting trained up. And then it's actually a very substantial effort in turn of then orienting those people and giving them the training to be able to then go out and do the investigations, do the public education.

So what am I saying? We could hire right away or advertise right away, and we'd have an open competition. But then there's a period of a number of months while that person is being trained and oriented before I'm able to send them out to do presentations or I send them off to meet with the deputy minister to sort out a particular privacy issue.

Does that answer your question?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you. It does but it leads me to other questions then. As in any organization, if we are hiring people that are below, say, the standards and we bring them in, are we in fact hiring them, or could we hire them at lower salary levels during the training period? I'm looking at dollars of course here, as we always are when we're looking at percentage. And if we're not hiring until midway through the year, then it's a half year salary versus the whole year salary.

I'm looking at ways we might be able to be creative here and make, you know, some improvement if we can't go all the way. And so I'm trying to get some feel about what some options may be for you. Of course we only approve the budget and then you as the manager manage it, but it's how can you manage it and . . .

Mr. Dickson: — Well the second suggestion always . . . I mean, one of the ways we manage a budget is you don't hire right away. You hire later in the year rather than earlier in the year. And so I mean, that's always in the range of kind of management options.

In terms of the classification, I mean, I'm kind of new to this, the classification process in Saskatchewan. And we've gone through two processes since I've been here: firstly when staff were hired and then the new reclass plan. And it just strikes me there may be a lot of complications with . . . if you're hiring somebody to do a particular job and that sort of bifurcated or two tier thing, I don't know. I'm happy to look into that.

But I mean, when we hire somebody we say these are the expectations. I mean if we can find somebody who comes in who's got that familiarity with the privacy law and privacy world, terrific. And sometimes they have some information and not others. But certainly on the other point, that is a tool we can use — delaying, deferring the start date of an employee.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — And my final question has to do with, what would the normal requirements be, typical requirements or qualifications of an individual that you'd be seeking to hire? Just to give us some idea of what this . . .

Mr. Dickson: — Of a portfolio officer?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Of a portfolio officer.

Mr. Dickson: — It would mean familiarity with the three statutes we oversee, with the personal information protection Act, the federal Act, the fair information practices or fair information principles. They're to the core that underlie all privacy laws enforced in Canada.

It would mean you want people with an understanding of the way government works and the way departments work because you have to go into departments and local authorities, and you have to be able to review government records and understand what those things mean.

We look for mediation training because I've told you I think our office should always be mediating successfully in the order of 80 per cent, at least 80 per cent of the complaints that come in. If we don't do that, then I'm not sure we're doing our job properly. So you want people with mediation training.

We're looking for people with investigation skills. It means . . . In the world we work in, you're often dealing with senior government people and so that means you have to be able to come in and intelligently assess their operation and the relevant record-keeping systems they've got to be able to engage in discussions and how those can be changed. You need the skill to be able to identify things to pursue and things that should not be pursued. So it's a level of maturity. Typically we're looking

for somebody with at least an undergraduate university degree. Does that give you a bit of a sense of . . .

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Yes it gives me a good sense of the types of skill sets you're looking for. And I was looking at why the difficulty in recruitment but . . .

Mr. Dickson: — I mean, we can find incredibly skilled people in Saskatchewan and bright and so on. What we just can't find are people who've worked with the privacy legislation to any considerable extent and step in, knowing this is what LAFOIP requires, this is what HIPA requires. That's where we have to provide the substantive training component.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you then very much, members. Mr. Dickson, thank you very much for your presentation and for your responses to some very probing questions. And I must say thank you for the expertise that you bring to this position. This is a fairly new thing for most of us, and actually for all of us across the province, and we certainly appreciate the leadership that you're providing, that you and your staff are providing for this.

Once again I think that the members have asked all the questions that they probably will want to ask, but if you wouldn't mind leaving us your phone number just in case there's a supplementary later in the day.

Mr. Dickson: — Sure. Thank you very much. And I should say, I mean, I continue to have what I think has to be the most interesting job in the province, and I appreciate the ongoing support from the Assembly for us to do our important work.

The Chair: — Thank you. Members, we now have a couple of options. It being 20 after 12, we have a cold lunch that's been ordered. We could break for lunch and reassemble at 1 o'clock. Is that fine? And everybody would then come back here. Would that be fine? So we will break for lunch till 1. And at 1 o'clock we would ask that we'll proceed with the item 10 which is the budget for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

Office of the Provincial Ombudsman

The Chair: — Thank you, members, for your prompt return. And I want to at this time to proceed and call the meeting back to order. We'll then proceed with the attention to item 10, review the 2006-2007 budget for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman. I welcome Mr. Fenwick to the table with his officials, and I ask you to introduce your officials and continue with your remarks. Mr. Fenwick.

Mr. Fenwick: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you as well for the lunch. We appreciated the offer to join you for it and very much enjoyed it.

The colleagues that I have here with me today represent both our offices in Regina and Saskatoon. To my right is Lynne Fraser. Lynne is our manager of administration; she works out of our Saskatoon office. And to my left is Gina Alexander. Gina

is one of the newer members of our team; she is our deputy ombudsman in Regina and joined us October 1 of last year.

I start right after lunch with some mixed feelings. In my former life as a mediator and a trainer, this is the part of the day we used to less than affectionately refer to as the dead zone. So we used to try and build in an icebreaker or something. And I have this urge to ask you all to stand up and join hands and do exercises or something like that, but I won't.

I don't propose to go through the entire submission, of course, that we provided you with a couple of weeks ago. What I would like to do is to hit some of the highlights of what's in that submission. And I'm more than happy to entertain questions throughout the presentation as well as at the end, if you prefer — whatever works best for the members of the board.

I don't intend to comment on the preliminary parts of the report as well. I'm not going to comment on some of the background information that we've provided to you and will concentrate instead on the number portion of the submission, but would certainly be more than happy to respond to any questions that you might have about the background material in the first half of our written presentation as well.

What I propose to do is to address the proposal with respect to our budget from the perspective of the four areas that are contained in our mandate. The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act prescribes that the mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman is to do four things. And if I can, I'll highlight those four things in terms of our budget submission.

The first part of our mandate is with respect to public complaints. Public complaints, or what we often refer to as individual complaints from members of the public, have always been the core part of our mandate. They take up the majority of our resources, and I suspect that that will not change. I suspect that that will always be the core part of our mandate, as it probably should be.

The good news is that contrary to what happened for a number of years until a couple of years ago, what had been a perennial increase in the number of complaints seems to have levelled off somewhat. We want to acknowledge that and acknowledge that we think that's a good thing.

We would hope that that has something to do with the efforts that we've been taking within the office to try and be proactive and to try and deal with government agencies — not just to deal with the questions that come forward, but rather to help them put processes in place so that they don't encounter the same problems over and over again.

The one thing that's a bit alarming for us is that the number of complaints that we received last year about matters that are not within our jurisdiction increased slightly over the year before. Now last year we saw a drop, a significant drop over the year before that. But what it tells us is that we do have some work to do in terms of educating the public and agencies that refer to us about what we have a mandate to do and what we do not.

With respect to the public complaints part of our mandate, we're simply asking for status quo funding. Now that status

quo, because of the out-of-scope compensation plan, has some consequences that come with it. But in terms of what we're asking for for staffing, we're simply asking for status quo. There's one small exception to that statement and that is, as I'll talk about in a few moments, we're asking for a slight increase in that part of our budget with respect to professional development and professional education for our staff.

The new compensation plan for us means that — just to keep the same staff on we had last year at the same levels that they were at last year and simply build in the consequences of the new classification plan that we have been told will be forthcoming this year and which we inherited last year — will cost us about \$72,800 more than what we had to pay those same staff last year. So while we are asking for, incorporated in our budget proposal, an increase of 72.8, that simply covers the increases that we inherited as a result of the new classification plan. That's not new money; that's status quo money for us.

We were very fortunate last year in a strange kind of a way in that we had something that was very unusual for our office, and that was a period of time where we had some vacancies. Our office is traditionally and typically very stable. We have staff that have served for a long period of time, and we don't have a lot of turnover.

Last year we did have some turnover, and so we were able to look ahead, anticipate the classification plan that was coming in and the salary structure changes that would occur, and we were able to manage those vacancies last year such that we could handle the increases in salary that we inherited last year without having to come back to the board by way of special warrant.

We did that last year because of the vacancy management that we put in place. The bad news is we do not anticipate any vacancies in this year. This is a more typical year for us where we have stable staff that will remain stable and as a result, anything that we want to do differently this year can't happen as a result of vacancy management.

With respect to status quo, we're asking for what I would suggest is a small sum of money — \$10,000 — for an increase to allow us to do professional development.

Our office has traditionally had a line in our budget of \$2,000 for professional development for our staff. That works out to about \$100 a year per staff person. That's nothing. And so what we were able to do last year was to relocate about \$10,000 as a result of those vacancies and use that to increase our professional development budget within the office to about 12,000. What we're asking you to do is to give us that \$10,000 this year as part of our budget, so we can maintain that professional development line at \$12,000.

Personally I am a firm believer in the necessity of keeping staff fresh and updated on current skills. As we do different things in the office and as we talk about different ways of solving problems and working with government, as we talk about being more proactive in going out to government and saying this is what you need to do differently, we need to be able to make sure that the people we're sending to do that job have the skill set necessary to do that, and professional development is the best way that we can get that.

What an increase of \$10,000 would allow us to do is a couple of things, and both of them I would suggest are quite modest. One is it will allow us to gather our staff together probably once a year, likely in Regina or Saskatoon, and spend a couple of days on some professional development as a team, and we'll concentrate on a certain area where we think that we have room for improvement. And we'll probably spend 5,000 or \$6,000 bringing in someone and paying some expenses to have that annual event.

The second thing it allows us to do is to set a pool — a fund if you like — so that every three years or so on average we'll be able to send individual staff members to some kind of a professional development opportunity. Some of those are out of province. Some of those are in province. They tend to be events that are shared with other ombudsman offices. There's an organization called the Federation of Canadian Ombudsmen that is doing a lot of advanced skills training for members. Those are the kinds of things that we would like to do, and this allotment would allow to send each staff member to those kinds of events probably once every three years on average, maybe four. So the request is for \$10,000 in that area. I can't emphasize enough how important I think that is to an organization such as ours.

The second part of our mandate is what we call alternate case resolution or what the legislation calls alternate case resolution. My preference actually is to change what the A stands for in ACR [alternative case resolution] so it stands for appropriate case resolution. I think we need to handle all of the complaints that come to our office in an appropriate manner, and that may be something very different than a formal investigation. What our alternate case resolution processes allow us to do is to sit down where it's appropriate to do so with the parties, to sometimes do some negotiation assistance, sometimes do some shuttle diplomacy, sometimes do some formal mediation work. And we have found that that has been a very effective way of resolving conflicts that have occurred between the complainants who come to us and the government departments and agencies.

Saskatchewan led the nation in establishing those ACR programs, and we should be proud of the fact that most other jurisdictions now, some informally and most formally, have adopted our model and are now incorporating into their own business plans and hiring their own ACR alternate case resolution people. We set the stage here and others have certainly followed.

We're asking simply for status quo funding with respect to ACR. We have two positions now, one in Regina and Saskatoon. We're not asking for any changes in that. It does however relate back to my former request for the professional development because what we're asking our staff to do now is to have a broader skill set so that those mediation kinds of tools and those assisted negotiation kinds of tools are not limited to two individuals but rather they're part of the repertoire. They're in the tool box for everybody that's in the office. And that's an area where I think the professional development money could be well spent.

The third part of our mandate is what are called own motion investigations. We often refer to those as systemic or major investigations. These are the areas where we will sometimes

notice a pattern that comes to us from a series of individual complaints. Sometimes we'll be able to pick something out of the news. Sometimes it'll be something that we identify from other sources. Sometimes it's areas that are referred to as by departments where they will say to us or we will determine that this is something broader than just something that impacts one or two individuals. And so we will do an own motion or a systemic investigation. They tend to be resource intensive. They take longer. They involve research. They often involve research that, although we don't send anybody out of province, we require that information be gathered from other jurisdictions et cetera.

That's an area where we believe we need to do some expansion. My estimate is that probably 90 percent of our resources in the past have been spent on the individual complaints. And while that will remain our core business, we think that we need to take some of that 90 per cent and reallocate it to more of these systemic kinds of issues. It's part of our intent to be proactive. It's part of our way of anticipating what problems would be in place and to head them off at the pass, as it were, to try and reduce the number of complaints that come to our office because the underlying issues are being addressed rather than just the presenting problems.

We're not asking for additional funding. We thanked the board last year for recognizing the importance of that part of our work and funding fully one position — one full-time systemic investigator position. We're simply asking for the status quo on that.

I have a long list here of the kinds of systemic investigations that we have embarked on and are anticipating for the next year, certainly would entertain questions if you're interested in that. I don't propose to go through the list unless somebody asks specifically about it.

The fourth part of our mandate deals with public education and communications. It's the one area of our mandate that I regret to say I don't think we're fulfilling. The legislation says it's part of our mandate, and we simply have not had the resources in the past to be able to do that.

Our organizational chart that's filed with the Public Service Commission provides that we have a communications director. In fact we don't have a communications director because that position is vacant. We have had the position filled periodically in the past. It's been vacant for the last year. My comment is, is that most of that communication kind of work is not optional work. This isn't a luxury that we're looking for; this is work that has to be done.

This is things like the preparation of our annual report, which of course we're required to do, and rightly so. These are things like the preparation of educational materials, both for members of the public when we go out and do presentations, and for government. It's for things like development of a website that we would hope down the road might allow complainants to be able to access us directly and file complaints via the Internet as some other jurisdictions have.

This is for things like fairness training materials. We have rolled out a training package that we have taken into

government now and say, this is what you need to do to make sure you have practices in place — fair practices or best practices — so that you don't get calls from our office, that you have the fairness principles within your departments so that the Ombudsman doesn't have to come in and respond to those kinds of complaints.

A year ago we did a bit of a survey that revealed to us a disturbing lack of clarity in the minds of the public about what the Office of the Ombudsman does. We were pleased to hear that most people in the province had heard of the Ombudsman; it's about 65 or 70 per cent. But only about 25 per cent of the people surveyed knew what we did. A lot of them confused us with Robert Cooper, the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] guy that used to do all of the stuff. That's the kind of ombudsman that they had in mind.

So that's part of our public education function. It's part of the reason why we had 1,500 complaints last year that came to our office that were not within our jurisdiction. It takes a lot of time for our staff to respond to those kinds of complaints. And public education is part of what that communications officer would do.

Another part of that combined communications, fair practices initiative would be the fair practices training that we're now doing for government. Now I'm certainly aware that in the past the board has not looked particularly favourably on the communications director position at times. And while I don't necessarily agree with that perspective, I certainly respect it.

And so we've heard that message. And so what we're suggesting this year is that we not come to you and ask for a communications director per se. Instead what we've said is we will scale back the pure communications responsibilities of that position, and we will add to that position the fair practices coordinator so that we can take the fair practices training initiative that we began last year and that we haven't been able to carry forward to a large extent because we don't have the person power to do that, and we'll roll that in, and we'll also make the communications person our public education director.

So what we're asking for is \$52,000 which would allow us to fund at a .75, a three-quarter time position, for what we would refer to as a fair practices, communications, public education coordinator. It's a big job.

But what we have found is, is that so much of that work right now, the mandatory parts of it, has to be done. And it's being done by others in the office — myself, our legal counsel, our deputies, our manager of administration — who (a) don't have the expertise to do it, and so we put out a product that is not as good as we would like it to be. It takes us twice as long to do the job as it would someone who has that expertise. And quite frankly, some of us are paid at a considerable higher salary than that person would be paid. So it's not very efficient either for people at a higher salary to be paid to do the necessary work that somebody should be doing within the proper pay range.

So our request is, is that you add to our budget that sum of \$52,000 for this particular position.

A couple of concluding remarks if I can. We know that we have to be fiscally responsible. We know that when you incorporate

the new class plan and the out-of-scope compensation scheme, even the status quo represents an increase of about 5.4 per cent, I think, over last year's core funding. And we recognize that's a lot of money.

We think that we worked hard last year to make sure that we were able to incorporate those extra costs within our budget, and we did so. But what we're asking for this year we think is the minimum that will allow us to do the mandate that the legislation provides that we must do.

In real dollars what that means is we're asking for about 2.8 per cent. It works out to 2.8 per cent if you factor in the 5.4 per cent that is already part of what we have to incorporate from the class plan. What we're looking for in new money, this \$62,000, is about 2.8 per cent because it's really only 44,000 — given that in a moment I'm going to be talking to you about the computer funding that you funded for us last year, and we're asking for less money there this year than last.

We have the joint submission that we'd like to make with the Children's Advocate's office with respect to that information technology package. Last year I think you requested that we do that as a sort of a separate parcel when we're here together. I'm at your pleasure as to whether you'd like to ask us any questions now about our sort of core funding proposal and deal with the computer package separately or address it now.

The Chair: — So other than the computer package aspect of it, you're pretty well done now?

Mr. Fenwick: — Yes thank you.

The Chair: — What is the . . . I don't see anybody wanting to ask questions at this time, so I think perhaps then what we will do is proceed to the Children's Advocate's presentation, and then there may be questions that will come to one or the other. Is that fine? Or does somebody have questions at this time? No? All right. Well thank you very much then. But don't go too far.

Mr. Fenwick: — No, I'm going to ask the Children's Advocate, Marvin Bernstein, to join me at the front then, and we'll make the presentation together with respect to that because it is a joint package.

The Chair: — That sounds good. So welcome, Mr. Bernstein, to the table.

Mr. Bernstein: — Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here.

The Chair: — We'll proceed with the joint presentation on the communications package.

Mr. Fenwick: — When we made the first half of this presentation last year, I was the new kid on the block, so I was able to look at Deb Parker-Loewen and say, why don't you carry this ball? And Marv's returned the favour this year, so he's asked me to initially begin the presentation.

The short summary is that last year the two offices, Ombudsman Saskatchewan and the Children's Advocate for Saskatchewan, made a submission that resulted in this board . . .

And we're very appreciative of the fact that you approved funding for the purchase of a new complaint or case tracking system. You approved that information technology package over two years in the total sum of \$110,000 to be shared between the two offices. You advised us last year that \$72,000 of that would be in the 2005-2006 budget and that although you were approving the additional sum of \$40,000 in principle, we needed to come back this year to make that request formally. Well it's year two and we're back.

Last year we heard the board say loudly and clearly that, while the funding was being granted, you had some questions about the specifics of our proposal and that you expected us to go out and do due diligence. And we heard that and we did so. We also heard the board say last year that you had a preference for the purchase of an off-the-shelf package as opposed to a custom-built package. And we heard that message as well. We listened and that is in fact what we did.

I certainly could answer questions that you might have about what the entire process was, but the short version is that we contacted and worked with the Information Technology Office. We contacted and worked with the Saskatchewan Property Management folks through a tendering process, and we had great assistance from Jeremy at the information technology office here at the Legislative Assembly. And as a result of that, the decision was made that we would purchase a system off the shelf that is currently in use with the ombudsman's offices in British Columbia and Alberta.

And so we have purchased that package. We're now in the process of tweaking it to meet our individual needs. It's a system that we're going to share between our two offices, that will share features, as a matter of fact, with our cousins to the west in both provinces as well and that gives us certain advantages and efficiencies. And we hope to be up and running by April 1, 2006, or shortly thereafter.

We've been able to customize the package in a way that we think will work well for both of our offices. I think it's fair to say we have not had to do significant compromises to make it work for both offices together. And although we're still playing with it, we're tinkering with it — we have the programmer working on the necessary changes — it looks like it's going to be a very good product for us and be reliable which is a big part of what we were looking for.

With respect to what we need from the board this year or what we're respectfully requesting from the board is simply that you provide us with the second phase of that funding that we alluded to last year which would be the additional sum of \$40,000 to be divided between the two offices. And I think our tradition has been that we split those 60/40 between the two offices based on the sizes of our respective staffs. So it would be \$24,000 which would essentially be attributed to the Office of the Ombudsman and \$16,000 to the Office of the Children's Advocate.

We're on track. There is a chance that we may actually come in slightly under budget for this year. We don't know that yet — I don't want to get your hopes up — but it's possible. But we certainly won't be over budget for this year. If we're not on, we'll be under and that's somewhat unusual in the world of

information technology we appreciate.

Mr. Bernstein: — Thank you. I think the only points that I would want to add is that all of the workup and all of the developmental consideration has been done in contemplation that there would be a second phase to the funding allocation. And through the various issues that are going to be tracked through this computer information system, we're all going to be in a much better position in terms of engaging in effective systemic advocacy because we're going to be able to identify particular issues that come up in certain files. And we think that this is going to help us programming-wise and help us in terms of meeting the needs of the mandates of our respective offices. So we would certainly be very appreciative respectfully in terms of receiving the allocations that both our offices are relying upon based upon the work that was done this past year as well.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. The Chair recognizes Ms. Harpauer.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. When do you expect to have your new system up and running?

Mr. Fenwick: — We're hoping April 1. We made the purchase in October, November and we formally went ahead with it. There is a programmer that works full time — somewhat different system than we have — but there is a programmer works full time with the Office of the Ombudsman in British Columbia, and she looks after their systems and that's who we've purchased from. So she is programming as we speak literally and we're hoping at least on the Ombudsman side that we'd be up and running April 1. I think on the Children's Advocate side it might be a bit later.

Mr. Bernstein: — I think that we're anticipating that there may be a slight gap of about three months so we probably would activate the system for our office probably the beginning of July.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Mr. McMorris.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you. You had mentioned there is a chance of sharing with someone to the west of . . . Can you just elaborate? I don't quite know what you meant by that.

Mr. Fenwick: — There is some commonality in the system of course with British Columbia and Alberta. So we're not going to be sharing information certainly, nothing like that. But in terms of the resources, BC developed the system originally; Alberta adapted it. So we've been able to piggyback onto what Alberta had done because their method of practice from the ombudsman perspective at least is more similar to Saskatchewan's than is BC's. So we've been able to share the development work that they did.

That's what I was referring to, although our hope would be — and this is something that we've had preliminary discussions with the technology office here at the Legislative Assembly — is that this service may also be workable for the Privacy Commissioner, for example. They don't have a complaint tracking system yet, so we've had some very preliminary discussions with Gary about the possibility of them coming on

board.

The other possibility that we're very interested in is actually having the system hosted on a server here at the Legislative Assembly. And the Legislative Assembly would serve as the host potentially for a number of the independent officers rather than us running separate systems.

So we are interested in that. When we've had those discussions so far, what we've been told is that there just isn't the capability in this building, yet but there may be down the road. And we're certainly open to that. Again we've heard from this board before that the sharing of resources is a good way to go, and we agree.

Mr. Bernstein: — And we have a flexibility in the contract that we ventured into to bring it back to Saskatchewan and host it here in this province or within the legislature.

Mr. McMorris: — And there would be efficiencies then in that?

Mr. Fenwick: — We think that there would be. We're not sure yet, but we think that there may very well be. So we would want to investigate that.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. And that will conclude the combined portion of the presentation with respect to computers. And I invite you, Mr. Bernstein, to continue with the presentation from the Office of the Children's Advocate.

Office of the Children's Advocate

Mr. Bernstein: — Thank you. Now I have the pleasure of more formally introducing Bernie Rodier, to my left, who is our director of administration, and Glenda Cooney, who is our deputy children's advocate.

This is my first opportunity to appear in front of this board as Saskatchewan Children's Advocate, and I am delighted to be presenting our office's budget request for your consideration. I know that you've reviewed the written submission that's been provided to the board, and therefore I intend to merely highlight some key points by way of introductory remarks before responding to any questions that you may have for me.

In addition to Ms. Cooney and Ms. Rodier, I would like to go on record as acknowledging the support and dedication of all the staff members who work at the Children's Advocate office. They've been of great assistance to me over the past several months and are passionately committed to making a positive difference in the lives of all children and youth in this wonderful province.

As well I wish to acknowledge and express appreciation to the administrative and other staff at the Legislative Assembly for the support and assistance that they have been extending to our office. That's been highly valued and it has been of tremendous benefit to our office.

As you know our office was created in November 1994, and I have the honour and privilege of being the second Children's Advocate appointed for the province of Saskatchewan. We have

a specific legislative mandate as defined in The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act which was enacted in 1994, and the statute has served as visionary legislation for the past 11-plus years. Under this legislation, we work diligently to ensure that the interests and well-being of children are respected and valued, both in the community and in government practice, policy, and legislation.

In addition to my position we have 12.1 full-time equivalent positions in our office. Of those positions, 1.6 are in-scope staff and 10.5 are out-of-scope staff.

Our office's work is based not only on our legislation but also on our strategic plan. Accordingly our budget proposal reflects both elements out of our legislation and our office's five priority areas as set out in our strategic plan. These priority areas are rooted in our office's belief that all people, and especially children, must be treated with respect, recognizing their inherent dignity as human persons. And the priority areas that follow and flow from that underlying principle are as follows.

One, individual and group advocacy, this involves advocating for the interests and well-being of children and amplifying their voice in a case-specific manner. So when there are individual concerns or difficulties with particular government departments, there will be contact made with our office for us to see whether or not we can advocate on behalf of the particular child and resolve the issue.

The second priority area is investigations. This involves promoting public accountability for comprehensive and impartial investigations, including both child death reviews and critical injury reviews which are important activities within our office.

The third priority area is public education and youth voice. This involves educating the public and community groups and stakeholders as to the rights and entitlements of children and young people. This includes public and professional presentations; the publication of position papers; the organization of presentations of the rights advocacy project to young people in school settings; community development and advocacy; the development and distribution of public education materials; and the maintenance of two websites, one which is a public website and the other which is specifically designed to meet the needs of youth in this province.

The fourth priority area is systemic advocacy. This involves identifying patterns or themes where government services have not been meeting the needs of children and youth and then using this information to advocate for and recommend systemic change to address these service gaps and promote the interests and well-being of these young persons. In the area of systemic advocacy, youth voice is critical in informing and shaping all of the positions and recommendations being taken forward by our office. So we heavily involve focus groups and youth perspective before we advance positions where we talk about trying to scope out approaches that are going to have large impacts within the system.

The last priority area is administration. This involves providing high quality service in the administration of all facets of our

office's activities. You also receive a comprehensive annual report from our office. And periodically we also produce other reports with findings and recommendations which we release either through tabling in the House or in some other manner in accordance with our legislation.

Having regard to the framework of our 2006-07 budget proposal, the first section identifies expenditure estimates for both personal and non-personal services based upon projected status quo programming levels and our best known assumptions at the time that this proposal was prepared. The subsequent section consists of a funding request to complete the replacement of our computer information management system, which is a shared resource with the Provincial Ombudsman's office. And we've just had a chance to provide our remarks with respect to that.

As mentioned we are presenting a status quo programming budget. We have not asked for funding to support any new initiatives other than the \$16,000 for stage 2 of the information management system. This funding request has been presented to you.

So I'll move on to make some more general comments in terms of some of the staffing issues and some of the drivers that I think that you've heard about from the various independent officers in the different presentations today.

Although the total percentage increase over our 2005-06 allocation may appear at first glance to be beyond the norm of the status quo programming budget proposal, it is important to note that the factors contributing to this increase are as a direct result of variables outside of our office's control.

The factors that we would like to identify are as follows: anticipated salary increments for eligible in-scope staff; anticipated 2 per cent cost-of-living adjustments for all in-scope staff on October 1, 2006; anticipated residual increases generated by a new out-of-scope classification plan implemented in 2005-06 affecting 10.5 full-time equivalent out-of-scope staff whereby they receive salary increases of at least 2 per cent on September 1, 2005. Next, the reclassification of two out-of-scope positions at higher levels within our office. Also anticipated 3 per cent cost-of-living adjustments for all out-of-scope staff on July 1, 2006. Then additionally anticipated 4 per cent performance pay increases for eligible out-of-scope staff effective July 1, 2006. And then an anticipated 3 per cent increase for statutory personal services expenditures effective April 1, 2006, in addition to the previous carry-over salary increase on September 1, 2005.

The end result of all of these different computations is twofold: firstly, the total increase over the 2005-06 allocation for budgetary personal services expenditures is projected to be \$69,600 of which \$68,500 is earmarked for out-of-scope staff. Secondly, the total increase over the 2005-06 allocation for statutory personal services expenditures is projected to be \$24,700.

I also wish to point out that we've endeavoured within our office to be fiscally responsible at all times and have solved our own shortfalls over the past fiscal year. Have we done that?

Well we've used our vacancies to cover off the monies required to pay for the following unanticipated expenditures: first, the increases of at least 2 per cent for 10.5 staff generated by the new out-of-scope classification plan which has been in effect since September 1, 2005, we've covered that off; secondly, the increase in statutory personal expenses which took effect on September 1, 2005; and lastly, the relocation expenditures incurred by my office to accommodate my move to this province.

We've worked hard at not having to utilize a special warrant and to have absorbed this within our own budget allocation. Having said this, we are in a similar position as our friends from the Ombudsman's office. We are not anticipating the same kind of flexibility and the ability to use vacancy factors in the next fiscal year, so that the monies that we're seeking are monies that we really need in terms of specific allocations.

Before wrapping up, I want to underscore that it is still early in my tenure, and I am presently reviewing existing structures and the proper balancing of the various priority areas within my office. Accordingly I wish to advise you and alert you that there may be some revitalized initiatives that I will be advancing in next year's budget proposal. However this year what we're advancing is essentially a status quo programming budget, and the only new monies was really phase 2 of the computer information project.

In summary then, I am respectfully requesting that the Board of Internal Economy recommend to the Legislative Assembly an appropriation for the Children's Advocate office of \$1,294,900 for the fiscal year 2006-07 which represents an overall increase of 7.4 per cent or \$88,900 over our 2005-06 allocation. And having made these remarks, I, like Mr. Fenwick, would be prepared to receive any questions that you might have. Thank you.

The Chair: — Well thank you very much for the very direct and straightforward presentations, both Mr. Bernstein and Mr. Fenwick and their respective staffs. It looks like you've done such a good job that everybody understands exactly what you want.

So I thank you very much for your presence, and again I think we've got your phone numbers just in case. But if not, we'll get them just in case there's something needed and we wouldn't have to hold you up any longer.

Mr. Bernstein: — Thank you so much. Thank you.

Proposed Budget for Compensation Review

The Chair: — Now committee members, item 12, the consideration for the proposed budget for the independent commissioner to review MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] compensation. There's some background information supplied for you under the tab, item 12. The recommendation is that the proposed budget in the amount of \$20,000 for the independent review of MLA compensation be approved and that the Board of Internal Economy authorize that the funding for this review be paid from the Legislative Assembly appropriation.

Just by way of background, the funding for this would come from the board. Your endorsing of this funding would be a signal, I think, to the legislative executive to authorize the appointment of a commissioner. Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much. I just would like to correct. The scope that you're referring to is not the scope of which we want the review to . . . the nature and the scope of the review. The proposed review is to only examine the annual indemnity of MLAs — not compensation — only the annual indemnity.

Ms. Ronyk: — And that's in the draft in the motion and it's on its way here.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Okay.

The Chair: — So we'll incorporate that into the motion then. And the motion is . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — Linda was getting that typed up.

The Chair: — Oh okay. The Chair recognizes Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, I would move:

That the Board of Internal Economy request the Lieutenant Governor in Council to appoint a commissioner pursuant to subsection 65(2) of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005 to review the MLA basic annual indemnity authorized under section 47 of the above Act.

The Chair: — Do I have a seconder? Mr. McMorris. It has been moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That the Board of Internal Economy request the Lieutenant Governor in Council to appoint a commissioner pursuant to subsection 65(2) of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005 to review the MLA basic annual indemnity authorized under section 47 of the above Act.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Is it the pleasure of the Committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? If not, motion is carried unanimously.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move subject to that we pass the last motion:

That a proposed budget in the amount of \$20,000 for the independent review of the MLA annual indemnity be approved and that the Board of Internal Economy authorize that the funding for such review will be paid from the Legislative Assembly appropriation.

The Chair: — Is there a seconder to that motion? Ms. Harpauer. I will take it as read. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? None. The motion is carried unanimously.

Legislative Assembly Service

The Chair: — I do believe that we are prepared, then, to move to item 13, decision item review of the 2006-2007 budget for the office of the Legislative Assembly. I will start the discussion on this by making a few introductory comments.

I want to just mention that the activities of the Legislative Assembly Office are completely under the auspices of the board which sets policies for all and reviews the services and the funding to all MLAs and also reviews the budgets for the independent offices, which we have just been doing.

The service that the Legislative Assembly Office provides to the members is . . . some of it is quite visible of course, that is, those things that are needed to keep the Assembly and the committees functioning, and also the functions that the Speaker's office is requested to host for the general public. There's also a lot of things that are in the budget that are not very visible like, for example, the works of the *Journals* portion, the *Hansard*, the administering of all the directives that the board members provide which is with respect to keeping the constituency offices and caucus funding functioning. And sort of in between those are the semi-visible . . . I shouldn't say semi-visible. It's very visible but not as often as publicly noticeable are the functions of things like the library that are also included in this budget.

I have to say that we've come through a very, very busy and very productive year, this being the centennial year, that we have done. Some of the highlights I'd like to put on the record — the introduction of the gift shop, all the centennial celebrations. We hosted the Midwest Legislative Conference here. We hosted Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. We did some recruiting and appointments to the independent officers personnel. There were considerable improvements done to constituency assistants' pay and their benefits over the last year. We have been working in preparation for the new MIDAS [Multi-Informational Database Application System] model payroll, administering the new Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

And the special compliment, I think, goes to information systems and broadcast services who have merged and, under the direction of Greg Putz, have . . . And we've recruited a new information officer as a manager. We've had the year to work out the bugs in the newly upgraded audio system in the Chamber, and of course, getting the live TV coverage out of the new committee room.

So for all of that I want to thank the board members for their support in putting those things together, and also I certainly want to express my appreciation to the Clerk and all of the staff that works under the Clerk and alongside the Clerk to do the

over-and-above, extra work which was in this very particularly challenging year.

Now when it comes to our budget, what we did in setting up the budget is we targeted for achieving a status quo budget plus 1 per cent. Status quo in our case includes the money to provide for the in-scope positions which are aligned with SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] and that came out to about 4.7 per cent, and that includes an estimate of 2 per cent for a COLA [cost-of-living adjustment] that would be coming into effect October 1. We also included in the status quo for provision to pay the people that are in out-of-scope aligned positions, and that would be in line with the government people which is an estimate of about 6.1 per cent which includes a 3 per cent economic adjustment.

The MLA expenses that were included in here were consistent with the directive, that is, at 1 per cent. The caucus expenses and CA [constituency assistant] expenses were estimated to be at 2.3 per cent. We assumed that there was a 76-day of sitting to come. So when we worked all of that out and we found that we had an increase which required us to make some cutbacks and we made to our original budget . . . We reduced from our original request for special events, we reduced it by about 7,000 from what we project it will actually be.

We have a saving of — from a management position — 70,000 because one management position was reduced. Some of that money of course was needed for some new equipment that was purchased in IT [information technology]. We reduced the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] grant by 16,000, and we're reducing some of the expenses for portal services through the library by about 14,000. And we have put into hiatus the request for a second committee room until the . . . I think it still will be resurrected into the future, but that won't come until this committee room itself has increased in its function as we had anticipated earlier. But we can dust that off at any time that the members feel that they want us to dust that particular proposal off.

So the request then and our budget ends up to have a total increase of, in the budget book, of 1.52 per cent over last year, and this does not include any of the funding that we've asked this morning.

I open it up then for comments or questions, maybe additional . . . anybody might want to make. And the Chair recognizes Ms. Junor.

Ms. Junor: — I want to . . . and I'm not sure where it is. I just closed my book on it, but in here I see . . . Oh page 42, part 2 — whatever that means — under estimate analysis. It says there, no funding has been provided for public hearings of the standing committees.

I understand the rationale previously . . . [inaudible] . . . we didn't do public hearings. We just had started the standing committee process. But now we are into public hearings for the first time with the Standing Committee on Human Services and anticipate that there could be at least one public hearing, an Act that initiates one public hearing for a committee a session or a term, a year, a fiscal year.

And I think that we should put some money into the budget to allow for that since we are contemplating coming back to the committee after we've . . . I'm not sure how effective that is when you decide you're going to have public hearings and then come and ask for special warrant kind of funding retroactively. I think it's a better process to put some money aside, assuming that the committees will have public hearings.

If they don't have public hearings, there's no way to spend it. I understand there's been some concern that if the money's there, the committee will spend it. Being a Chair of the committee, I'm not exactly sure how we would do that if you don't have public hearings which it's put aside for.

So I think it's time to look at this again. And I think that now that we are starting into the first process of public hearings, we can anticipate that we will only have more. So we should put some money aside. And I'm not too sure how much money. Someone could advise me on that. But I do think that this is the opportunity to do that.

The Chair: — Greg, I wonder if you could make a general comment about the funding of committees in general and the process. Greg Putz.

Mr. Putz: — Sure. As board members will recall that last year in making our budget submission, we had done a survey of all the committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs to gauge what sort of activity they might anticipate as far as hearings and intersessional meetings and many of the things that the committees are mandated to do now but hadn't been doing because the committees were so new.

The board at that time felt that the budget should not go forward, and the committee budget was reduced then down to the average level of activity, basically for the Public Accounts Committee and what used to be the Crown Corporations Committee, the Crown agencies committee. It was on that basis that the budget went forward with a nominal number of intersessional meetings for the regular amount of activities. But you're right; there was no funding put forward for committee hearings.

Now the committee hearings that you will be chairing in a matter of a week or so, those came up and, as the board had requested a year ago, that if hearings were to come up, then a special request would be made to the Board of Internal Economy. And that was approved for this current fiscal year and was approved through the process of a special warrant.

Now the question of ongoing funding for the various policy field committees . . . in particular for conducting hearings, especially in the intersessional period because that's where most of the expense comes . . . has not been included in this budget. We felt from what the board had indicated a year ago that we would not put that funding in the budget this year, assuming that it was the board's wish that if special funding for investigations and inquiries by the policy field committees was to come forward, that the board would be approached on a case-by-case basis.

Now we can give you some numbers. When the rules reforms did come forward through the second and then third report of

the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures, it was anticipated that there would be some funding put in place every year and that, on average, we'd likely have one inquiry by each of the four policy field committees, at least through a four-year term. So that had been openly discussed. And at the time it was felt that until the committees did get up and running and there was some experience with what the average level of activity might be, that the committees would not be funded.

Now as you say, that we are beginning that process. And if you wish, I can give you some options based on what we did last year as far as a proposal to the board as to what these things might cost. I could go through that with you if you wish.

Ms. Junor: — I think we should hear it.

The Chair: — Please proceed then. Oh before you do that, if you just wouldn't . . . I'd like to take a minute here because I think we've got everybody here now from the Legislative Assembly Office. And I just want to take a moment to introduce the people that are here.

Seated right beside me is Gwenn Ronyk, who's Clerk of the Assembly. And Greg Putz is at the witness table at this time. I want to introduce also Marilyn Borowski, who's with us. And Marilyn is our director of finance and member payments. And by the wall we have Linda Kaminski, and Linda's title is the director of human resource and administrative services.

Seated beside me on my left, Margaret Tulloch, assistant to the Speaker. And then along the back I want to welcome Darcy Hislop, who is here for his first budget meeting, the fellow that's doing double duty, our new chief technology officer. And let's see, then we have Ihor Sywanyk and Kerry Bond who were working with Darcy in the broadcasting end of it.

And behind them is Jeremy Phillips, who is information systems administrator. Beside Jeremy is Ken Ring, our Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk, and of course behind him is the very familiar, Pat Shaw, Sergeant-at-Arms.

In front of him is Meta Woods, Clerk Assistant; and Marian Powell, chief librarian; Pat Kolesar, assistant legislative librarian, and Lenni Frohman, who is the acting director of Hansard, is here.

So welcome to all of you. And of course, Darlene has been here all day, Darlene Trenholm, who was here working and not just looking at the budget. So welcome to all of you and to the members and thank you for allowing me this time to make these introductions, and we'll proceed now with a continuation of Greg Putz's presentation.

Mr. Putz: — Okay, I'm not sure it's too much of a presentation. I'll give you some numbers here for your consideration. When we worked out what it might cost for public hearings . . . of course this is based on our experience in the past with special committees and what those things cost as far as travel and members' expenses intersessionally because of course the members get a per diem for committee meetings intersessionally.

Committee research is what it costs to produce reports and that

sort of thing, so all of these numbers I'll give you now incorporate all of the different aspects of what it would cost to put on a hearing program for a committee.

A committee hearing that would travel the province in terms of something like we had for the Tobacco Control Committee or the child prostitution committee or Mr. Hagel's Driving Safety Committee, it's our estimate that a committee such as that, which would be about 80 hours of committee time, would cost about \$155,000 to put on, bringing forward some of those costs to 2006 dollars.

Now if you were to hold a similar sort of inquiry without travelling, the cost would be reduced to about \$140,000. But if you wanted live television, because we have to pay by the hour intersessionally, that adds on another component. Without the television, it's about \$140,000 for about an 80-hour . . . of committee hearings. It would be \$180,000 for a hearing program.

Now if you were to do a hearing program in terms of, say, 45 hours, which we do have some experience of committees doing inquiries that are about that duration, the cost would be about 90,000. If you added the live TV, doing it from this room without any travelling — that's what I'm talking about here — it would be about \$112,500. If you were to take a similar sort of program to, say for instance, three cities to outside Regina, the cost would be about \$100,000.

So that's sort of your range of options if you're looking at hearings. So there is a cost for televising them live, and there's also a cost for travel in the province and having your hearings in a number of cities other than just Regina.

The Chair: — Carry on please, Ms. Junor.

Ms. Junor: — What have we put aside or what have we anticipated for the upcoming public hearings that are going to start next week on the consumer protection Bill?

Mr. Putz: — I think we budgeted about \$30,000 and that includes television but, of course, it's a much shorter duration. There was a researcher only hired for one month. If you're doing a longer inquiry, of course you'd have a much more substantive report, and you'd need more hours for researchers. So as I was saying, that component of it was built into these other budgets.

The Chair: — Marilyn.

Ms. Borowski: — I think the budget was 58. The special warrant amount was 30.

Mr. Putz: — Right. Sorry, I was going by what it was coming out of our budget. Sorry.

Ms. Junor: — Thank you. That gives me a good idea of what we could suggest for a base number to put in just to start with if we were to go that way. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any other questions or comments on this particular portion?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Which particular portion are we on?

The Chair: — Well we are on the whole thing, but the whole . . . the item 13 on this . . . Then let's see; where's my agenda? We should be then . . . yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chairman, I think it would be a crying shame to not have Marian Powell have an opportunity to provide response to a question.

The Chair: — We invite Marian Powell to the witness table, please.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chairman, one of the things I enjoy as part of this annual exercise is hearing Ms. Powell's descriptions of the need for increase in the library funding. And so I wonder if we could just have a brief summation of the justification for the \$35,000 increase requested.

Ms. Powell: — Certainly. The \$35,000 has a number of components in it. Probably the most significant and beyond our control is our rent, which you'll see if you're looking at page 23, we've had an increase in accommodation charges. And this does not reflect any additional space; it's simply an increase in rent by SPM [Saskatchewan Property Management].

We've also had an increase in postal and courier which is a third bullet, again related to charges from SPM for handling Canada Post mail.

Beyond that and importantly, the second bullet — the \$6,700 — refers to our computer information services subscriptions. And these are the ones that provide the basis for the various special services that MLAs receive — the special edition direct user access, the paper service that many of you receive. And what's happening here is of course prices are going up from our vendors. And in terms of our special edition package, we buy the package in groupings of certain numbers of passwords, and we're within one or two of our maximum with our current package. And to buy the next lot will cost additional dollars, to buy the next 24.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — When I look at the information services subscription in your reference here, that the increase would have been \$14,000 higher than the 6,700 requested but hasn't been because one major service has been discontinued, what service has been discontinued?

Ms. Powell: — That was a service called *Command News*, and we were very excited about that, and when the members' portal was beginning we put that on the portal. We worked with it very diligently with the vendor to tailor it to our particular needs. It's based on a Canada-wide news service, but we were able to pin it down to support Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan political interests and public policy interests.

But it was over \$10,000 a year and the price was going up. The problem that we faced was the very small amount of access to the portal didn't justify at this time that large fee per year. It's not that we wouldn't want to do it later if more members are going to the portal but at the present time it was very, very tiny and we couldn't really tell how much of that tiny use was actually of this very expensive but very good database.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I think, Mr. Speaker, that concludes my questions. And I just wanted to say thank you to Marian for the outstanding professional commitment for many, many years in managing the Legislative Library services that served us well and has been fairly nimble on its feet over the time that I've been around the place in terms of adjusting the delivery of services to the needs of the members, increasing substantially in volume in a way that made use of efficiencies as technology has developed, results I think in pretty efficient delivery of service. So thank you very much Marian.

Ms. Powell: — Thank you very much. I wonder if, Mr. Speaker, if at this time it would be at all appropriate for me to make a couple of comments?

The Chair: — Could I make a couple of comments first? Members may be aware, and certainly people in the Legislative Assembly Office staff have been made aware, that Marian Powell has indicated a desire to retire from her business, and she will be leaving us around the end of May. And we want to certainly take this opportunity to thank her first of all for all of the work that she's done and the collaboration she's had and relationships she's developed with her colleagues at work and with all the MLAs and the service that you've provided not only to MLAs but caucus staff and the province as a whole has been tremendous.

And we also understand that Trevor Powell is also retiring, and they've got some good plans I think and I maybe should let you comment on it. But I just want to put on the record that we acknowledge your work and wish you the best as you go into the future. So now I recognize Marian Powell.

Ms. Powell: — Thank you very much, that's very kind. Yes, Powell and Powell are going into private business, but I would like to take a little opportunity just to respond.

I came to the library in 1982 on the heels of the special report on the legislative committee on the library. And there were 28 recommendations to modernize the library. It's always been a magnificent collection. It's provided yeoman service regardless of its resources, but in the late '70s and early '80s it was decided that it needed to move ahead. And I was fortunate enough to come in with that mandate. Since then we've seen a lot happen, and I'm glad that you've seen it too.

We've overseen a complete renovation of the reference and reading room. That happened in the '80s which allowed for the current level of computerization. I have to tell you, when I came, the whole library ran on about three extension cords. And our electric typewriter, the one we had, plugged into the overhead lights. So it was a bit pioneering.

We've also seen the introduction and now the updating of legislation to ensure the deposit of Saskatchewan government publications which of course is very, very important that Saskatchewan government information continue to be available and the electronic as well which you saw in legislation last year.

We've also seen a magnificent improvement in the housing of the collection. We've moved from four disparate locations to two much better organized ones and most importantly — and I feel this was my focus and I think probably the committee that

interviewed me thought so too — was to really focus on the MLA and try to develop and deliver services focused on his or her particular needs.

I'd like to thank the Board of Internal Economy over the years for providing an interested hearing to library matters and issues and particularly with their vision in approving the milestones of our modernization. And these are — approving the funding and positions necessary to implement the 28 recommendations of the 1981 special report on the Legislative Library, that brought us our first computer amongst the 28; approval of the library joining as a founding member of the Regina Library Information Network, RegLIN, automation consortium in December 1989 and that brought us our electronic catalogue and the integrated library system; approval of the purchase and installation of mobile library shelving at Walter Scott in 1998, and I have to say kudos to Minister Hagel who was Speaker at the time, which provided a long-range solution to a terrific space problem; and the approval last year, and we hope this year, of the current card catalogue conversion project to bring the record of this historic collection to the Legislative Assembly desktops and to the citizens of Saskatchewan on the Internet.

As more than one Speaker has said to me, Marian, the library is a hard sell. I do know that information for the Legislative Assembly is important. I call it the fuel of democracy. And so I really thank you and the other board members in the past, for your support and evolution of this service.

And lastly, but not least, I would like to thank publicly my wonderful staff, past and present, without whom none of this would be possible. You will be hard pressed to find a more able and dedicated staff. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Members, are there any other questions related to the portion of the budget we've dealt with? If not, what I will do is proceed to the B-budget request items.

B-budget items, the background information is located under tab 13, and I would ask Greg and Darcy to come to the witness table and give us just a little overview of the necessity for this.

Mr. Putz: — Mr. Speaker, I'll just introduce this topic, and then I'm going to turn it over to Darcy to give the explanation of why we're bringing this forward this year.

As members you'll probably appreciate that the lighting in the Chamber hasn't been the best and it never has been, partly because of the type of lighting that, through necessity, exists and the fact that it comes straight down on you. Now this lighting has become an issue as far as our television broadcast goes and our cameras being able to keep our members in focus — particularly members who are a little more active and move about when they speak.

And I'll let Darcy get into more of that. Maybe we might have, if there are questions, the assistance of our broadcast technicians. But if Gary Ward was here today giving his farewell speech . . . And I'd like to acknowledge Gary. He retired in December, and one of his parting comments was that the only thing that he kind of missed out in doing, as far as his career goes, is improving the lighting in the Chamber.

Gary's desire was that we have some lighting somewhat similar to this room where you get a nice, crisp, clear television picture, and the cameras are able to focus to the full extent that they're able. In the House right now, the apertures of the cameras are wide open, and there isn't much room for error. And with the present lighting, as the session goes on, the intensity of that light goes down and it does cause a problem.

And with that bit of an introduction, I think I'll turn it over to Darcy to briefly take you through the B-budget submission that you have before you, and he'll outline the different components of what is being proposed to do to improve that lighting.

Mr. Hislop: — Thanks, Greg. I think he's sort of documented some of the long history of the lighting issues in the Chamber. As a recent newcomer to the legislature, the issues certainly are well documented. I've had the opportunity to go through Mr. Ward's files. The first report I have dates back to 1991, an initial recommendation on how to improve the lighting. I think it was for the amount of about a quarter of a million dollars which was fairly significant.

In conjunction with Sask Property Management over the years, the Legislative Assembly has looked at a variety of options. One that appears to be fairly reasonable in terms of cost and in terms of accomplishing what we'd like to do, which is provide an adequate level of lighting, seems to be fairly straightforward: upgrade the light box bulbs to a different type — this will provide a better colour, provide longer lasting, and will reduce the need to replace the bulbs prior to every session — replace the lenses on the light box that are directly overhead, and this amount is approximately \$55,000.

The second piece to that is a recommendation that came out of the Ritenburg engineering associates report that talked about this light box and also recommended that supplementary lighting be examined in order to provide better lighting for the broadcast. And the primary emphasis here is to provide some indirect lighting. And so there's another 15,000 that we would like to have allocated to continue researching and finalize and test the supplementary lighting proposal that we've been looking at.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I assume this will be referred to as the Gary Ward commemorative lighting project or something of that nature. Actually what comes to mind is — as you were describing the initial cost estimating to deal with lighting — that sometimes procrastination does pay off. Some of us take great comfort in that. It's clear to me the \$55,000 related to the direct lighting, that will make us all look brighter, I presume. What's the \$15,000 for indirect lighting? Is that for background or what's that?

Mr. Hislop: — One of the options that we have examined that looks promising — we still have to do some testing to ensure that it provides the lighting we're looking for — would be to have four suspended lighting fixtures in each of the corners of the main gallery. And that would cast some sideways light on to the faces of the members there, getting rid of heavy shadowing that you get with direct overhead light.

There's potential that we may need to also add up to one additional one in centre of each of the galleries. That wouldn't be known until we actually conducted some tests. They're relatively inexpensive, although the ability to change those easily may require a little more investment up front. The fixture itself is relatively nominal. Like the one we're looking at is adequate. It's about \$500. The installation is a little more significant at about \$2,800.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So in essence it's just to reduce the shadowing effect.

Mr. Hislop: — Yes. We feel we could bring the direct light from the overhead by changing those bulbs to a reasonable level. But in order to actually assist with the broadcast quality image, we need some of that indirect lighting from an angle other than directly above.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — All righty. Is there any way of making us look taller and more slender? Is there any lighting tricks we can . . .

Mr. Hislop: — I'll leave that to my subject matter experts.

Mr. Putz: — We can probably do that on the computer . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — When would you anticipate this being installed?

Mr. Putz: — Probably immediately after the upcoming spring session.

Mr. Hislop: — The Chamber light box would be the primary one, so do that in conjunction with Property Management. And then the investigations for the supplemental, that will depend somewhat on how those investigations go.

Mr. Putz: — We're assuming — and until we have the fixture in and have some feedback from lighting experts that the suspended fixtures will improve the lighting as well — the replacement of the lights in the light box will just nominally, marginally improve the lighting. It'll make the lighting more consistent through the session because as we go through a session, the light intensity drops to the point where it's way below the acceptable standards for even reading and writing in that room and never mind television broadcasts. But we're anticipating that with the suspended lighting that we'll get some improvement there. And I'm not sure whether one of the technicians want to speak to that, whether I've captured in essence what the consultants . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well that was . . . really my final question is that, I mean, to have lighting improve the picture for television purposes is certainly not insignificant. But I was interested in knowing whether this would do something to increase just the lighting for reading purposes. Quite frankly sometimes it affects the mood in the place I think particularly in a long day and you're in there in the evening hours. The lighting just becomes a bit depressing.

Mr. Hislop: — The third paragraph of the background section of the note talks about the light meter readings. When we first get the bulbs changed, approximately 430 lux which is

considered an adequate level. There's a footnote on the first page that, for reading and writing, 300-500 lux is the recommended illumination by the engineering society, that that actually drops down to 215 lux at the dais in the corners as little as one month later. Under average conditions if you look at the length of time that session sits . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Does that mean the Speaker is the least bright of all of us then?

Mr. Hislop: — I'll defer comment.

An Hon. Member: — Order, order.

Mr. Putz: — Not this Speaker at least.

Mr. Hislop: — So then only the Clerks' table in the centre area of the front benches are receiving what is considered to be adequate lighting for reading.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — It's good that the Clerks can see anyhow. So that will be . . . so what you're saying is that will be substantially improved then, the lighting on the members' desks right through all the rows of the desks.

Mr. Hislop: — Much more consistent across all the depths and corners.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay, thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. Do you have a comment on this? Gwenn Ronyk.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, I just have one more comment on the corner lighting . . . would also light up some of the beautiful architectural features in the corners of our Chamber, in the ceiling, the crown effect that's up there. It's just in shadow all the time and so we lose a lot of the beauty that's there, and this suspended lighting would certainly help to improve that.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And I assume that it would be architecturally coordinated. I think that's probably a given.

Mr. Hislop: — We'd be working with Sask Property Management and the culture group, the heritage group.

Mr. Putz: — And we were reminded from a proposal that Gary Ward put forward, the quarter of a million dollar proposal that involved a chandelier, something similar to what they did in the Ontario Assembly to help with the same similar sort of problem. But at that time Steve Bata did take it to the heritage people, and he reminded me that they didn't seem to have a problem with hanging a fixture in the Chamber. So he wouldn't anticipate a problem this time around if this proposal was to pass budget phase and then go on to implementation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks.

The Chair: — Okay, Mr. Hagel. The Chair recognizes Mr. McMorris.

Mr. McMorris: — I think my question had been answered. My question was around, you know, hanging fixtures in the

galleries and what that was going to look like. I agree that increasing the lighting is, you know, what we want to do. But you know, the aesthetics is pretty important of that facility. It's pretty nice.

And a comment that I didn't realize as we got into July, that we weren't as bright as we were when we started in March — I didn't know that.

The Chair: — We don't really need a Clerk's response to that. But I would ask if, Darcy, if you would carry on and give us a brief outline of the need for the video monitor request — lounge hallway.

Mr. Hislop: — The Government Whip at the time, Mr. Yates, had proposed to the Speaker that a video monitor be installed in the hallway outside the government lounge. The purpose of the monitor would be to provide members, staff, government officials, the ability to follow proceedings while in the hallway.

Broadcast services, in conjunction with Sask Property Management, researched a variety of options, size and locations of monitors to provide that coverage in the area where those chairs sit, availability and location of cable feeds and electrical outlets, as well as the physical aesthetic requirements.

We believe that a 20-inch flat panel monitor, actually very similar to what we have here in this room, one of those could be installed close to a electrical feed and a cable feed so that we could provide that for an estimated cost of approximately \$2,000 potentially.

The Chair: — Okay. Do you have any comments or questions about that? All right, then. Thank you very much, Darcy and Greg, for assisting with this portion.

We have one other item and that is we were expecting representatives from the gift shop, who should be here momentarily.

Committee members, as we await the arrival of the representatives from the Legislative Assembly gift shop, I would ask that we skip to item 14, notice of items for discussion at future meetings. The Chair recognizes Mr. Yates for other business.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Yes, on other business, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to raise a number of issues. I'd like to start with the issue of caucus grants. The situation is such that the new classification plans in government have resulted in significant increases with implementation of those class plans to salaries throughout government. Our caucus grants have not allowed those same types of salary increases and consideration of those salary increases within those caucus grants.

So based on the tightness of budgets as a result of requirements for additional salary pressures, I would like to move:

That we move the base of the caucus grant to \$300,000.

The Chair: — Do we have a mover for a motion?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — And in addition . . .

The Chair: — Is there a seconder to the motion?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Well there's a second part to the motion I wanted to speak . . .

The Chair: — Oh okay.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — And in addition . . .

The Chair: — It's all in one motion, is it not?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — In addition, Mr. Speaker, it has been the practice in the past that severance packages within the caucus office had to be budgeted for and kept in order to deal with any issues of severance, which is a significant expense to caucuses when you don't know if you'll ever expend those funds and when.

So secondly, Mr. Speaker, I would move that, notwithstanding clause 6, the second part of my motion will be:

Notwithstanding clause 6, the amount of severance payments made to a caucus employee upon termination of employment shall not be deducted from any of the amount of that caucus monthly payment provided.

The Chair: — Now we've got the gist of the motion here. I think what we'd like to do is make sure that we've got a copy that reflects the . . . double check it for accuracy. So I would just ask that we hand the motion to Marilyn.

And in the meantime we can carry on with any discussion. I think the principle is quite straightforward. And I'll need a seconder for the motion as well, I suppose. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Mr. McMorris will second it.

An Hon. Member: — Don, we need a seconder for that motion.

Mr. McMorris: — I second it.

The Chair: — Seconded by Mr. McMorris. Moved by Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. McMorris.

The Chair: — The floor is open for discussion then on both parts of the motion.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Did you want to deal with these now, or did you want to just give notice of them now and come back to them?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I think we'll table the motion now in light of the people . . .

The Chair: — Just take notice of it. We'll use that as a notice of motion. And is there anything else under item 14 that you wanted to mention at this time or should we report back?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — There'll be a number of other items, but

we'll come back to them at a later point on the agenda.

The Chair: — Okay. Then we'll proceed to item 13, Legislative Assembly gift shop. And I would ask the representatives of the gift shop to come to the witness table.

I want to at this time welcome to the witness table Jackie Schmidt and Jacquie Messer-Lepage who have worked together many, many hours on our new and what I consider to be very successful venture into a gift shop. And both of these people are associated with the Museum Associates across the lake and have put in numerous hours of volunteer time into the gift shop. And I ask them to make their presentation at this time and their request for funding.

Ms. Messer-Lepage: — Okay, we've provided a preliminary business plan with respect to the shop but just a quick background. We decided as the Royal Saskatchewan Museum Associates to embark on this partnership with the legislature and open a shop here to help draw additional funding to the Royal Saskatchewan Museum public programming.

And so we've gone into this venture, and this first year has been actually fairly successful from our perspective. We have over the first year generated a gross profit of just over \$22,000 which we have turned back into inventory. Our total revenue from other sources including the operating grant amounted to probably about \$35,486.

The Chair: — Could you just hold this for one minute. Members of the Assembly, as we proceed into this, part of the information that we have asked the people from the gift shop to provide are some actual numbers in terms of how their business is doing. And because this is a business that could be viewed in competition with other businesses in town, I would ask that before we proceed any further with this that we go in to an in camera session for this portion. The gallery . . . Pardon me. The gift shop administration has requested that the figures that they will provide to the committee be held in confidence. Mr. Yates

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In light of that, I will move that we move in camera.

The Chair: — Is there a seconder to the motion? Ms. Harpauer. Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Ms. Harpauer that we move in camera. Is the motion carried? Is the motion agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Anybody opposed? The motion is carried. Thank you.

[The board continued in camera.]

The Chair: — The committee will come back to full session and come to order. And what we've done is taken some time to organize a series of motions based on the discussions that have taken place in camera. And what I'd like to do at this time is go back then to item 14 where we had a notice of motion with respect to caucus grants. And resulting out of the notice of motion, I have a motion here that I would like to read into the record. Moved by Mr. Harper, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That effective April 1, 2006, directive 7.2, caucus resources, be amended as follows:

In clause 3(a) and clause 3(b) delete the amount \$177,296 and replace it with the amount \$300,000.

And further that the indexing provision specified in clause 8 not be applied on April 1, 2006, to the \$300,000 amount specified in clause 3(a) and 3(b).

And further add new clause 6.1 as follows:

Where a caucus terminates the employment of a caucus employee, the amount of money that is paid as severance to the employee in accordance with guidelines approved by the Board of Internal Economy shall not be deducted from the amount of that caucus's annual grant that is determined pursuant to clause 3.

Is there any discussion on that motion? Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt that motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously. With respect to constituency assistants, there are several assistants that have now been working for a fairly long time and deserve more than three weeks holiday. So the next motion that we're to look at is a motion moved by Ms. Junor — and I'll need a seconder in a minute here:

That effective April 1, 2006, directive 6, constituency assistant expenses, be amended as follows:

(1.1) The amount specified in clause 1 is intended to fund the vacation and statutory holiday pay entitlements for constituency assistants that are entitled to vacation leave of three weeks. If a constituency assistant is entitled to vacation leave in excess of three weeks, the individual member's allowance shall be increased by the amount that is required to fund vacation leave in excess of three weeks.

That directive 6.1 constituency assistants' benefits be amended as follows:

In clause 6 insert the words, "except for the benefits specified in clause 1" after the words "The cost of the provisions outlined in this directive".

Do I have a seconder for that motion? Thank you, Ms. Harpauer. Any discussion on that motion? Is the committee agreed to adopt that motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

We had some discussion about the need for adding other associated ways that can be funded from the constituency office equipment and furniture provision, and the motion that I have before me has been moved by Ms. Junor and seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That effective April 1, 2006, that directive 24, constituency office equipment and furniture provision be amended as follows:

(1) That clause 2 definitions for technical computer support be deleted and replaced with:

“technical computer support” means remedial technical support that includes on site assistance, software/hardware troubleshooting, installation and removal of software/hardware and the design/maintenance of MLA constituency websites.

I guess that should read the design and maintenance. Any discussion on this? Pardon me. Are members agreed on that motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? None opposed. Motion is carried unanimously. There's a request from the Legislative Assembly Office to move two positions from non-permanent to permanent, and the first one is a motion moved by Ms. Junor. I'll need a seconder. It reads:

That effective April 1, 2006, the non-permanent position of human resource advisor be converted to a permanent position.

Would you like to comment on that, Linda? Oh, do I have a seconder for that motion? Okay thank you. Seconded by Ms. Harpauer. Yes, Ms. Kaminski.

Ms. Kaminski: — I just want to comment that the position, the non-permanent resource adviser, was created six years ago, and we filled it on a non-permanent basis for the past five years. The person has been working full-time, non-permanent for the past five years, and so definitely the need has been demonstrated that we need the position on a full-time, permanent basis. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Are we ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

The same explanation for this motion, moved by Mr. Hagel. I will need a seconder.

That effective April 1, 2006, the non-permanent position

of procurement/support clerk be converted to a permanent position.

I need a seconder. Thank you, Ms. Harpauer. Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

There is a request that we increase the amount that can be moved to travel allowance from \$5,000 to \$75,000. I have a motion by . . .

A Member: — Seventy-five hundred.

The Chair: — What did I say, 75,000? Sorry. I'll read the motion into the record. Moved by Mr. Harper:

That directive 4.1, constituency service expenses, be amended as follows:

in clause 3.1, delete the amount of \$5,000 and replace it with the amount of \$7,500.

Do I have a seconder? Mr. McMorris. There isn't an effective date on there. Is there a suggested date . . . [inaudible] . . . It would be effective immediately. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt this motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

I believe this one is a housekeeping amendment, moved by Ms. Junor, and I will need a seconder.

That clause 12 of directive 3.1, MLA travel and living expenses, be amended by deleting the reference (c)(ii).

Could we just have a little explanation of what this is for?

Ms. Borowski: — That's a reference that's been in the directive actually for quite some time. It was in there by mistake, and what it does is, in the calculation of the travel allowance for members of Executive Council and the Leader of the Opposition, it removes half of what is considered the accommodation allowance amount as well as half of the mileage. And that never was the board's intent, and that's actually never what we've done so this is just correcting that to take that portion out.

The Chair: — To correct the text, then. I need a seconder to the motion. Moved by Ms. Junor. Seconded by Mr. McMorris.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And what is the intention, Marilyn?

Ms. Borowski: — It was to . . . the travel allowance is

calculated with a mileage amount, and then there is also another part that is for temporary accommodation. And the idea was that the mileage probably should be halved for cabinet ministers and anyone else who has a CVA [Central Vehicle Agency] vehicle because they likely don't need to have the mileage amount. But they likely do need the secondary accommodation amount so it just reduced the amount for mileage for cabinet ministers.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Half of the mileage.

Ms. Borowski: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Thanks.

The Chair: — The motion before the committee moved by Ms. Junor, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That clause 12 of directive #3.1, MLA travel and living expenses, be amended by deleting the reference (c)(ii).

Those in favour of the motion . . . or are we agreed on motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? The motion is carried unanimously.

We're going to proceed to item 6 on the agenda, the classification renewal for Legislative Assembly Service. And the motion I have before me has been moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That effective September 1, 2005, executive government's management classification plan with a modified impact factor be applied to out-of-scope aligned positions in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly Service; and

That professional classification assistance be obtained to develop a modified impact factor for the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly Service that reflects a type of work in a parliamentary environment.

Any comments? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

We'll now go to budget items, item no. 7, review of the 2006-2007 budget for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. I will need a motion, a mover, and a seconder:

That the 2006-2007 estimates for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner be approved in the amount of 138,000, and further that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Mr. Harper. Secunder, Ms. Harpauer. Chair recognizes Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'd just

like to once again put on the record the exceptional job that the Conflict of Interest Commissioner is doing. In the last number of years, he has been able to keep his budget constant without increase and the small increase we saw this year were simply as a result of the implementation of the new management classification plan and that impact on the independent officers.

So I'd just like to, on the record, say how pleased we are with the effort and diligence with which he's done in the performance of his duties over the years.

The Chair: — Thank you. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

We proceed then to item 8, a decision item with respect to the budget of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. The proposed motion is:

That the 2006-2007 estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer be approved in the amount of \$882,000, statutory, and further that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do I have a mover for the motion? Ms. Junor. Do I have a seconder? Ms. Harpauer. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

Proceed to item 9, decision item with respect to the budget for the Office of Information and Privacy Commissioner, moved:

That the 2006-2007 estimates for the Office of Information and Privacy Commissioner be approved in the amount of 599,000; and further that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do I have a mover for the motion? Mr. Yates. A seconder? Mr. McMorris. Any discussion? Mr. Yates.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I think it's important to acknowledge the significant work that the Privacy Commissioner has done. When he first took the position he was the first Privacy Commissioner in Saskatchewan. He started with little or no staff, and he's been developing an office and a plan to move forward with the issues of privacy within our province.

And in his budget submission this year, we have given him a substantial increase, but it is to acknowledge the fact that the office represents four FTEs and the work is expanding and the timeliness of the work is important.

In the estimate, I think it should be noted that we have given him enough funds for a single new portfolio officer this year. But if those funds were expended in the latter six months of the fiscal year and he were to hire two portfolio officers, we would

entertain him coming back next year with two full-time portfolio officers in next year's budget . . . and of course just an indication of what we'd be prepared to look at a year from now.

The Chair: — Thank you. Committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? None. Motion is carried unanimously.

We proceed to item 10. This is an item with respect to the budget for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman. The motion being:

That the 2006-2007 estimates for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman be approved in the amount of \$1,816,000 as follows: budget to be voted, 1,662,000, statutory budget, 154,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do I have a mover and a seconder? Moved by Ms. Junor, seconded by Ms. Harpauer. Any discussion? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

We proceed to item 11, decision item with respect to the budget for the Office of Children's Advocate. The motion I have before me is:

That the 2006-2007 estimates for the Office of the Children's Advocate be approved in the amount of \$1,295,000 as follows: budget to be voted, 1,141,000; statutory budget, 154,000; and further that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do I have a mover? Mr. Hagel. Secunder? Ms. Harpauer. Any discussion? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? None. Motion is carried unanimously.

We now proceed to item 13, B-budget requests. And the motion that I have has been moved by Mr. Yates and seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That B-budget items be approved as follows: Chamber lighting, \$70,000; video monitor, \$2,000; gift shop, \$6,000; and be included in the 2006-2007 estimates for the Legislative Assembly.

Is there any discussion? Is it the pleasure of the committee to

adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? None. The motion is carried unanimously.

Decision item 13(c), I will need a mover and a seconder for this:

That the 2006-2007 estimates for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of 20,198,000 as follows: budget to be voted, 7,146,000; statutory budget, \$13,052,000 which includes \$43,000 of capital acquisitions.

And further that the 2005-2006 amortization expense for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$104,000 and that the 2006-2007 amortization expense for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of 112,000.

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

I need a mover and a seconder. Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded by Ms. Harpauer. Any discussion? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

What I'd like to do at this stage is propose one more motion with respect to the budget and then we'll backtrack to your suggestion.

This is now item 13(d), motion to approve revenue estimates. And I need a mover and a seconder:

That the 2006-2007 revenue estimates for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$6,000; and further that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Is there a mover? Mr. Yates. Secunder, Mr. McMorris. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? None. Motion is carried unanimously.

Under other business then to item 14, would you like to make a proposal, Mr. Yates?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. On our earlier discussions when we were talking about the gift shop and the Legislative Assembly . . . And we had a great presentation from the staff of the gift shop. As we do our budget on a year-to-year basis but they had some concern for planning towards the future, I would move:

That the grant to the gift shop this year be the \$21,000 we have put forward in the budget and then next year that we would put forward a grant in next year's budget of \$18,000.

The Chair: — Is there a seconder?

Mr. McMorris: — Can we put in the motion what we're going to budget in the year next?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — We'll put forward in the budget \$18,000 next year.

The Chair: — The question is, can we bind next year's budget by a motion?

Ms. Ronyk: — What I'm suggesting in the wording is that the board advise the gift shop that that's your intent.

The Chair: — I have a motion before me then, moved by Mr. Yates, and I will be asking for a seconder:

That the management of the Cumberland Gallery Gift shop be advised that for planning purposes, the grant for this year is approved at 21,000 and that it is the board's intention that the grant for next year be set at 18,000.

Mr. McMorris will be seconding the motion.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, are you using the terms this year and next year? Is it clear what that means . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We're actually in now . . .

The Chair: — With the approval of the mover and the seconder the motion will read:

That the management of the Cumberland Gallery Gift shop be advised that for planning purposes, the grant for 2006-2007 fiscal year is approved at 21,000 and that it is the board's intention that the grant for '07-08 fiscal year be set at \$18,000.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Any opposed? None. The motion is carried unanimously. Is there any other business? There being no other business, I would like to take a moment just to thank all the members for their diligence and persistence to work right through starting from 9 o'clock through to 5 o'clock and with a very, very brief break for lunch. And on behalf of all the Assembly officers, thank you for the diligence.

And I certainly want to thank the Assembly officers for the preparation of the budget that they've gone through and the work I guess that they have done over the past year and that they are obviously now obligated to do into the next year. So with that I think we will adjourn.

I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So moved, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Moved by Mr. Hagel that this committee do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Motion is carried.

[The board adjourned at 16:52.]