



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 12, 2007

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY
2007**

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Prince Albert Carlton

Hon. Glenn Hagel
Moose Jaw North

Ms. Donna Harpauer
Humboldt

Ms. Judy Junor
Saskatoon Eastview

Hon. Warren McCall
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Mr. Don McMorris
Indian Head-Milestone

Mr. Kevin Yates
Regina Dewdney

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Room 8 Legislative Building
Monday, February 12, 2007

Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy

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

Staff to the Board

Ms. Marilyn Borowski, Director, Finance and Member Payments
Ms. Linda Kaminski, Director, Human Resource and Payroll Services
Mr. Gregory Putz, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Ms. Margaret Tulloch, Secretary to the Board

Officials in Attendance**Office of the Chief Electoral Officer****Mr. Jean Ouellet, Chief Electoral Officer****Mr. Dave Wilkie, Assistant Electoral Officer**

Mr. Brent Nadon, Manager, Election Finances

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Mr. Gary Dickson, Information and Privacy Commissioner

Ms. Diane Aldridge, Assistant to the Commissioner

Ms. Colleen Zimmer, Assistant Manager, Communication

Mr. Clint Krismer, Portfolio Officer**Office of the Children's Advocate**

Mr. Marvin Bernstein, Children's Advocate

Ms. Glenda Cooney, Deputy Children's Advocate

Ms. Bernie Rodier, Director of Administration

Office of the Provincial Ombudsman

Mr. Kevin Fenwick, Provincial Ombudsman

Office of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Ms. Lorraine de Montigny, Director, Visitor Services

Ms. Lenni Frohman, Acting Director, Hansard

Mr. Darcy Hislop, Chief Technology Officer

Ms. Pat Kolesar, Assistant Legislative Librarian

Ms. Iris Lang, Clerk Assistant (Committees)

Ms. Melissa Bennett, Legislative Librarian

Mr. Kenneth Ring, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel

Mr. Pat Shaw, Sergeant-at-Arms

Ms. Margaret Woods, Clerk Assistant

AGENDA Moved by Mr. McCall, seconded by Ms. Harpauer, that the proposed agenda be adopted. Agreed.

MINUTES In consideration of Meeting #3/06, Minute #1661, Item 10, it was moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Ms. Harpauer:

That Item 10 from Meeting #3/06, Minute #1661, come into force on April 1, 2006.

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

Minute # 1662

Moved by Mr. Yates, seconded by Ms. Harpauer, that the Minutes for Meeting #3/06 be adopted, and that the effective date of Minute #1661 be superseded by Minute # 1662. Agreed.

ITEM 1 Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

The Estimates, in the amount of \$ 138,000, were presented by Ms. Marilyn Borowski, Director of Finance and Member Payments, on behalf of Mr. Gerald Gerrand, Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

The item was deferred until later in the day.

ITEM 2 Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

The Estimates, in the amount of \$1,329,000 were presented by Mr. Jean Ouellet, Chief Electoral Officer.

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

ITEM 3 Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

The Estimates, in the amount of \$680,488, were presented by Mr. Gary Dickson, Information and Privacy Commissioner.

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

ITEM 4 Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Children's Advocate

The Estimates, in the amount of \$1,518,900, were presented by Mr. Marvin Bernstein, Children's Advocate.

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

ITEM 5 Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman

The Estimates, in the amount of \$1,935,000 were presented by Mr. Kevin Fenwick, Provincial Ombudsman.

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

The board recessed until 1:15 p.m.

ITEM 6 Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Legislative Assembly

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

Budgetary:	\$ 7,370,000
Statutory:	\$13,403,000
Total:	\$20,773,000

The Speaker and Clerk presented the Legislative Assembly Service budgetary priorities for fiscal year 2007-2008, in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Legislative Assembly Service strategic plan.

The Board reviewed the non-status quo budgetary requests as follows:

- Development of a Second Committee Room
- Digital Collections and Metadata Librarian Position presented by Ms. Melissa Bennett, Legislative Librarian
- Committee Researcher Position
- CTS Broadcast Services Digital Migration Plan presented by Mr. Darcy Hislop, Chief Technology Officer
- Library Additional Space Proposal presented by Ms. Melissa Bennett, Legislative Librarian

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

The Board recessed for a period of time.

The Board met in camera for a short time.

The Board resumed public meeting at 4:21 p.m.

ITEM 1
(cont'd)

Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

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

That the 2007-2008 Estimates of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner be approved, as submitted, in the amount of \$138,000;

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 # 1663

ITEM 2
(cont'd)

Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

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

That the 2007-2008 Estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer in the amount of \$1,174,000 (Statutory) be transmitted to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1664

ITEM 3
(cont'd)

Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

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

That the 2007-2008 Estimates of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be approved in the amount of \$675,000;

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 # 1665

ITEM 4
(cont'd)

Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Estimates for the Office of the Children's Advocate

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

That the 2007-2008 Estimates of the Children's Advocate be approved in the amount of \$1,450,000 as follows:

Budgetary to be voted:	\$1,289,500
Statutory:	\$ 160,500;

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 # 1666

**ITEM 5
(cont'd)****Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman**

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

That the 2007-2008 Estimates of the Provincial Ombudsman be approved in the amount of \$1,935,000 as follows:

Budgetary to be voted:	\$1,775,000
Statutory:	\$ 160,000;

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 # 1667

**ITEM 6 (a)
(cont'd)****Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Legislative Assembly**

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

That the 2007-2008 Estimates of the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$21,023,000, which includes the capital acquisition fund of \$250,000;

The 2007-2008 Estimates include:

Budgetary to be voted:	\$ 7,620,000
Statutory:	\$13,403,000
Including capital acquisitions of	\$ 15,000;

And further,

That the 2007-2008 amortization expense for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$97,000;

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 # 1668

**ITEM 6 (b)
(cont'd)****Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Revenue Estimates for the Legislative Assembly**

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

That the 2007-2008 Revenue Estimates for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$5,000;

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

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1669

**ITEM 6 (a)
(cont'd)****Decision Item: Approval of Capital Acquisition Fund**

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

That the Board of Internal Economy approve a capital acquisition fund, in the amount of \$250,000 for refurbishment projects within the Legislative Assembly, to be determined by the Legislative Assembly Service in consultation with the Board of Internal Economy;

And further, that this fund shall remain in existence for each of the next five fiscal years as follows:

2007-2008	\$250,000
2008-2009	\$250,000
2009-2010	\$250,000
2010-2011	\$250,000
2011-2012	\$250,000

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1670

ITEM 6 (a)
(cont'd)

Decision Item: Legislative Assembly Committee Researcher Position

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

That a permanent research position for standing committees be created effective April 1, 2007.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1671

ITEM 6 (a)
(cont'd)

Decision Item: Grant Funding for the Cumberland Gallery Gift Shop

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

That notwithstanding Minute #1650 of Mtg. #1/06, the Board approves additional grant funding for the Cumberland Gallery Gift Shop in the amount of \$5,000 to be used to host musical events at the Legislative Building for the fiscal year 2007-2008 .

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1672

ITEM 6(c)

Decision Item: Motion to adopt Legislative Assembly Service strategic plan and budgetary priorities, in accordance with the approved Budgetary and Statutory Expenditure Estimates

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

That the Legislative Assembly Service strategic plan, priorities and objectives for fiscal year 2007-2008, in accordance with the approved Budgetary and Statutory Expenditure Estimates be approved as outlined in the Legislative Assembly 2007-2008 Estimates document.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1673

ITEM 7

Table Item: Legislative Assembly Third Quarter Financial Report and Fiscal Forecast

The Chair tabled the report.

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

That the third quarter financial and fiscal report for the 2006-2007 fiscal year be received and approved.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

Minute # 1674

ITEM 8 Other Business: Amendments to Directive #3.1 – MLA Travel and Living Expenses

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

Effective April 1, 2007, that Directive #3.1 – *MLA Travel and Living Expenses* be amended as follows:

1. That in subclause 11(a)(ii), “\$4,880*” be deleted and replaced with “one-half of the amount calculated in subclause 11(b)(ii); and
2. That in subclause 11(b)(ii), “\$9,760*” be deleted and replaced with “the amount specified in clause (4) multiplied by 365”; and
3. That in subclause 11(c)(ii), “\$9,760*” be deleted and replaced with “the amount calculated in subclause 11(b)(ii); and
4. That in subclause 11(c)(iii), “\$4,880*” be deleted and replaced with “one-half of the amount calculated in subclause 11(c)(ii); and
5. That in subclause 11(d)(ii), “\$9,760*” be deleted and replaced with “the amount calculated in subclause 11(b)(ii); and
6. That clause (14) be added as follows:

“Notwithstanding subclause (11)(b)(ii), when a fiscal year is a leap year, the amount specified in clause (4) is to be multiplied by 366.”

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

Minute #1675

The Board adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

ITEM 2 Addendum: Decision Item: Review of the 2007-2008 Budget for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Following the meeting, it was determined that the amount of \$1,174,000 approved for the 2007-2008 Estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer was made in error. The amount to be approved should have been \$1,299,000 (Statutory), which includes capital acquisitions of \$125,000.

When the error was discovered, the Board acted to correct the amount meant to be approved. By agreement of members of the Board, the corrected amount was transmitted by the Chair to the Minister of Finance for inclusion in the Estimates. The correction of this error will be ratified at the next meeting of the Board.

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
Chair

Margaret Tulloch
Secretary

Notice of Next Meeting Date: April 16, 2007 at 5:15 p.m.

[The board met at 09:00.]

The Chair: — Well good morning, members of the Board of the Internal Economy. Welcome to our annual budgetary meeting. You have a great big long agenda before you, a challenge to complete in one day.

Our duty today is to review the budgets for the years 2007-2008 for the independent officers of the Assembly and also for the Legislative Assembly Service itself. The proposed agenda is that we go proceed with, before lunch, with the budgets for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, followed by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, then the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and then the Office of the Children's Advocate. That would be followed likely by lunch, and then by the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman. And then we will get to the review of the budget of the Legislative Assembly Office.

Now before adopting the agenda I would just like to get a little bit of feedback from the members. Typically what we do is we ask each of the officers to present a brief outline of some of their requests and there's time for question and answer, and that's the way I would recommend we proceed. But I will be open to suggestions if members want to have some other way that they'd like to do it. I know that members of the board have had this information before them for a couple of weeks so members of the board may want to start directly with questions, but I want to find out.

And I want also to find out from members whether you want to schedule a noon break promptly at 12 or do you want flexibility there.

And also do members wish to make decisions on items as we go along one by one or do they wish to just have the presentation and then look at it after?

And at this time before I just proceed any further I want to introduce with me that I have Margaret Tulloch as well, the secretary to the board; Marilyn Borowski, who's from financial services; and our Clerk here for the first time in his new position, Greg Putz. So welcome him to the meeting. And the Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Just in response to your question, Mr. Speaker. I think what I would recommend is that we proceed with our traditional way of review with the presentation and Q's and A's [question and answer] and I would ask that we defer our decisions until we've heard all of them and have had a chance to have an in camera discussion and then do the decision, make the decisions on all of the proposals after that.

As for lunch, I'd hate like heck to miss lunch, you know, so whatever is the appropriate break in between officers that's around about noon I would recommend it's just a dandy time to take a lunch break. That's my story.

The Chair: — Are we agreed upon that? I see some heads nodding so thank you very much and that will be the way we proceed. So you have then before you the agenda and I would ask for a motion for approval of the proposed agenda.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — So moved.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall moved and a seconder? Ms. Harpauer. Those in favour? Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously.

We have some draft minutes from the meeting no. 3 of the year '06 which have been distributed. Do we need a motion on that?

A Member: — Yes.

The Chair: — And that's in the blue cover, under a blue cover. And the motion that's required for this is the motion that the minutes for meeting no. 3 in the year '06 be adopted. I think what this is comprised of is, there's part of it's under blue cover and it's repeated again under white, on white bond. Under blue cover includes the transcript as well, some transcripts as well.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I think, Mr. Speaker, the minutes at first glance seem to be accurate. But I think it's appropriate that item 10 have a coming-into-force date attached to it. Is it your advice that we deal with that at this point or at a later point on the agenda?

The Chair: — I believe the recommendation is that this be effective April 1, 2006. So this would be a motion that we would put at this meeting today. So I think perhaps what we should do then is maybe adopt this first and then have that motion on our next . . . no? Okay. Then a motion pertaining to item 10.

Mr. Yates: — I move that item 10 take effect April 1, 2006.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Yates that item 10 take effect April 1, 2006. Seconded by Ms. Harpauer. Any other discussion? Those who favour the motion? Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Mr. Yates: — I move we adopt the minutes as amended.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Yates that we adopt the minutes of meeting 3, the year '06, as amended, seconded by Mr. McMorris. Those in favour of the motion, please raise your hand. Any opposed? None. The motion is carried unanimously. Thank you.

Item no. 1, a decision item regarding the review of the 2007-2008 budget proposals for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Mr. Gerrand is unable to be here today. However Marilyn Borowski is here and is prepared to answer any comments or questions. As usual Mr. Gerrand has put forward a very straightforward budget proposal.

Mr. Yates: — There are no questions I believe, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — No questions. Thank you. Then we'll proceed to item 2. And at this time I would invite the officer, the Chief Electoral Officer of the province of Saskatchewan to the table. Good morning, Mr. Ouellet. I would ask that you start by introducing your officials that you've brought with you and then proceed with the presentation that you might want to make today.

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Mr. Ouellet: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To my left is Dave Wilkie, the assistant chief electoral officer. To my right is Brent Nadon, who's the manager of elections finance. Thank you very much, members of the Board of Internal Economy, to host me again.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Oh, I didn't catch Brent's last name.

Mr. Ouellet: — Nadon.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Nadon.

Mr. Ouellet: — Nadon. N-a-d-o-n. And I'm Jean Ouellet, obviously. Once again, it's a pleasure to put before you the annual report on plans and priorities of the office. This year I will particularly be brief since we're in the midst of a by-election at this time in the constituency of Martensville.

The reports on plans and priorities this year has been streamlined to emphasize the costs that are required by the office to be election ready.

Our priorities in 2007 and '08 include the completion of preparation for the 26th general election which, if we are to believe the media, should occur either in the spring, in the fall, or next spring, and build an information technology strategy in preparing to implement a permanent electronic list of voters.

We're also responsible for providing a public education and information program. Our priority includes the provision of timely and quality public education programs including a redesigned, user-friendly website, assurance that support on electoral matters is available for members of the Legislative Assembly, the public, registered political parties, candidates, and any other stakeholders. We will also focus on special outreach efforts targeting new, young voters and Aboriginal electors.

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

To summarize the office requirements for fiscal 2007 and '08, we're asking for an additional \$447,000 — 104 will be allocated to personnel services, which is \$37,000 to increment for five existing positions and \$67,000 for returning officers training. In addition we require \$293,000 to be allocated to suppliers' payments in order to be fully election ready. The details which appear on page 914 of our document reports the plans and priorities.

Lastly the office requests \$125,000 in capital costs to implement the second module of its system, of its election system which is a management system which includes online results.

Although a 50 per cent increase in the budget from year to year

may be termed excessive, allow me to put it into perspective for the benefit of the members of the board. The amount of request is not the new operational standards for the office. Every year we include in the reports of plans and priorities estimates for various electoral scenarios — such as by-election, general election, enumerations outside an electoral period, town votes and so on, and plebiscite — one of which is a general election. This year's estimates amount for general election is 9.7 million as a result of the amendments of March 22, 2006. These funds are not spent exclusively in the year that an event is called. Rather the money is spent under three distinct phases.

The first and longer phase is the election readiness phase with such projects as the ones that are proposed before you in this budget document. The second phase is the conduct of the event itself. That includes payment of election officials, locations of polls, advertising. And the third and final phase is the reimbursement of candidates and parties. And that goes almost a year after an election.

So I thank you for your time this morning and would be glad to answer as many questions as you may have. Thank you.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much. I'd just like some clarification as to . . . When you were talking about that the expenses for the election for a non-base year really are spread out over a number of years, so the expectation is your request this year would not necessarily reflect what your request would be say the year after an election or . . .

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

Mr. Yates: — So it's not really a base year that we're talking about in this. We're talking about what's required this year in order to be prepared for the election if it's this year or early next year.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes. Basically our base is our salary for five positions, our rent for our office, our telephone and telecommunications, and that amounts to somewhere between 7 and \$800,000. And therefore this year, that's why — because we're requesting an extra \$447,000 to be election ready — that would be that chunk of the estimates of the general election that we would bring into the operational budget, which would not be the case next year.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much. Just a couple of specific questions that I think would be helpful just for us to have a little better understanding. Under telecommunications we see an increase from roughly, and it's coded five twenty-seven six hundred, from 1,000 to 9,600. Could you explain why that increase?

Mr. Ouellet: — Sure, it's quite simple. Basically the Minister of Justice did state at the time of introduction of the amendments to the Bill, which was Bill 119, that the province would want to put into place a permanent list of electors. And therefore this doesn't really happen overnight. So we have to put infrastructure in place to receive that information, one of which is we had looked at electoral system, management system that were offered to us to host the register of electors for

Saskatchewan. We had offers from British Columbia, from Ontario, and Alberta that were offering us their intellectual property. We did a study as to what would be the best approach for this province since we want a solution that fits Saskatchewan, and the Alberta system was the best approach since it is web reliant. And so to be web reliant you also have to have access.

In the past we used to communicate with our stakeholders, high-speed Internet. We now no longer are able to use that because of the infrastructure that we're putting into place, so now we need T1 and a T1 costs about \$855 a month. And that's the explanation of why we're going from \$1,000 which is high-speed to a full T1 access so that when our 58 returning officers wish to have access to the electoral information system, they will be able to do so.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. That's all my questions for the time being.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. A small number of questions, Mr. Ouellet.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — First of all, just on the general approach to the budget proposal, we all recognize that you have the authority to do what is necessary in order to meet the obligations of the office required under The Elections Act to ensure that procedures are properly followed and resourced and prepared and so on.

It struck me as odd that you referred to a number of things, and I'd like to go through some of them in your base budget, which at first glance seemed to me to be things that are more, they're not appropriate to an ongoing base in that sense of the word — and I need some comment there — but more appropriate to general election readiness. So before getting into some of the specifics, why is it that you would take that approach to proposing the budget as opposed to those things which are general election readiness not being included in your options for a general election, for example?

Mr. Ouellet: — Generally, as indicated, our operational budget is fairly standard — salaries, rent, and so on, telecommunications. Every year amounts from the statutory estimates such as a general election must be brought into the operational budget so that members of the board can make the decision on the entire picture as to, you know, what we choose to live with. Because we do accept the board's recommendation. And we do live with the board's recommendation, although being statutory — as you indicated — if something's got to be done, something's got to be done. Similarly last year, for example, the board approved \$882,000 for the office. That's the operational part of our budget, and we will live through that. And we are well on that target.

However, we now have had two by-elections, so we have had to add to our estimates \$446,000. So our budget now becomes 1,200. So by-elections are sort of a different breed as opposed to a general election where the general election preparation

really . . . As I said, there's three phases to a general election, not just the conduct itself but the after and the before, getting ready for it. I mean, if we'd wait until our Premier would call a general election, we'd have to go to his office and say, I'm sorry; I'm not quite ready. Could we just delay that a little bit? And I don't think that would be acceptable to our Premier. And since we do not have permanent election dates yet, so we have to do that. Does that answer your question?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, I think so. I guess what I hear you saying is that there will be some pre-election readiness requirements which have to be done before the election is called, and the budget you propose is really the budget that kicks into place at the point that the writ is issued.

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, yes. I think then in that case what I'd like to do is go through some of the items here where your base budget proposals are substantially higher than they were in the previous year. I suspect that I'm going to find a common theme to the answers.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — It would be, I think, appropriate in the presentation of your budget to the board in a similar circumstance in the future to, just in the interest of clarity, to pull those things that you see adding to your real ongoing base operations that are general election readiness items, just to help us clarify.

So if we could just go through and I can ask some specifics. First of all, 521,350, the fees. Then we see a very substantial increase there. Is that related to general election readiness?

Mr. Ouellet: — Five twenty-one, three fifty.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes.

Mr. Yates: — It's on page 17 . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, page 17. I'm looking on page 17.

Mr. Yates: — Of appendix 1.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes, of appendix 1. Yes.

Mr. Ouellet: — Oh, okay. Just before I explain, I hear you quite well and maybe next year we'll prepare our estimates into two columns — truly operational and then truly election readiness or whatever.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes. I have to admit when I first looked at it and I thought, my goodness gracious here, this is looking like a huge . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — It is.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes. I mean this is a, obviously it's a huge increase that you're . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — Absolutely.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Over what you would normally consider to be base.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes. The increase in the fees and inspection and searches and so on, you will notice on the previous page where it says employee education expenses. There is nothing there any more in the budget. There was 4,000 the year before. This is the MIDAS [Multi-Informational Database Application System] code that was eliminated, so now the employee education expense is in fees and inspection and registration searches and so on. I just abide by it, so . . .

Also fees for conventions. For example the office attends every year the conference of election administrators for Canada. And we also attend the council on government ethics law convention. Those would be the fees. The attendance fees would be in there as well. And that explains the difference.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. And now the difference now, the employee education expenses added to the previous fees is still over \$7,000 short of the amount requested. What's the difference between those two figures? Is it convention fees?

Mr. Ouellet: — We add it from the 4 to 6,000. We have 2,000 for education for our employees. And as indicated, the rest is merely attendance at conferences and fees and annual membership.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Where did that show up previously then?

Mr. Ouellet: — There's 5,000 of it that's new money in there, and that's in part for the attendance . . . Canada has established among all the jurisdictions a committee which is the electoral technology accord committee, which is a committee that meets three times a year and looks at sharing of information systems and software and procedure, and standardizing procedure.

In the past, the Government of Ontario used to pay the whole cost of a facilitator, which is \$50,000. The auditor for Ontario indicated that that was not quite fair, and so we decided to chip in 5,000 on behalf of Saskatchewan into the item. That explains the difference.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you. Can we slide down then to item no. . . . 525,000, postal, courier, freight, and related. Again there's an increase of over 100 per cent.

Mr. Ouellet: — Right. We are going to train returning officers in the spring, in April, and so we have to mail their manuals, mail . . . like there's greater activities on the delivery of couriers.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. I had the same question Mr. Yates had already asked. Then moving over to the next page, item no. . . . 529,000, general contractual services.

Mr. Ouellet: — General contractual services. Because we have to train the individuals, we have to train the trainer and hire the trainers, so some of the contract costs associated with that.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — This is associated with training for election . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — Readiness, correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Election readiness. Okay.

Mr. Ouellet: — And also it includes some . . . We're part of a family with SaskPower, SaskTel, with the Information Services Corporation, where we are a partner in the digital-based map of the province because we require mapping services. And \$5,000 in that is allocated to that particular item.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Thank you. Sliding down under advertising then to item no. . . . 531,800, duplication services. Again this is a over 300 per cent increase.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes, substantial. We have to reprint some of our forms as a result of the amendments that were passed on March 22, 2006. For example the absentee process is completely revamped, so we have to reprint some of these forms and also print election Acts because we have to provide election Acts to candidates to . . . one in each poll. So we have to print 2,800 of them.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And is that tied together then . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — The case for printed forms as well.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — With the next item as well?

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes, that's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes. Okay.

Mr. Ouellet: — Which includes also . . . Because of the difficulty of getting ballots printed province-wide, not all printers can do perforation nor numbering of ballots. So what we do is we have stock ballots — 750,000 — that are preprinted, that are ready to just print the name on the face as well as put the printer's block and the security feature on the back.

We have had in the past about four registered political parties. Our family has grown to eight now, and so therefore the ballot that we had in the office to accommodate four candidates is no longer adequate. So we now have to go to eight and nine candidate ballots preprinted. And that's what we're doing as well in that item.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So these are blank ballots with the framework and then the printing that's required after the deadline for . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — For candidacy is passed, then those are used by the printing firms that print the actual ballots themselves.

Mr. Ouellet: — To put the face on. That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So they're not printing them from scratch then, they're printing them onto these . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — No, no. That's correct. Because they could not

perforate them everywhere, and they could not serially number them everywhere. So we reprint that.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes. Okay. Thank you. Over to the next page under travel and business, the general travel code, again that's about a 300 per cent increase there.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes. Again we are training returning officers. If we could do it by telephone, that would be brilliant. We wouldn't have too many expenses. Unfortunately we have to bring them in, either in Regina or Saskatoon, from wherever they are, and therefore they have hotel accommodation. They have meals, and they also have mileage and air services in some cases. And that explains the increase.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. And then sliding down supplies and services, 550,100 printed forms is an increase of several thousand per cent there.

Mr. Ouellet: — Printed forms?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes that's . . . We just said that before. The ballots for example are printed forms.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So what's the difference between duplication, printing, publishing?

Mr. Ouellet: — Duplication is . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Because those are under advertising. This is under supplies and services.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes, I can explain all three. Duplication is a form that needs not to be put on a press — that could be photocopied for example — such as a returning officer's manual or some forms that do not require some specific treatment. Forms that can only be printed are printed forms such as ballots and some other forms which are produced in large quantity. Photocopying would not be a solution for those. Supplies would be the elastic bands, would be the pencils, the pens, rulers, to get ready for the general election.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So what your previous description about the ballots being . . . Is that this one, the printed forms?

Mr. Ouellet: — It's the printed form; that is correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — That's actually the description for this line item, not the duplication line item.

Mr. Ouellet: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay.

Mr. Ouellet: — That is printed.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. And third from the bottom, other miscellaneous materials and supplies, there's a 250 per cent increase there.

Mr. Ouellet: — Those are the pencils, the pens. We have to

replace a lot of our pens because they are no longer functioning.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — They've gone dry now.

Mr. Ouellet: — That's correct. They have a shelf life. Some of our forms also have a shelf life. And also we have duplication of our maps for candidates and for the general public also is included in that.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much. That's all the questions I have for this speaker.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. On page 13 of your submission, under public education, electoral support initiatives for the upcoming year, there is a 30,000 cost of public opinion survey and then a liaison with returning officer advisory group, a cost of \$33,000. If that were removed from the budget, what implications would that have on your ability to be ready for an election and to deliver an election?

Mr. Ouellet: — Well it's always a good practice to be able to communicate with your stakeholders and find out how you can reach them and what's the best way to reach them. If such item would not be in the budget we'd have to find other ways of obtaining this information. Our returning officer could certainly be a good source of that information. I mean it would not . . . It is not extremely critical. It would be a good practice.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you. Mr. Hagel?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks. Would that be a post-election exercise or a pre-election exercise with returning officers?

Mr. Ouellet: — Well we're bringing them for training so we can certainly question them at that time as well.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — But it would also be a post-mortem?

Mr. Ouellet: — It will also be a post-mortem. That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Do you learn from the experience?

Mr. Ouellet: — Lessons learned.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And where does that line . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — It would be in . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Where does it show up in the base budget line?

Mr. Ouellet: — In general contractual services.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Under the general contractual . . . What number? Oh was that the 529,000, page 18?

Mr. Ouellet: — Correct. Yes, that's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — That's in 35 . . . Okay so 3,300 of the thirty-five six twenty is this . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes. Project.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Then how does . . . Okay. Because when I asked you about that before, you'd said that was for training of . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — Training the trainer.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes, which is a minimal amount.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Which is a minimal amount.

Mr. Ouellet: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes.

Mr. Ouellet: — Absolutely. It includes the field liaison officers as well in there.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks.

Mr. Ouellet: — Okay.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Mr. McCall.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just looking to get a status report on the progress that's been made around the permanent electronic voters list. Is it going to be ready for the election, I guess is my . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — Well it is being tested in Martensville at this time. A short, a smaller version of it is being tested and it will be ready for the spring — the first phase, which is the electronic voters list.

A Member: — Yes, but it's not the permanent . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — No. Well the recommendation, generally, to have a permanent register of electorate is something that will span over two general elections. The first one will have a final enumeration, if you wish, whether it's outside the event or inside the event. And then after that, once you have collected the information, then you have to date it through process, so wherever you can get your information, vital statistics, and so on. So the electronic . . . The infrastructure for the electronic list is in place.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Which specific preparations are you making for areas that have been proved . . . that have over the past decades, that have proved hard to enumerate such as inner-city Saskatoon or Regina.

Mr. Ouellet: — Well if you conduct an enumeration within an electoral event, usually you have a period of 10 days to do that. And as you probably saw in Regina Elphinstone, it didn't lead to something very earth-shattering because your preliminary list, I believe, was 6,000, and this should be double by the . . .

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I guess, perhaps if I could . . . just correct me. In terms of something like when the 10-year census is conducted, they allocate additional resources to ensure that the difficulty of the job of enumerating places like the inner cities of Saskatoon and Regina to make sure that the resources are equal to the task. What specifically are you anticipating around making sure that these hard-to-enumerate areas . . . There are other parts of the province that have different sorts of challenges as well. What specific sort of preparations are you making in that regard?

Mr. Ouellet: — Well we still also have to wait for what regulations will be put in place because right now whenever an electoral event is called, there is enumeration. There is provisions in the Act that will permit the enactment of regulations for the purpose of establishing the department of register of elector which will then supersede the statutory provision.

As indicated, the enumeration should be conducted outside . . . That would be my recommendation, that it be conducted outside an electoral event so that you . . . Rather than doing it over 10 days, you can do it over a month, and then you can knock on the doors and knock on the doors over and over. And you put incentives for enumerators to get a good job done. And those would be certainly matters of discussion at the time of establishing those regulations.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Okay, thank you.

The Chair: — Mr. Ouellet, I have a couple of questions on operations. Is it correct that youth ages 18 to 24 still comprise the population that has a lower voter turnout?

Mr. Ouellet: — One in four.

The Chair: — One in four, so that's lower than the average. Now do students who are enrolled in post-secondary educational institutes, do they fall into that category? Do they have the same lower turnout or is that subpopulation of the youth group different? Or do we know?

Mr. Ouellet: — No, that would be part of the youth generally.

The Chair: — So is there anything that you may be aware of that is being tried or looked at as we get into electronic voting lists or polling places that we are able to perhaps, for example, test voting on-site at schools or colleges. Is anything like that being done?

Mr. Ouellet: — The students have an option as to where they may vote. They either can vote where they are located in residence, a temporary residence, or they can vote where their permanent residence is with their parents, for example. And also they have the option of using the absentee system which has been totally open and revamped for that; amongst its purpose, one of those purposes.

They generally are individuals that are very difficult to reach. Their preoccupations are very different from the preoccupations of seniors, for example. Some initiatives have been put in place federally. They have seen a rise in the turnout generally at the last election in 2006. Where you have to really communicate

with them and make them aware of the issue is also they're interested in seeing the candidates, which is part of engaging those individuals.

So there's various initiatives. You can bring a horse to water, but, you know, we can facilitate the vote as much as we can but it'd still be up to the individual to exercise that franchise. We have tested in the last two by-elections now, the one in Weyburn-Big Muddy and the one in Martensville, radio ads. And those have a certain amount of success as well in reaching the young populations.

The Chair: — Thank you. I'm just wondering whether it was possible as we get into the database with the voters list on it where students might have been able to vote right on-site. See because quite often if a student at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], for example, is not home to be enumerated in the first place, a trip all the way to their residence, where their out-of-city residence is difficult to get to, the easiest place for them to get to would be right on-site. Although keeping track of that could be very difficult. So that's just something that I was wondering whether you're able to look at.

Mr. Ouellet: — As indicated, they have several options available to them. We certainly . . . We enumerate residences. They're part and parcel of, you know, the terrain that we have to look at. And obviously we have to provide polling stations for those, be it at university or off-site.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any further questions? If not, then I thank you very much, Mr. Ouellet . . .

Mr. Ouellet: — Thank you very much. I look forward to your decision.

The Chair: — Mr. Wilkie, and Mr. Nadon, for coming. And you'll be hearing, well if not tonight, tomorrow morning for sure. Thank you.

We then proceed to item no. 3. And this is for the review of the budget proposals for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. And I welcome to the table Commissioner Gary Dickson and his officials to the table. Good morning, Mr. Dickson.

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Mr. Dickson: — Good morning, and thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — If you would . . . I invite you to introduce your officials, please.

Mr. Dickson: — You bet, sir. On my right is Diane Aldridge, who is our senior portfolio officer or investigator. And to my left is Colleen Zimmer, who's been temporarily filling in while our office manager's been on a leave. And then I also have from our office this morning Clint Krismer, who is behind me, who I can introduce as our fourth and newest investigator. It's been a bit of a busy time. He started just last week, so he's been involved in all kinds of interesting work since that time.

The Chair: — Welcome all.

Mr. Dickson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I understand all board members have been provided with our estimates booklet. And I was going to propose, with your leave, Mr. Chair, to use the big screen to highlight a couple of key elements in our budget request. Would that be acceptable?

The Chair: — That's quite fine. We have the technology here so let's see if it works.

Mr. Dickson: — And what we do, as I'm passing out . . . I'll have passed out to each of the members a copy of the slides that I'm going to be showing.

The Chair: — Do you need the lights dimmed or . . . Well we'll just test it, I guess. We'll see how it . . .

Mr. Dickson: — We actually understood that we were going to have somebody set to operate this thing. So I think we can . . . If the lights could be dimmed briefly. Do you want to pass out those, please? And just while they're being passed out, Mr. Chair, let me indicate that in your booklet you will find our revised business plan for 2006 to 2009.

Members will recall that two years ago we had moved to a rolling three-year business plan so that the board would have the opportunity to know not just what we're asking for in the current year, but to be able to understand where we're proposing to take the office over a three-year period. And as I'd said at the time, but we would be updating and tweaking and revising that business plan as circumstances change and requirements change.

So in fact what we have is the same five core business activities, because that's defined by legislation. We've revised the 12 goals. We've revised the 48 key performance measures. And a copy of our business plan was sent to all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] on January 15.

Pages 2 to 5 in our Estimates booklet, we've revisited our business plan and, Mr. Chairman and members, we discuss what we achieved over the last year as well as those performance measures we did not meet. Because the whole idea is to be able to hold us accountable in terms of our goals and objectives.

We're often asked sort of what a typical day or workweek looks like in our office. I want us to just spend a moment highlighting that. The next slide you will see, the one after this . . .

The Chair: — Could we have the lights back on I think for a minute? Or are you using the screen now?

Mr. Dickson: — I'm using the screen now, Mr. Chair, if that's . . .

The Chair: — Okay, thank you.

Mr. Dickson: — Thank you very much for your assistance. So in a typical workweek, these are the kinds of demands on our office or requests for service. You will see the largest piece is summary advice, 80 per cent of the requests for service.

What that represents would be, members of the committee, your constituents calling, looking for information on access and privacy. It may be the lone woman working in a tiny RM [rural municipality] office who is being bullied by somebody who comes in and says he wants certain records in their office and she's looking for some advice in terms of whether she can disclose it or not.

It may be somebody in a doctor's office. There's an issue with a patient who wants access to all of a file. The doctor's office thinks that's not appropriate, so they would call our office and try and understand what the law required.

What's interesting is, although that's 80 per cent of the requests for service in our office, it represents less than 20 per cent of our time and our energy. It's the old 80/20 rule I guess. If you look at the four small pie slices in the upper right-hand corner, actually that's 80 per cent of our work. That's where we do . . . Most of our energy and time goes into dealing with those four things.

Now members are familiar from past presentations, I think, with the three small slices of the pie. I just want to spend a moment on detailed research and commentary. It's 4 per cent of the request for service, but it's becoming increasingly important. It's always been part of our mandate but was seldom done before 2004. We have 85 files opened this year where we're providing advice and commentary.

And the example would be, if we look at the next slide, you'll remember a year ago when the Assembly dealt with the youth detoxification law. After that Bill had been passed by the Assembly but before it was proclaimed, we were approached by Saskatchewan Health. They were interested in making further amendments to it. They solicited our feedback and our advice.

So we identified a number of concerns, including a failure for example for parents to have a right to be able to access information about their young people involved in that program. So we submitted a report to the Assembly last spring, you may recall, with some specific recommendations in terms of how this Bill could be improved. We had some further meetings with department officials that proved to be very fruitful, and people in the department worked very hard to try and address some of the things that we identified as concerns. That resulted in amendment Bill 6 that then came in front of the Assembly last fall and was passed.

And then we had the delightful opportunity to do a follow-up report to the Assembly acknowledging excellent work had been done by Saskatchewan Health and frankly saying largely our major concerns with that Bill in terms of access and privacy were addressed in that Bill. We also identified a couple of other things that we thought could be improved the next time the Bill's up for review. But we think that's the sort of win-win situation that's involved with us working with public bodies and trustees to do a stronger job on the access and privacy file.

And then the next example is even more current, and that's the Bill 20, The Gunshot and Stab Wounds Mandatory Reporting Act. This was when the Bill was at second reading in the House. We provided the Assembly with a report raising a number of questions and concerns. And then in response, the

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure invited us to meet with them last week in Saskatoon and discuss those concerns. So we provided the committee with not only the questions and issues we saw with that Bill, but seven concrete specific amendments for the committee and ultimately the Assembly to consider.

We also put together a binder of relevant materials to assist the members on that committee in its deliberations, and it wasn't just material that necessarily supported our particular amendments. But it was information we thought was relevant to the members to have while they were weighing access and privacy issues. And that material is put on our website, so it's also available to the public.

And it's going to be up, obviously, up to Mr. Yates and the other members of the standing committee to decide whether they accept none of our recommendations, some of the recommendations, or all of the recommendations. But we think this is still a good example of the kind of dialogue that we think is constructive and appropriate between our office and legislators.

A moment ago we talked about all of those, the 80 per cent summary advice calls. And somebody may say, well what does that consist of in terms of volume? So we'll take you to slide 6 where you can see on the bar graph there, at the time we prepared our presentation to the board — fourteen forty-three. You can add another 230 to that, so to date in this fiscal year it's about almost 1,700 requests that we get to our office by fax, by email, by phone call, and occasionally people dropping in.

And if we go to the next slide, what do those kinds of enquiries relate to? Well you can see there the three statutes we oversee. The general privacy — the item, the piece of pie on the bottom — about half of that would be employees in the private sector in Saskatchewan. And members will remember from a year ago when I said we have to tell people who work in the private sector and call with an employment related privacy concern, we just don't have legislation in Saskatchewan. If you're working in the private sector, you don't have privacy protection equivalent to what those working in the public sector have had since 1992, 1993.

And even if we move on to the next slide, in terms of the formal reviews we do for either breach of privacy or a frustrated access request, this is actually fairly consistent. As of last Friday the bar on the far right of the page, that would now be closer to 80. I think it was 68 at the time we prepared the material. We now have approximately 80 of these formal reviews going on. And that's actually where the bulk of our work is. Next slide, please.

In this, just in the three laws we oversee, both FOIP [freedom of information and protection of privacy] and local authority FOIP and HIPA [Health Information Protection Act], there's both a privacy component and an access component. So what we wanted to break out for you here was, you can see where a file is opened. It's in one of those six areas. The biggest one is obviously reviewing access decisions, and then to a smaller percentage it's dealing with breach of privacy complaints, and then the other items as you see them on the slide. Next slide please.

And then this one is the slide we're always happy to show. Last year you recall we told you we were informally resolving on those formal files. I think 82, 83 per cent were successfully resolved through mediation. This year we've been able to nudge that up to 88 per cent, and we'd like to go further. We'd ideally like to be well over 90 per cent in resolving things by mediation because we think that works better both for public bodies and for citizens.

And you'll see here, 4 per cent of those formal cases we dismissed because we think it's an abuse of process; it's a frivolous or vexatious request. And that leaves us 8 per cent where we actually issue a report. And if you go to our website today, you would see almost 30 full-text reports on our website which help public bodies understand exactly what our analysis is, how we go through, how we are interpreting the three laws that we oversee.

So final slide . . . And this is obviously what the board is interested in. Last year in our three-year-business plan we'd asked for two portfolio officers and one administrative support person. Members will recall that what we received was no administrative support person, one portfolio officer we were able to hire last spring, and then we received the go-ahead to hire another portfolio officer at the end of this current fiscal year. Because of a leave situation, we were actually able to make that hire on February 1, and that's Mr. Krismer behind us.

So what we're asking for now are really just the first two bullets. The first one is a full-time administrative support position. Particularly as we're doing more reviews, more investigations . . . You've seen the 1,700 calls in terms of intake. We're just a tremendously busy office, and we need more administrative support to take the phone calls, respond to the emails, format reports, do the correspondence, manage the website. The website incidentally last year attracted 190,000 hits, 54,000 visits from people who have gone and then gone back and forth to a number of pages. So that translates into 37,214 for that full-time administrative support position with direct and indirect costs. So that's our priority request to the board this year.

The second item. When the two people who are currently on leave come back, we're going to be in a situation of kind of musical chairs and musical desks. We've talked to the landlord and SPM [Saskatchewan Property Management] and we have the opportunity to take on another 49 square metres immediately adjacent to our space. The cost would be \$16,300 to take on that additional space. That would take us through, in our planning, through to 2009.

So the third bullet item . . . And you will have seen in our business plan we talked about another portfolio officer in November. We're not requesting that. We think that our needs are the first two bullets and we'd ask the board this: either we'd be looking for the green light, if you will, to hire another portfolio officer at the end of 2007-2008 — the notion that would be carried forward — or, if the board would prefer, we'll simply come back and make the request a year from now.

But I think our . . . What we need to do now is just work with the staff we've got with hopefully the additional full-time administrative support person. The problem is when Colleen or

the woman she's replacing is on vacation or whatever, I mean we're in a bit of a pickle handling all the administrative requirements.

In any event, those are the comments I want to make. So if you take kind of the fixed expenses we had coming at the end of this year with the new portfolio officer and you were to add the 37,214 for the full-time admin person, add the 16,300, then we'd be asking for 680,488. So those are my comments. I look forward to your questions.

I might just also say this is the fourth time I've had the privilege to come in front of the board and make one of these submissions and, you know, it's always a bit of a guessing game in terms of what the board members are going to be interested in hearing. Our office is new so we've maybe spent a little more time talking about what we do. But, you know, we would sure appreciate it . . . If the PowerPoint is not helpful, if there's other material that board members would like to get in their package from us, we'd be happy to accommodate that.

Sometimes I just think . . . I'm not always sure that we're providing the members, Mr. Chairman, with exactly the kind of information, the kind of data they want and they need to be able to make their decision. Anyway, I'll shut up and I'll look forward to the member's questions.

The Chair: — Well thank you for your very concise and I think effective presentation. The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Thanks very much, Mr. Dickson, for your presentation. Just by way of feedback, I think I personally find the presentation to be helpful as presented, however with a bit of confusion. And I'd like to sort out the confusion in my own mind to eliminate what may be partial confusion. Now Mr. . . . is it Grismer?

Mr. Dickson: — Mr. Krismer.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Krismer, sorry, brings . . . he's portfolio officer number four?

Mr. Dickson: — He is. He is.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay, all right then. So that was . . . In the presentation as he made it, on pages 16 and 17 I guess, as I went through there I have to admit it wasn't clear to me whether the person coming on who . . . where his name was at that moment . . . was the final officer or whether you in fact were requesting an additional person in addition to the one that was now in place. I mean you've clarified that now.

Mr. Dickson: — Yes. In the business plan initially, we contemplated yet a fifth portfolio officer.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay.

Mr. Dickson: — That's not what I'm requesting now, if it's helpful. So what we have now is we have four portfolio officers.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Right.

Mr. Dickson: — Two of them are here with me. We have a director of everything, a director of administration who handles all of the administrative work — and Colleen is filling in that role now — and me. Those are the . . . It's the six FTEs [full-time equivalent] today. And we understood the board had said, if we could find money in our budget, to have a temporary person three days a week. And that's what we've been doing. And our concern, I think, is we stand to lose that on April 1.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So it would take \$37,000 to translate that into a full-time support person.

Mr. Dickson: — That's what I'm advised, sir.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Now when you've given us your revised number, the six eighty-four eighty-eight, can you just then . . . the code . . . I'm back on page 15 now.

Mr. Dickson: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — That obviously — most if not all of that — is in code 1, Social Services.

Mr. Dickson: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — What's the new number there then, the revised number?

Mr. Dickson: — I think it would be less \$12,000. Is that correct? We'd take the four ninety-two six oh eight . . . because what we'd talked about was a couple of months, was originally going to be a request. And as I say, we're not making that now. So it would be four eight zero six oh eight.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay.

Mr. Dickson: — \$480,608.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And then the other numbers remain the same?

Mr. Dickson: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Now when you talk about the extra . . . I think you said 17,000 in your verbal, in your oral presentations. I don't recall seeing that somewhere . . . 17,000. Was that 17,000 . . .

Mr. Dickson: — It was \$16,300 for the additional space.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay, where . . .

Mr. Dickson: — I think it actually appears on page 18. It's the second bullet under explanation, Mr. Hagel. Second bullet under explanation, the final sentence there.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay.

Mr. Dickson: — This will cost approximately \$16,300.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — If you go back to page 15, can you slot that . . . where do you assign that figure into the . . .

Mr. Dickson: — That would be in number 2, code 2, contractual services.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Contractual services. Okay. So in fact your increase request in contractual services isn't as large as the increase in space then. Outside of the increase in space, there's actually a small reduction.

Mr. Dickson: — Yes. Actually I think in three different items there's a reduction. And I should just say by the way of context, you know, we've been sort of building the office and now we've sort of reached a critical mass, I think, and I told you this a year ago. So now in fact some of those things that had been ramping-up year over year, now we're starting to stabilize and I think we now are much closer to being able to do the job that I think the statute requires.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Perhaps in that context and in response to your request for a bit of feedback regarding the request for the fifth portfolio officer in the year, it would be my view it's more appropriate to build that into your proposal for your '08-09 budget proposal to be considered at that time.

Mr. Dickson: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I say that with a bit of a context. And this is from my point of view a bit of a standard question to all of the Legislative Assembly officers. And it's also I think in the context that, as you correctly pointed out, that your office, it's been in a ramping-up circumstance for some few years, since the office has been introduced. But you're at a point now where it's kind of business as usual. Although we'll recognize in your office, as in virtually every government office, it's never, ever totally business as usual. Circumstances are changing and that causes your demands to change, as you point out in some of your stats here.

Inevitably every single government department, if they had the freedom to do it — which they don't — to say we're doing some things, we're being requested to do some things that we weren't previously, or more of some things than we were previously, and therefore we need a bigger budget to accommodate that. To which government inevitably in the financial review process will . . . Frequently the response is, you need to prioritize.

And that's the reality of public administration. Just because something is more of or new doesn't necessarily mean that there's the money available to enable the operation to be what we would like it to be in ideal terms. And we can be no less scrutinizing in offices of the Legislative Assembly officers and I know that you understand that.

One of the questions that departments have to wrestle with and have to give a written answer to is, what would be your decision if your base budget was reduced by 2 per cent? In other words, if you have to deal with the realities of priorities, what is it that would be the lowest priority — not necessarily painless, everybody understands that — but what could you most easily manage living with less of if that was the circumstance?

So in the real world of government departments, managers have to answer that. And I know we haven't given you advance

notice, and I can appreciate that it's sometimes a difficult question to answer that requires some careful thought. But I'd like to ask the question of you, Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Dickson: — It's actually not a difficult question at all. I would look . . . And without consulting with my colleagues, I would think travel and business.

We had made a commitment when I came here that it shouldn't matter how far you live from Regina in terms of your exercise of access and privacy rights. And so we spent a lot of time travelling. I think 28 Saskatchewan communities we've been in to doing presentations, meeting with schools, and doing hospital tours. That's the thing that would have to go. Because we would still be . . . So we'd be hunkered down in Regina still doing the reviews remotely. So what you'd get is you just . . . there wouldn't be a presence of our office really in, you know, in Buffalo Narrows and Beauval and La Loche and those parts of the province.

If I might just add two things to the question, I mean it's certainly a fair question of course. I just say this: we're not however a department of executive government. And here's what's significant. And I'm not saying that . . . I mean we do try and track what's going on in executive government because we understand expectations and we understand limitations. But the two things I'd say would be this: the Supreme Court of Canada has said repeatedly these are quasi-constitutional laws. They're special laws. They trump almost any other law in the province. They set out fundamental, democratic rights of citizens and they warrant a bit of . . . [inaudible] . . . kind of importance and there's quite a bit of law around that.

The second thing to say is that we're, as I think I've told the committee in the past, I mean we've — or the board — we've been doing a lot of catch-up. I mean there's been not a lot of attention paid, frankly, to the access and privacy file since we became the first province in Western Canada to enact the laws.

And so when I'm saying we're getting close to have a critical mass, I mean we're, you know, we still have a huge challenge in this province in making sure that health trustees know when they can share information with the police and when they can't, and when school officials can share information with somebody outside parents.

But at the end of the day I take your point, Mr. Hagel, and it's . . . We respect the fact it's for the board to make that kind of decision on what the envelope of funding is for our office. But travel would be the place that we'd look to cut.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Which wouldn't infringe on what you consider your core activity. Or it would least interfere with your core activity. Okay. And I ask the question not in a disrespectful way but in the same way that that's a pretty standard procedure for executive government to wrestle with.

On page 4 of your . . . let's see, the overview and foundation section. At the top you refer to partnering with some departments and non-provincial government bodies to provide a prairie health information privacy day and a Saskatchewan privacy and access conference. I would be interested in knowing a little bit more about the . . . And I have to admit I've

not gone and checked out the website here about the objectives of both of those conferences.

Mr. Dickson: — And just to give you some context. When I first started we determined our priority need was education. There just had to be more awareness both within public bodies and within the Saskatchewan public. And so we've targeted roughly maybe 60/40, 60 per cent of resources into helping develop tools, education, developing a website and that kind of thing. About 40 per cent in terms of doing kind of investigations for one complainant or one applicant.

And now what we're shifting to is we're actually flipping that. So for three years we've produced a lot of educational materials. We have a lot of material on the website. So now we're focused on the backlog. And so we're looking at, it will be roughly 60 per cent doing those case files that we saw on the slide. And maybe we're going to say, no, or not this year, to more of the requests we get for educational sessions. So we're going to try and reduce that to about 40 per cent.

And in terms now . . . But we're always alive. We've always been interested in leveraging and partnering because it means you can take a very small number of our dollars and have a significant impact. We've determined that now that we have . . . We actually have an identifiable access and privacy committee in Saskatchewan. Most larger organizations have somebody who is responsible for this. And so we've actually persuaded our colleagues in Manitoba and Alberta, who have been doing this a little longer than we have, to come in. We'll make a prairie health information day. Speakers are being brought in. We've done this and all the costs, we have no cost exposure.

Our involvement is the contractor is taking all of the risk. We have input on the speakers, input on the topics. We've brought together a coalition of public sector bodies to work with us to make sure this is going to be responsive and helpful in their work. But I'm pleased to tell you there's no cost exposure to us, other than Diane Aldridge is on the steering committee, has a key leadership role in that and will certainly be very busy when it happens. But I think, you know, we'd love to have more opportunities like this.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — You've probably also answered my supplementary question then about the cost because I wasn't seeing that showing up somewhere, and the answer is that it's borne then by your contractor.

Mr. Dickson: — It will just be some time from Ms. Aldridge. That's really our . . . And then our office will be active. We'll be speaking a number of the sessions and that kind of thing, but . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. And I assume that it's going to be held here in Regina? Is that the location?

Mr. Dickson: — It is.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And what provinces will be . . . participants will be from which provinces?

Mr. Dickson: — We're actually doing two things. We started out doing this prairie health information day, and we're

partnering with the Information and Privacy Commissioner in Alberta and the Ombudsman in Manitoba, who does the same thing. And so there will be speakers actually from outside those provinces also.

We'll bring in the best people we can get to help trustees here become more comfortable in the tough decisions they have to make. The second day is a series of workshops, and actually Saskatchewan Justice have said, hey if you're bringing all these people together, we'd like to put on some workshops and take advantage of that, so the second day is that. The third day, we then said, well what we'll do is the same contractor is . . . We're going to have a specific access on privacy one-day session, and this will be mainly for Saskatchewan local authorities — so schools, and regional health authorities, and municipalities — who don't actually get a lot of exposure in a conference context to this.

So we have a steering committee, I should tell you, for the second part, the FOIP section, and that has representatives of Justice, the University of Saskatchewan archives office, Saskatchewan Health, the city of Regina. All of those people are involved, once again, to make sure the content is going to be helpful to those public bodies

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And these, you would expect the two conferences will have the same attendees? The second one will be a larger number of Saskatchewan attendees?

Mr. Dickson: — The second part will be almost uniquely Saskatchewan focus, Saskatchewan people. But there are certainly some people who work in regional health authorities. Regional health authorities have to wrestle with HIPA, but they also have to wrestle with the local authority FOIP Act. And so this is a chance for them to get to both.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I want to commend you on being able to achieve this without it directly impinging on your operating budget, and it speaks to synergies that can be found when collaborating with other bodies which will have common concerns. Thank you.

Mr. Dickson: — We hope actually some members may attend all or part of the sessions. We get a lot of questions from members about different access and privacy things. And there's going to be some terrific speakers, a lot of good material, and any member who is interested, from either caucus, interested in attending, just let our office know. We'd be keen . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — What days of the week are those?

Mr. Dickson: — I beg your pardon?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — What days of the week are the 16th to the 18th?

Mr. Dickson: — It's Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. So it's April 16, 17, 18. So it would be the 16th and the 18th, I think, that would be of interest to members. Sixteenth for health.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Thank you. I assume you'll be forwarding the information to members of the legislature.

Mr. Dickson: — We will. The other thing we do is, our experience is most members are getting our electronic newsletter, the *FOIP Folio*. And so we advertise. That's a good vehicle for advertising this, but we'll make sure there's something specific to members around these two conferences, Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. And finally then, this is probably a . . . Let's see here. I think this is a question probably for Ms. Zimmer. With the altered request, the previous request was a whopping 15.6 per cent, so it's obviously not that high now. Have you figured out . . . What's the request with the new number?

Mr. Dickson: — I'm advised that the overall increase is 13.6 per cent instead of 15.6.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. All right. And then that's with the built-in and continuity of the portfolio officer continuing, of course, as in place now and . . .

Mr. Dickson: — That's right. And that would give us the additional space to take us through to 2009 and the full-time admin person.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So it is, in essence . . . With the exception of the admin, it is the status quo budget in the sense that the portfolio officer was previously approved.

Mr. Dickson: — Sure. It looks quite a bit bigger because we've just brought on a new portfolio officer, and instead of one month we'll be paying 12 months, but . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Right. Thank you very much.

Mr. Dickson: — Good. Thank you, sir.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just a quick question. Could you, if necessary, find \$20,000 in codes 3 through 8?

Mr. Dickson: — I'm sorry. I missed the first part of the question, Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — In codes actually 2 through 8, if necessary, could you find an additional \$20,000?

Mr. Dickson: — Well I mean, I recall when the budget was being constructed, we were looking at a lot of shortcuts. I mean, we decided we're going to put out, if the board is comfortable, our annual report on a CD [compact disc] instead of the printing costs. We ended up getting hammered with a lot of printing costs. So I mean, we've actually shrunk those costs. I don't think we can find them . . . I mean, if we cut out travel and some of those things, I mean, I guess you're not just . . .

Mr. Yates: — But not without cutting out something that's . . .

Mr. Dickson: — Not without cutting out something that we think is important in terms of our business plan and the feedback we get from public bodies in terms of what their

expectations are. And I might just say, I mean, it's sort of a good-news, bad-news story.

The good news is we have more public bodies coming to us like Health or other bodies do when they want advice and commentary. But then it takes us longer and longer to turn around. And then you get people saying, well, Dickson, if you can't get this information to us quickly, we have to go in front of a legislative review process. Spring sitting is going to start soon. You're not moving fast enough to be part of that.

And we really want to be engaged in that process. So I think if we were to reduce, what we're looking at is less ability to be able to respond even as we do now.

Mr. Yates: — Okay, thanks very much.

Mr. Dickson: — Thank you.

The Chair: — There being no further questions, then I'd like to thank you, Mr. Dickson, and thank Ms. Aldridge, Ms. Zimmer, and Mr. Krismer for attending, and you will be hearing from the board in due course.

Mr. Dickson: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Good luck to you and to all your work in the coming year. Thank you very much.

Mr. Dickson: — Thank you so much.

Office of the Children's Advocate

The Chair: — Members, ready to proceed with the next item agenda. I believe they are, so I would then invite the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to come to the table . . . pardon me, the budget for the Office of the Children's Advocate to come to the table along with the officials. Welcome, Mr. Bernstein, and welcome to your officials. And I would invite you to start by introducing your officials, and has everybody had a chance to . . .

Mr. Bernstein: — Yes, I'm pleased to have with me this morning Glenda Cooney to my right, who is the deputy children's advocate within the office; and to my left is Bernie Rodier, who is our director of administration. We're all pleased to be here to have the opportunity to present our office's budget proposal for 2007 and 2008.

As a preliminary matter, I'd like to advise the board that our office has amended its written budget proposal. And this is referenced in a further three page supplementary document that we have developed over the weekend and we wish to hand out to members of the board. This document, as you receive it, you will note that it is captioned supplemental information part II, new programming initiatives request, legislative services, expanding investigations, prepared February 12, 2007.

And my remarks are going to focus specifically on the new programming initiatives request principally to strengthen our investigations capacity rather than the status quo allocations which I would submit is addressed at some length within our written proposal.

I'm going to give you a couple of minutes just to go through this. But I do want to initially just underscore that what we have done, you can see, is to amend our request so that what we are asking for is three positions, one being a full-time equivalent who would be an intake specialist. This is in page 1, second column. I should indicate that what we are trying to do is to compress the scope of the request into a three-year business plan. Initially it was framed as a two-year business plan, and that generated a higher allocation request in year one. Secondly, there is a request for a full-time investigator. And the third component of the request is the .40 FTE at the admin support level. And the costs are set out in the third column.

One point that I just want to clarify . . . And my apologies for not having included this in the written document. But in terms of the total cost — this is the far column to the far right where we're asking for 2.4 FTEs — in terms of the total cost, you should add to the 145,900, you should add 16,000. And that as you may recall is the additional money that we're asking for to support the ongoing information management upgrades within our office. This is a joint proposal that's being made by the Provincial Ombudsman as well as our office. His request is for 24,000 as an annualized allocation; ours is for 16,000. So that brings the total up to 161,900 as an additional cost.

In terms of the budget request, the total aggregate figure then would be \$1,518,900. That would be a 17 per cent increase over the 2006-07 total appropriation. So rather than it being 16.1, it's 17 per cent. You may want to just take a quick read through, just if the board would like to do that for two or three minutes, and then I'll continue with my submissions.

I could pick it up at this point, Mr. Chair. And I apologize in terms of providing this at the 11th hour but we had occasion to reconsider the level at which we were seeking an allocation. And we feel as though the methodology that we are using at this point has some benefits. First of all, it allows us to strengthen our investigation services in a planned and incremental way.

Secondly, it allows us to carefully assess the impacts and examine the validity of our projections, enabling us to make the necessary adjustments from year to year. I think we all know that there are always unintended consequences of the plans that we put in place. And we need to consider those variables in a flexible way from year to year.

Last but not least, it softens the impact upon the public purse. And we're very mindful of the fact that there are allocations in play that need to be provided to various independent officers, and it isn't just our office alone that is calling upon the Board of Internal Economy for allocations today.

So what are we asking for? As I've mentioned we're asking for 2.4 new full-time equivalents at a total cost of \$145,900. And I've indicated the nature of the positions that we are seeking in year one. In my submission this is the bare minimum as to what we need to support our current restructuring and to expand our investigations capacity in the areas of child death reviews and critical injury reviews. And that's what this submission in year one really focuses on. And I just want to go on further to explain the framework with some greater detail.

So how did we get here? And in the course of getting here, how

did we restructure, which is I think something that's important for the board to understand. We are moving in a different direction. And there is some different pressures and factors in play that have caused our office to reconsider some of the focal points of our activities.

As you can see from our written submission, we have five priority areas which are defined through our strategic planning. They're set out on page 4 of our written submission and are as follows: (1) individual group and systemic advocacy; (2) individual group and systemic investigations; (3) public education and communications; (4) youth voice; and (5) administration.

Now for one reason or another, the second priority relating to investigations has never been fully operationalized within our office. This is a function which is explicitly stated in my legislative mandate and pertains to traditional Ombudsman functions as well as the other activities that relate to the role as Children's Advocate.

A recent reorganization took place in December 2006 after an operational review was conducted by an external consultant. We determined that there were four different types of investigations that our office could be actively involved in but we weren't structured or funded to achieve. Firstly, child death reviews. Two, critical injury reviews. Three, program service investigations. For example, Oyate is an example of a program service investigation. We receive other requests to investigate children's residential facilities and CBOs [community-based organizations]. We're not able to respond to those kinds of requests because they would just continue to exhaust our resources, and we don't have the funding base to make that a reality.

The other component is administrative fairness investigations. What do we mean by that? Just quickly, some examples: there are situations where we have children living in long-term foster care homes, situations where those homes may be converted to a person of sufficient interest causing the child to lose benefits that would otherwise accrue by that child remaining a long-term ward. Sometimes because the foster parent may be in a situation where the funding allocation is diminished to the foster parent, it may lead to that particular child having to move out of that placement, finding an alternate placement. So that's one situation.

Another situation could be in the health regime. We sometimes find disabled children who require dental work, dental surgery. They may require an anaesthetic. It may take over a year for that child to receive the kind of dental care. There may be toothache. There may be pain that that child is suffering. When we carry out our advocacy functions we're normally negotiating and trying to facilitate resolutions with government, with individual departments, to address the situation. In many instances we receive reasoned and co-operative responses from government and we achieve the resolution we're seeking. In some instances the resolution is not achieved.

The question then is, should that young person have the capacity to trigger an investigation? If we are involved in an investigation there's a certain procedure we go through and then we're able to advance certain systemic recommendations that

may improve the system for other children as well.

We also have situations where children require certain kinds of medications. There may be behavioural problems that aren't part of the provincial formulary and we receive recommendations from physicians and specialists recommending alternate forms of medication. Sometimes when the alternate form of medication isn't provided, it leads to further institutionalization which generates larger costs than finding something which would support the child at home through an additional kind of medication cost.

I'm just trying to give some examples of the kind of issues that we would be addressing through administrative fairness.

We also determined the child death reviews and critical injury reviews had the greatest importance for our office. And our funding requests for year one, as I mentioned, is essentially to allow us to develop protocols and effectively operationalize child death reviews and critical injury reviews.

In the case of child death reviews, we're proposing a change in criteria so that we would review those child deaths where a child died in the care of a government or while receiving government services in the previous 12 months. This would be a change from the current criteria established three or four years ago where we agreed to review those child deaths where children are or have been in care within six months of their death. We had agreed to this change in criteria hoping that government departments would be able to review child deaths in a timely, critical manner as we simply did not have the staffing resources to sustain this work.

But this arrangement is simply not serving the children of Saskatchewan as effectively as we had thought. For one thing, we are receiving fewer and fewer government notifications of child deaths. Secondly, the internal government reviews are often missing, in our viewpoint, critical elements. Thirdly, we are often waiting two to three years to receive the internal government reviews, thereby still dating our findings and recommendations that could have potentially saved other lives in the interim period.

Fourthly, we are left to primarily review the deaths of children in government care rather than those children who are receiving government services. These are, for the most part, medically fragile children who would have died of natural causes in any event.

And fifthly, internal government reviews cannot be as objective and as unbiased as an independent review by our office. And it is important to create a process that the public views as being truly impartial, a process in which the public would have confidence.

As well, we continue to receive pressure from the members of our multidisciplinary advisory review team who do not want to waste their valuable time looking at deaths that were going to happen in any event and want our office to review both preventable child deaths and critical injuries. That's how we can be most effective — if we can turn back the clock and look at different intervention points and identify different kinds of approaches, different kinds of interventions that may have had a

positive impact in terms of preserving the child's life or preventing the occurrence of the specific injury.

At the same time, our proposal takes into consideration what's happening in the national scene. In British Columbia and Manitoba, for example, there have been child welfare reviews precipitated by well-publicized child deaths. In those reports there have been findings that the lack of an independent child death review process has called the credibility of the child welfare system into question.

In Manitoba, the recommendation was to move the responsibility for reviewing child deaths away from the chief medical examiner's office to the independent Children's Advocate. In both the Manitoba report and the Hughes report in British Columbia, there were recommendations that called for child deaths to be conducted by an independent advocate and to occur in those circumstances where children died in care or were receiving government services within the previous 12 months.

And those are the same criteria that we wish to apply currently within our office. And interestingly enough, those are the criteria that applied within the office up to about three or four years ago, before revised protocols were negotiated principally with the Department of Community Resources and the Department of Corrections and Public Safety.

As well, in British Columbia after the elimination of the position of the children's commissioner some years ago there was some confusion as to where the responsibility rested for purposes of reviewing child deaths. In the end, there was much negative publicity concerning the fact that hundreds of these files were sitting in a warehouse in British Columbia with no one scrutinizing the circumstances relating to these deaths and learning the lessons that could prevent future child deaths.

As a case example, one recent child death review, a 15-year-old committed suicide by hanging herself in her basement where her depression and self-destructive behaviours appeared to have been known to various child serving systems such as child welfare, young offenders, education, and mental health.

Often times in the child death reviews that we conduct which are multidisciplinary, which review different child serving systems, we see problems in terms of communication, role identification, case coordination, case management. And it's important to be able to find solutions that are integrated, where different government departments, different child serving systems can work together more effectively to prevent these tragedies.

Also we have looked at situations and identified issues, for example, where there has been a child death resulting in part for . . . in a situation where there was a custody and access dispute, and child protection allegations not being investigated in the context of a custody and access dispute as they would be normally. So again, we're in a position to advance recommendations that can be helpful.

Moving on to the case of critical injury reviews. We're being asked to review critical injuries. We've developed a working definition of critical injury that we are proposing to the

departments of Community Resources, and Corrections and Public Safety, and the delegated First Nations child welfare agencies. Under our proposal, a critical injury is defined as a situation that necessitates a child's hospitalization and major medical treatment.

Again we want to be reviewing critical injuries where they occurred while a child was in care or was receiving government services within the previous 12 months. In the case of critically injured children, it's important to realize that these children will by and large be in government care for the rest of their lives so that these children may require ongoing advocacy as well. In addition there may be a need to refer the case to the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee to protect the injured child's legal interest.

Critical injuries, as child deaths, can occur while the child is in care or at home or in the community, having been left at home in the face of imminent risk, or having been returned home after having resided in care. In the case of Baby Andy, for example, he sustained life-threatening injuries one month after returning home after an extended stay in foster care.

In another critical injury case reviewed by our office, a child sustained life-threatening injuries at two and a half years of age in circumstances where the child had been left at home in the face of over 40 child protection referrals to the department. In this case we reiterated, and have looked at a prior recommendation which we have advanced to government, that where a child has experienced chronic neglect or abuse in a family setting and there have been multiple child protection referrals from the community, it's important that before that child is left to remain in the family home that there be a review by the department at a level beyond the supervisory level. And we've certainly had some good discussions with the departments around that particular approach.

So in these kinds of cases our office can be very helpful in formulating recommendations where policy, practice, and legislation can be developed to better protect the children in this province.

So why are we wanting to expand our investigations unit? First, to better serve the children and youth of Saskatchewan. Second, to fulfill our legislative mandate which specifically includes investigations. Thirdly, to fulfill the expectations of the public with respect to independent oversight over child deaths and critical injuries. And lastly, to learn from the experience of other provinces which have recently undergone extensive reviews and the loss of public confidence as a result of inadequate attention paid to child death reviews.

What are the fundamental purposes of child death reviews and critical injury reviews that we hope to accomplish? Firstly, to recommend changes to government policy, practice, or legislation that will prevent child deaths and serious injuries. Secondly, to improve the quality of services being provided by child protection services and other child-serving delivery systems. And lastly, to promote greater public accountability. It's important to understand that it's not our intent to find fault or attribute responsibility for the child's death or injury. Our child death reviews are unique in that they are multidisciplinary and evaluate the role of various child caring serving systems.

We also have the benefit of an expert advisory multidisciplinary review team that includes the province's chief coroner. So when we review a child death or a critical injury, it's not unusual for us to be evaluating the activities of a variety of departments, a variety of child-serving systems — DCR [Department of Community Resources], CPS [Corrections and Public Safety], Health, Education, police, Justice.

How have we restructured to accommodate this expanded investigation capacity? Just to tell you a little bit about what we have done so far and where we hope to be going, as of December 2006 we did the following. We created separate, specialized advocacy and investigation units and moved away from a generalist model. We moved two of our five generalist advocate staff into a specialized investigations unit together with a .75 FTE advocate who was specializing in systemic advocacy and recommendation tracking.

In order to allow our advocacy unit to function with only three advocates, we created and hired an intake specialist position for a three-month term, until March 31, '07. We did this by diverting funds from a vacant youth coordinator position. In my submission it's absolutely essential that we receive additional funding to sustain this position. This is kind of the glue that enables us to have a specialized advocacy function on the one hand in a separate unit, and a separate investigation function and unit on the other.

We determined that it was necessary to create a specialist model for the following reasons. First, advocacy staff and investigators require different skills. Whereas advocacy is often very subjective — requires excellent negotiation and facilitation skills, effective oral communication skills, and the capacity to work as part of a team — investigations, in contrast, are rooted in detailed critical analysis and effective written skills and is very much an individual kind of pursuit.

Secondly, there are conflict of interest issues involved in being both an advocate and an investigator, certainly on the same file, as one must be impartial at all times as an investigator. In addition, these roles must be seen by those in government services as being distinct so that the expectations and role definition for our staff are always clear.

Good example. An analogy that comes to my mind is kind of the role of a pre-trial judge and a trial judge. A pre-trial judge, who could be likened to our advocate, is often trying to facilitate settlement or resolution amongst the parties. He's also expressing opinions as to what the outcome might be if the case went to trial. So it's very passionate, very subjective, trying to be very directive. If that pre-trial doesn't settle and the case goes to trial, it goes before another judge, and that individual has to be an independent and impartial fact-finder and adjudicator, which is comparable to the role of our investigator.

Third reason why we need to have a specialist model. Since advocacy focuses on live children with real-time issues, often it is the child death review investigation work that keeps getting pushed down to the bottom of the priority list.

And fourthly, the workload of both advocates and investigators is more manageable without a blended caseload and the need to do rotational time at the intake desk, which in fact resolves

about 80 per cent of our cases through the provision of summary information and advice.

So what would be the impact of not having these new positions funded? In the case of our intake specialist, without this position we would have to return to our pre-2006, our pre-December 2006 organizational structure. As three advocates cannot do intake and travel, this would require all advocates and investigators to rotate through intake on a fixed schedule.

In the end, the productivity and continuity of services provided to the public would be compromised — particularly since the intake specialist would have a superior knowledge of the range of community resources and contacts across the entire province. The advocates, you should note too, are assigned to different geographical parts of the province, so there's a fair bit of travelling. And there's a public education component as well.

In terms of the investigator that we're asking for, without this position we would not be able to cover off all of the child death review and critical injury review activities. We projected that there would be approximately 90 child care serving system investigations in respect about child death reviews and critical injury reviews. As well we are anticipating that there is a backlog of about 39 investigations that haven't yet been completed. So we would need to be able to add to our current complement to be able to accommodate the kind of investigation volume that we are projecting.

In addition we're anticipating that a fair bit of time is going to have to be invested in meeting with different government departments and First Nations child and family service agencies in terms of negotiating and finalizing the protocols and the criteria that we've identified.

As well, even though our current complement includes a point seven five investigator position — so we currently have two point seven five investigators — that person is heavily involved in systemic work and recommendation tracking and public reporting.

Also when this was tracked by Ms. Rodier, our director of administration, she found that there is still 1.75 FTEs that are part of our CDR, our child death review staffing complement. However in 2004 the office took the position that it wasn't necessary to continue the one further FTE that had been given to our office on a one-time-only basis for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. Therefore, in a sense, what we're asking is to reclaim that previous FTE that was provided to the office on a one-time basis.

Specifically in 2003-04 our office received \$67,000, one-time funding for one position and some admin costs — \$63,000 for the investigator position and 4,000 to cover some admin costs. This was requested by our office as a permanent position. For the 2004-05 fiscal year, our office presented a status quo budget reflecting the reduction of the 67,000 one-time funding. And the case was not made to have the 67,000 become annualized funds.

And I've explained already that that was predicated upon an understanding or some recognition that the departments of Community Resources and Corrections and Public Safety

would take a stronger stance in terms of billing those investigations. I think time has demonstrated that isn't the way to go, that there needs to be an independent critical eye applied to those child death reviews. And in order for us to be able to have the capacity to carry that work forward, we are requesting the additional allocation.

Moving on to the admin support, the extra point four oh FTE is required to support the work of the additional intake specialist and investigator positions. In particular there is a good deal of administrative support required in respect of the heavy amount of correspondence and documentation generated in our office's investigation work. As it is we have 1.6 FTEs administratively that support the staff generally outside of the executive office and outside of my executive administrative assistant, which comprises of one FTE.

So by way of final comments, before I turn it open for questions, our office is still relatively young and is still evolving, having been created in 1994. Secondly the permanent staffing level of our office has been constant at 12.1 FTEs since the 2003-04 budget year. Next, our office has the broadest legislative mandate of any children's advocate office in the country, but we have limited resources.

We would still need to consider how we could manage a program service investigation referral if one were to arise. We would likely need to rely upon a special warrant in this interim period.

For example this isn't referred to in our written submission, but the Oyate investigation had the effect of crippling our office. We had 2.7 FTEs fully engaged in this investigation for four months as well as our director of communication and others beyond that four-month period. The diversion of resources into the Oyate investigation created a backlog of child death and critical injury reviews while at the same time our public education initiatives came to a standstill.

I would ask the board to consider that our office is best positioned to do this kind of work. We have a history of having engaged in this work since 1998. The only other option that we can think of is the chief coroner, but Kent Stewart has stated that he supports our office continuing to do this work with the assistance of the multidisciplinary review team upon which he sits.

And this is also the trend in other jurisdictions. The reasoning for that is that the chief coroner will often take a very strong forensic approach, examine the particular circumstances surrounding the child's death. But what is more helpful is having the capacity and expertise to examine the life of the child, examine the intervention points at which different systems might have had a difference in terms of preserving the child's life or preventing an injury, and drawing upon the expertise in a multidisciplinary kind of way and generating solutions that are going to be integrated across different government departments. So again this is the approach that we are commending to you.

We've always seen it as being our office's responsibility to elevate and amplify the voice of children and young persons in this province. And I would respectfully submit that the

first-year allocations being sought are necessary to enable our office to expand our investigations capacity so that we can also speak for the dead and critically injured children whose voices have been stilled but not forgotten. In this regard it is crucial that we learn the lessons from these children's tragic circumstances so that they will not be repeated in the future.

As stated in our February 2001 *Summary of Child Death Reviews*, page 7:

All of us want to ensure that all children have a chance to live happy and contented childhoods, reaching their full potential as adults. We owe no less to . . . [those children who have died.] It is hoped that what has been learned from these child deaths will help give children increased opportunities to realize their potential.

Finally I just want to assure the board that, regardless of the allocations that are provided to our office, we will continue to do the very best job that we can in terms of meeting all of the priority needs of our office. And we may have to be more creative. We may have to look at things more situationally, but we've attempted to develop a three-year business plan.

We've recognized that in the area of program service investigations and administrative fairness investigations, we're moving into an area that's less tangible. The pressing need, certainly imminently and in terms of the first year allocation request, is to enable us to expand our capacity to engage in more appropriate forms of child death reviews and critical injury reviews. So I hope that provides the priority, the framework, the methodology that we are attempting to use within our office. Happy to answer questions.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. You've made reference on more than one occasion to an operational review that has been done. Could you provide for the board a copy of the operational review so that we could, as we're trying to understand, moving things forward just where . . . You know, what the operational review, the outcomes were and why? It would be very helpful for us to have that as reading material and background material.

Mr. Bernstein: — May I just have a moment?

Mr. Yates: — Sure.

Mr. Bernstein: — We can certainly provide a version of the operational review to the board.

Mr. Yates: — Sir, that would be very, very helpful. I guess, yes, pardon me, one point of . . . What does a version mean?

Mr. Bernstein: — Well there are certainly a number of components that may be more sensitive that may relate to individual statements that were made by staff in terms of their impressions of the office and I think that would be beyond the pale of what this board would require. I think there is more direct observation in terms of recommendations and options and where the pressure points are and how to restructure the office

that is germane. And we're happy to provide that information to the board.

Mr. Yates: — Okay. Thank you. I would like to just ask a number of questions for clarification. We're expanding the mandate to look at reviewing the deaths of children who die in care, and also those who have received services in the last 12 months.

Could you give for me, just so I understand, what you would see as receiving services? As an example, if a child died that was receiving subsidized daycare, would that be investigated? Or if a child living in the family environment, if a child died as a result of a car accident that was in foster care? Could you give me some context just what we would investigate and what we might not investigate? And why we would pursue the various investigations.

Mr. Bernstein: — Well I think that we are certainly talking within our office about applying specific criteria. So it wouldn't be every case that is brought to the office's attention. And we would be looking at situations, for example, where the injury or death is the result of abuse or neglect; where the injury or death occurs in unusual or suspicious circumstances; where the injury or death is or may be self-inflicted or inflicted by another person.

Considerations for not proceeding with an investigation would be: where a child has died who was medically fragile, would have died in any event; where the death was determined to be of natural causes, with no concerns; or where a youth was residing in an adult correctional facility at the time of their death.

And generally we're looking at situations where children are not only in care, but situations where a child may have been left at home and then the child suffered some serious injury or may have died. Or a situation where a child is returning home from having been in care — could be in a foster home; it could be in a residential facility — and is being returned to the community. And what was the level of intervention that was being used? What were the risk factors that were being considered by the professionals who were involved? Were there some points that were being missed? Were there some points that could have been addressed differently? I think those are the kind of situations.

So that what we've talked about within the office is, first of all, we need to receive the notifications of child deaths, of critical injuries. Then we apply some selection criteria and we determine which of those cases are going to be appropriate, which ones would have the greatest amount of value in terms of assisting other children in the future.

We don't want to be using up time. We don't want to be using public dollars. We don't want to be taking up the time of the members of our multi-disciplinary review team looking at those kinds of cases that aren't going to yield any dividends, that aren't going to improve policy, practice, or legislation that are going to benefit the children of this province.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Ms. Harpauer.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you and welcome. You had a very good presentation. Do you have or can you give us some indication about how many occurrences of child deaths and child critical injuries there are in our province of children in government care or in government . . . having services from government?

Mr. Bernstein: — We're projecting about 30 investigations per year in terms of child deaths, and 30 investigations per year looking at critical injuries. This isn't just children in care. We're projecting this according to the new criteria that we're identifying. And then as I mentioned, we have a carry-over of child death reviews — I think about 39 — that are referenced in our written submission that we still need to investigate.

The number that we have heard from physicians is that for every child death there are about nine critical injuries. And that's just a rule of thumb. Some people will say the number's 10; some people will say the number's 12 for every child death.

Ms. Harpauer: — Is your office seeing an increase from year to year of child death or child critical injuries?

Mr. Bernstein: — The difficulty in terms of child deaths is that the number of notifications has really diminished from government departments, partly because of the new criteria that we have entered into about three or four years ago. So we anticipate that once we expand the criteria we will see more child death referrals.

In terms of the critical injury investigations, that is not an area that historically the office has had significant involvement with. In the course of having discussions with physicians, the members of our multidisciplinary review team, it has come up as an area in which our office can provide some value in terms of the level of investigations. And I should also underscore that it's our intent to use the multidisciplinary review team to identify those cases where we have done internal investigations of critical injuries as well as child deaths. And there's broad-based expertise. There's medical expertise, there's child welfare expertise, legal expertise, political, police expertise sitting around the table. First Nations perspective, a youth perspective, so that we can kind of build upon the expertise coming from different sectors.

Ms. Harpauer: — My final question would be, do you know statistically how we compare as a province to other provinces for occurrences of child deaths?

Mr. Bernstein: — I think that the information that I was relying upon, last year I was on a panel at the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute. At one point, we have the highest incident of child mortality in Canada. Last year, the presentation that was made was that we are faring better than Manitoba and Alberta. It was kind of like the presentation that was made was that we were doing the best on the Prairies. And it was, is the glass half full or is the glass half empty? We have improved the circumstances in this province. We're faring better than those two provinces. But we're doing worse — a higher level of infant mortality in Saskatchewan — than most other Canadian jurisdictions.

Ms. Harpauer: — I do have another question even though I

said the last one was final. That's extremely alarming to hear that. To your knowledge, has the government ever initiated a really extensive comprehensive investigation as to why our numbers are so high?

Mr. Bernstein: — We had recommended about three years ago an all child death review advisory committee which would examine every incident of child death in this province with a critical, educated eye. There is a group that's meeting to . . . advising the Department of Health with respect to how we might capture themes, how we might aggregate data from different offices that have a slice of responsibility with respect to child deaths. And that process is underway in terms of meeting and scoping out options.

We still don't have a formalized all child death review committee process. We don't feel as though that would significantly impact upon the functions of our office in terms of reviewing child deaths and critical injuries and advancing recommendations for systemic change. But it would be very helpful in terms of aggregating data because there are fragments of information across the province and it becomes problematic in terms of looking at causation and identifying themes. So that process, if it were to unfold, would be very helpful.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. Mr. Bernstein, when the Office of the Children's Advocate was created, I guess I believe that there were several assumptions but one of the assumptions would be that the reports produced would eventually lead to fewer deaths or some preventative death . . . of deaths. Right now there's one and a half million dollars being spent annually on the Children's Advocate office. Is there any evidence of success of the office in terms of its . . . the assumption that I talked about to begin with?

Mr. Bernstein: — Over the years, Mr. Chair, there has been a reduction in child deaths. The principal emphasis of our office had been in terms of the advocacy, the individual advocacy, the systemic advocacy, the public education. The investigation piece is a piece that we feel we need to place more emphasis on and this seems to be consistent with directions and approaches being taken in other Canadian jurisdictions.

So we feel as though we've had a positive impact in terms of reducing the number of child deaths. We feel as though we can be more successful if we turn our minds and focus on those deaths that were clearly preventable rather than expending time and energy looking at those child deaths that would've occurred likely in any event.

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Bernstein, thank you for your comments and also thank you very much for your revision of your budget request. Yours is not a new office. It's been here for 13 years, and the original proposal of a 27 per cent increase was very, very difficult to see in the context of Government Services. And I know you understand that and I appreciate the revision of it. Clearly in executive government the request of that size would be considered to be . . . Let me be very kind, and say quite unusual.

Mr. Bernstein: — I can appreciate that.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So, however, the revised request of 17 per cent is still large and again I don't . . .

Mr. Bernstein: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — When we look at the use of tax dollars to support the operations, surely the same scrutiny must occur for legislative officers as Executive Council. In the Executive Council's standards that figure as well is really quite significant and I know you understand that.

I'd like to ask some . . . To understand I guess a bit more, the considerations behind a request of that size, and maybe I can begin just with the, first of all just with the budgetary items themselves. Perhaps the simplest thing is just to take a look at page 30 of your proposal in which you summarize there then the status quo request and then outline your initial version of new initiatives request which you've revised for us here today.

If I could start just on the status quo because the status quo request is in itself a 6.1 per cent increase and by far the most significant portion of that is in the personal services, referencing their known and assumed salary adjustments. Now I quite recognize that that's the best you can do when you're doing your estimates is to assume some things. Can I ask what your assumptions have been that led to the figure for increase in personal services?

Mr. Bernstein: — In-scope employees, it was a 4.1 per cent increase in April and an anticipated October 1 cost-of-living increase. For out-of-scope, 6.1 per cent July 1 cost-of-living increase.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — 6.1 per cent, sorry, July 1 cost-of-living increase?

Mr. Bernstein: — I'm sorry, and performance pay increases that are projected for July 1 and historically I think they've come out at about 4 per cent.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. All right. I think I understand that then. Now let me ask you . . . I think you were here when I asked the previous legislative officer the question that is a standard question that managers in Executive Council departments have to provide a written response to. If you were required to present a status quo budget with a . . . which in effect, not in effect . . . which is in fact a 2 per cent reduction, where would you turn to minimize the impact on your budget, faced with that question?

Mr. Bernstein: — I think the area probably would be out-of-province travel. One of the interesting facets of our advocacy work, which is different than some of the independent officers which have more traditional ombudsman functions, is that they often can do much of their work from their office in terms of their investigations. One of the components of being an advocate is the need to be out, the need to meet with children and young people so that it is a personal kind of relationship that is established, public education is a must, a shall, within our legislation. So it's important to be out and provide information to young people in terms of their rights and their

entitlements.

And the other piece is too that we spend a fair bit of time in the northern part of the province meeting with First Nations and Aboriginal communities. And that is important in terms of supporting the advocacy and the credibility component of our office. So I did kind of gauge when you asked the question to Mr. Dickson, could we cut back on in-province travel and I concluded that that would be very problematic.

The kind of things that we do in terms of meeting with colleagues and peers across the country, the kind of conference development attendances in other provinces, that would be the likely area to target.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And as you think of that the least problematic area to reduce, would it be possible to manage a 2 per cent of budget reduction that would be completely out of that category?

Mr. Bernstein: — That would be difficult in terms of setting priorities and kind of determining where we would be able to kind of make those reductions.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Two per cent I think would be roughly 24, 25,000. Just quick mathematics.

Mr. Bernstein: — That's right.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — What would be achievable?

Mr. Bernstein: — I would go back to the out-of-province travel. That seems to be the principal area where we could likely recover that amount of money. Perhaps some of the professional development activities of our staff although, quite frankly, I think that they probably would like to pursue more of those kinds of initiatives. But those would be areas where we probably could find the money to claw back.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay thank you. I appreciate that. And I appreciate it's not an easy . . . You know, there's no happy answer to that question. And that's the real world of public administration of course. I appreciate your comments there.

Now I'd like to just get a little more detail in my understanding of the implications of your proposed change of criteria related to the timelines moving from 6 to 12 months . . .

Mr. Bernstein: — Right.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — For both investigations of deaths as well as critical injuries. First of all it's not clear to me. I heard your reference to the criteria that would trigger an investigation. You're clearly saying it wouldn't be all children who had within the 12 months previous received government services. But there would be some criteria that would, I guess, would probably be summarized as pointing to suspicious circumstances.

Mr. Bernstein: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I think that's . . .

Mr. Bernstein: — That's a fair representation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — That's a summary of what you're saying.

Mr. Bernstein: — Yes. Essentially preventable deaths is what we are trying to trigger.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes. Yes. I think it's your objective not to repeat for purposes of explanation the accumulation of information that's already available.

Mr. Bernstein: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — You're wanting to do a value-added exercise which the outcome of which would be the reduction of deaths, preventable deaths, and critical injuries by way of advice. So I understand and commend the objective that you're working to achieve.

Can you tell me then, first of all, when we refer to having received government services . . . I know Mr. Yates asked this question. Clearly if a child is the ward of the province, if a child's in foster care, if a child is in institutive incarceration, those are clearly services provided by the provincial government that would put a child into that general category. Are there other services provided by the provincial government, for example health-related or social-services related . . .

Mr. Bernstein: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Or culturally-related or educational-related? It's not clear to me. It's hard to imagine a child who's not receiving services from the provincial government. And clearly you're not saying everybody. So my question is, which of those services are the ones that put the child potentially into that category?

Mr. Bernstein: — There are situations where there are acts of omission as well as acts of commission, where a government department may make a decision not to provide services or not to intervene in a particular way. At times there is the provision of voluntary services. So there may be a supervisory function that is being carried out by a government department, Department of Community Resources.

So the child is returned home, but it doesn't mean nothing is happening. It may mean that there is a level of supervision with the child at home, but the child is not physically in care. Or it is 12 months from the termination of the provision of those services.

And oftentimes in relation to health, it may come up in the context of the child requiring some kind of extraordinary health intervention that wasn't provided. And we have people with medical expertise that are very helpful sitting around our multi-disciplinary review team that enable us to kind of review and scrutinize the level of medical and health intervention. And that may be a consideration as well in terms of identifying specific findings and recommendations.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Is that specifically . . . Then when you say medical intervention, are we talking . . . are you meaning like hospitalization?

Mr. Bernstein: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. So it wouldn't include having . . . It wouldn't include the service being a visit to the doctor but . . . that would be excluded, but if the child is hospitalized or something, then that would be included?

Mr. Bernstein: — I think a visit to the doctor, depending upon the doctor's judgment and how that intersected with other components of the case, could be germane. But the more typical kind of situation is when there has been a hospitalization subsequent to some other injury, perhaps caused by a parent and perhaps certain decisions being made in responding in a way that is supportive of the parent, perhaps where there may have been risk.

So it may be situations where a government department or a service provider is making a specific decision to intervene, and then we're evaluating the level of intervention. Or as I said, it may be a situation where there's a judgment not to intervene or to take a less intrusive approach that then comes under some broader-based scrutiny.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. So you are in effect saying that the pool of children potentially available, you know, to justify an investigation actually does potentially extend this far then as going to . . . where the provincial government service is a visit to the doctor then.

Mr. Bernstein: — Usually those are corollary or secondary kinds of system reviews. The entry point really is through some involvement by DCR or CPS. So we have sat down in the past . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So is that a criteria where the entry point is one of those two departments?

Mr. Bernstein: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I see. Okay.

Mr. Bernstein: — And so we have developed protocols and criteria around notification. The kind of criteria where that should apply in terms of whether or not it's six months or twelve months in care or the provision of government services. Part of what we are identifying now is the fact that we shouldn't be waiting for the completion of an internal departmental review because, as I mentioned, sometimes we've waited two or three years to receive those and then we aren't able to undertake an independent investigation. And that may be preventing the development of recommendations that may be helpful to other children who are still living.

So what we are proposing to say to DCR, CPS, and First Nations Child and Family Services agencies that have delegated authority is that we are going to undertake our investigation quickly and promptly. But we will consider your internal review at any point while we are still doing our independent investigation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Okay. Well I think that's helpful by way of clarification. So similarly if a child was, say, in foster care and there was something related to an incident at school,

then you're saying because there is the community . . . Department of Community Resources involvement, the educational, which again is a provincial government service . . .

Mr. Bernstein: — Right.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — May stimulate a decision to begin an investigation. But if the child was not, say, a ward of the province or in foster care, for example, who's just a child who is just attending school and an incident occurred at school that led to, say, a fight in the schoolyard or something, that would not come under the auspices of the Children's Advocate by way of review then.

Mr. Bernstein: — That's correct. So I think that those kinds of secondary or tertiary kinds of reviews are triggered through a larger entry point with either DCR or CPS. One of the advantages of having an integrated look is that in many of these cases these children cross over different service systems. And when you're looking at a . . . [inaudible] . . . an individual child within a specific sector, you may be losing the fact that you can add value by identifying other deficiencies and making other recommendations that are going to be helpful in the future.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Now there will be a large number of children in Saskatchewan who will attend child care homes or child care centres that are licensed by the Department of Community Resources, so therefore there is department involvement. Is that then within the umbrella that . . . And the vast majority of those of course will have had no other involvement with Community Resources or Corrections and Public Safety, but clearly it is a service that is under the auspices of Community Resources. Would those children then be included in the pool?

Mr. Bernstein: — Those aren't the kind of investigations that traditionally our offices have been involved with.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So I hear you saying, not traditionally. But they are therefore included in the pool because child care is a Community Resources service.

Mr. Bernstein: — I think it's just because in the past, because of the licensing component, we haven't typically become involved in those cases. So I'm not anticipating that we'd necessarily become involved with those in the future.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — But could . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Sorry about that. Okay. So yes, I think, will there be any? Because I don't, I have to admit, I don't tend to think of those large numbers of children that are attending child care placement as a pool of children that are potentially, you know, available for the children's advocates office to initiate an investigation.

Mr. Bernstein: — We haven't traditionally looked at that subset of children. That's why our time has been focused on developing protocols with DCR and CPS and delegated First Nations agencies.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Right. Okay. Is there some policy sense in the concept of excluding those children who are attending child care facilities from the pool? Is there some policy sense?

Because what I hear you saying is in practice it's not. Is that something that's being considered in terms of translating the practical reality into clear and publicly supported policy?

Mr. Bernstein: — We have developed a policy in the past that excludes that kind of investigation function within the office.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Have had it in the past.

Mr. Bernstein: — When we did have more expansive criteria in the past, where we were looking at 12 months and we were looking at the provision of government services as well as in-care situations, those kinds of situations were specifically excluded by policy. And I would anticipate that that would be the situation in the future. We're in the midst of negotiating these protocols and criteria with both DCR and CPS.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I appreciate that. I'm not trying to be picky here. But I do understand as you're proposing additional resources to engage in more . . . a larger number of investigations, I think it's important for us to understand what the potential of that is, as I say. Because clearly this is in the context of an office that's been in existence for 12, 13 years and has a pretty solid record of service.

Okay, I think then, now what . . . When you come with the proposal then for 2.4 FTEs in this budget proposal, how much of that 2.4 FTE proposal is related to the policy shift from six months, since the last received government services, to 12?

Mr. Bernstein: — I think that the proposal takes into account not only the shift from the six months to the 12 months and the in-care to the provision of government services, but allows us to respond to critical injury investigations as well. So I think that's a big piece.

We're starting to feel more pressure in terms of looking at developing findings and recommendations that can prevent injuries. The two really cross over because when you're looking at child deaths, you're trying to prevent not only future child deaths, but future critical injuries. When you're looking at critical injuries, you're trying to prevent both child deaths and critical injuries, and you may be looking at the same kind of issues in terms of service limitations, intervention points. The only difference is the force of the blow and the impact in terms of whether or not the child is still living.

And, as I mentioned, I think that there's another dimension because we provide both advocacy and investigation. And so sometimes when a child is still living and there are problems in terms of that child requiring a whole range of supports, we can engage in effective advocacy following up from the specific critical injury investigation. But I think it's a combination of changing the criteria and expanding the net in a significant way to include critical injuries.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And can you break down the 2.4 for me then, the proposed 2.4 FTE increase?

Mr. Bernstein: — The intake specialist position, as I mentioned previously, is to enable the office to have a framework where we can have a separate investigation unit and a separate advocacy unit so that we can have people who are

focusing and developing a greater skill level in investigation work. The linchpin is that intake specialist. The investigator position is to cover off the increase in workload that would occur, that we're projecting, from expanding our criteria to engage in child death reviews and to take on the function of the critical incident reviews. And the admin support is to recognize that if there are additional investigative functions that tend to generate a lot of documentation, a lot of paperwork, a lot of correspondence, there would be a need for some additional admin support.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Right. And I understand the explanations, but what I would like you to do for me is to break down that 2.4 as related to the two policy positions that you're advocating. One is increasing from six months to twelve, and then the other is the increase in investigation related to critical injury . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well no, I guess I'm really asking for your professional estimate.

I think I'm asking a question that hasn't got a precise scientific answer. But you will clearly, as you're looking at wanting to increase your activity and you're proposing increased human resources in order to achieve it, you will be associating some portions of that to each of those policy objectives.

Mr. Bernstein: — Just to kind of get at this question I think the . . . Probably the weightiest position that relates to the change in the two policies obviously is the investigator position. That's where the pressure is being felt. That's what we need to augment.

The intake specialist is helping us in a broader way in terms of developing a specialized structure within the office to support investigations on the one hand, and advocacy on the other hand which feeds into our capacity to do child death reviews and critical injury reviews.

And then the admin support, I would weight that probably last in terms of providing the kind of support that we need. That point four oh is being directed at the expanded investigation capacity. But the intake specialist really kind of bridles the support that we need in terms of the change in policies but it serves a much broader function within the office.

So I think based upon the question that you're asking, I would say the investigator number one, the intake position number two, the admin support position number three. And it might be something in the area of 70 per cent for the investigator, 20 per cent for the intake, 10 per cent for the admin support. But I'm just kind of drawing rough numbers.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And I appreciate that. That's the best you can do is exercise your . . . [inaudible] . . . You'll have, of all of us in the room, the clearest perception of the relationship between human resources and outcomes at the end of the day which is what we would all . . . It's the outcomes that matter.

Mr. Bernstein: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — It's not the activity that matters, it's the outcomes that matter.

Mr. Bernstein: — Right. Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And I think you've also then, you've answered my final question which is . . . And I want to put this into a context because I understand what you've done upon reflection is brought a recommendation to the board today which is broken down over . . . which has implementation plans. It's not, you know, a Cadillac this year. I mean, faced with a Cadillac this year or nothing . . . But it's hard to look at the Cadillac. What you've done is looked at a business plan that enables gradual shifts in resources to address the concerns that your office justifiably has, as serves the public policy needs of the province to protect children.

Mr. Bernstein: — That's correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And I respect that. And in the context of the revised 17 per cent, which gets a lot easier to look at — it's still not easy — then I think you've also broken that down for me in a way that's helpful for review. I appreciate that.

And I think, Mr. Chair, that's all the questions that I have. And I thank you very much for your responses as well as your ongoing report.

Mr. Bernstein: — Well our pleasure. Thank you.

The Chair: — Any further questions? If not then thank you very much, Mr. Bernstein, for your presentation . . .

Mr. Bernstein: — Thank you.

The Chair: — And your presence. Also I would like to thank Ms. Cooney and Ms. Rodier for being present. Members, it now being just shortly after the hour of 12 o'clock, I wish to advise you that lunch is ready. However so is Mr. Fenwick. So if you wish to proceed.

Mr. Bernstein, I just wish to advise that you and your officials are welcome to stay for lunch. And I understand the committee is at this time prepared to hear Mr. Fenwick and his presentation on behalf of the Ombudsman. And I've been advised that members are looking for a brief, brief presentation and they have . . . So I at this time would recognize the Ombudsman, Mr. Fenwick.

Office of the Provincial Ombudsman

Mr. Fenwick: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some would say that I need a hint that's that direct in order to shorten presentations from time to time, so I will endeavour to do so.

I certainly don't propose to go over everything that's in the budget proposal that we submitted. There are I suppose one or two highlights that I would like to address, and perhaps address or anticipate and then fore-address a question or two that has been directed to my predecessor sitting in this chair today as well. And I will perhaps anticipate those questions.

Highlights, therefore, are this. Our office has, as we have indicated when I've appeared before this board in the past, four parts to our mandate: addressing public complaints, which is and always has been and probably always will be the primary role that we have; what has in the past been referred to as alternate case resolution; thirdly, own motion or systemic

investigations; and fourthly, a public education model.

The point I would make as I endeavour to be brief is, is that the board can anticipate in the future that we may talk about two of those parts of our mandate — that is, dealing with public complaints and what has previously been referred to as alternate case resolution. I think you will hear from us in the future that we're going to deal with those under one head. And I do that because I have a belief that, when we have in the past talked about alternate case resolution, we have done somewhat of a disservice to those kinds of work that are something other than formal investigations.

As I've indicated in the submission, I think that ACR [alternate case resolution] as we call it in our office — or ADR [alternate dispute resolution] as it's known in a broader context — is a good acronym. But it shouldn't stand for alternate case resolution or alternate dispute resolution; it should stand for appropriate case resolution.

We have a range of services that we provide. I believe that every person who walks in the door or calls us at the Office of the Ombudsman Saskatchewan deserves to have their case assessed appropriately to determine what is the best way to proceed. And sometimes that is investigation. That's a valid way of dealing with complaints, but so are other methods. So is conciliation. So is mediation. So is facilitating negotiations. And that's also a large part of what we do. In fact most of the complaints that we deal with are dealt with in some other way than formal investigation. So in the future I think what you'll hear us talking about probably are three heads rather than four. We continue to expand the role that we have with respect to systemic or own motion investigations. I think that's a good direction for us to be going.

And if I can give one short example of where I think that is effective and is consistent with our striving to be more proactive and that's with regard to conversations we had last year with SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] when SGI announced that it was going to be providing a rebate for the citizens of Saskatchewan with respect to car insurance.

And without certainly wanting to get into the debate about whether that's good, bad, or indifferent, our role when that program was announced was to call the president of SGI and say, in the past when government has announced programs like that, we will receive a number of complaints about how that program is administered. So my suggestion to the president of SGI was that we would like to sit down and talk to SGI about that program before the details were ironed out. SGI took us up on that offer. We had a fruitful meeting with two people who were involved in the implementation of that program and we made I think five recommendations, although they were somewhat informal so perhaps calling them recommendations is a bit further than I would want to go. But we made five suggestions, and four of them were implemented.

And a couple of months later I received some correspondence from SGI talking about the reduction that they were able to make in their complaint handling process as a result of that program. And I'm proud to say that our office did not receive one complaint about that rebate program from SGI.

And I think that's a very effective and important role for us to play in terms of being proactive rather than reactive. A proactive solution almost always costs considerably less than a reactive one, and that's part of the proactive, systemic kind of work that we're doing. I could certainly talk to you about a number of own motion investigations and would be pleased to answer questions you have if necessary.

A quick word as well about our public education role. We have, as I've talked about in the past, rolled out a fair practices training initiative. I think members of the board, some members of the board may recall that in the past I've talked about a shift within our office from going out and talking to government departments about what to do when the Ombudsman calls and, in addition to that, talking about what to do so the Ombudsman doesn't call.

We have rolled out that initiative. It has been very, very well received within government. And one of the questions that we have on our evaluation form is, will this particular training help you do your job better as a public servant? And I believe in the sessions we've done so far, the response rate to that has been 100 per cent yes. And so I think that is a role that we have to play. If we can be out there helping government workers do their jobs better, then that's a function that I think we can and should be playing.

We have asked for some specific funds for a northern initiative. If there is one area where I think that our office does not do a good enough job it is providing an equivalent level of service in northern Saskatchewan. We have been working closely with the Children's Advocate's office and the Human Rights Commission to see if we can share some work in the North to deliver it more cost-effectively. We continue to work in that regard, but there is a request for some specific funding to allow us to do that.

And I certainly don't want to cut off any questions, but I would like to address a couple of ... or anticipate a couple of questions. And one is with regard to some of the assumptions that we have made with respect to our budget. The assumptions that we have made are essentially based on the information I think that's set out on page 10 and page 11 of our proposal.

With respect to the non-salary expenditures that we talk about on page 11, we're asking for status quo based on the guidelines that have been used in executive government and provided by Treasury Board, which is a point nine per cent increase. That's what we have incorporated — with one exception, and that is that we know how much our rent is going up this year for our building because the lease was renegotiated last year.

Quite frankly we had a bit of a shock last year because the information that we received at this time last year was that our budget was going to be ... or, sorry. Our rental requirements were going to be consistent with the year before, and then when we actually got the notification from Sask Property Management there was an increase of I believe almost \$12,000. Now we were able to work with Sask Property Management effectively to say, we can't absorb that; it was unanticipated. This year we're being required to work that in. So that's an actual increase.

With respect to the salary increases, again all we have done with respect to status quo is incorporated the guidelines set forth for executive government and by Treasury Board. And that's the anticipated increase of ... or, sorry, the actual increase of October 1, 2006. And what we have used for the anticipated increase for October 1, 2007 for out-of-scope and for October for in-scope and probably July for out-of-scope is the 3 per cent. Now it would appear that that may not be enough to cover the actual increases, given what we understand has recently been negotiated with SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union]. But we've stuck with the 3 per cent in our proposal.

We've assumed that something similar will be in effect for out-of-scope as of July 1, 2007 because historically that's what happens with out-of-scope. And that's the assumption that we have done, again using a 3 per cent — which it appears now may not be sufficient, but we're not asking for anything more.

And the last item is with respect to performance pay increases. Most of the staff at Ombudsman Saskatchewan were at the top of the range until the new class plan was implemented last year. And so there is some room now for most of our staff to move towards the top of the range. Some of them will be there this year; some of them not. But we've assumed a 4 per cent increase in order to accommodate an average with respect to those out-of-scope increases. So that's where the status quo numbers come from.

Second question — that if I could be so bold as to anticipate — is: what if we were asked to reduce our budget by 2 per cent? And so again we try to work on a consensus basis within our management team. But as I sat for a few minutes at the back contemplating what we would do, there are probably five areas that would come to mind where we would reluctantly be able to find some room.

And the first thing we would probably do is not replace computer hardware. We are trying within our office to replace computer hardware on a three-, four-, five-year cycle, which is what's recommended to us by the IT [information technology] people. If we were told our budget was being reduced, we would postpone that for a year, now recognizing that's a postponement because that stuff has to be replaced eventually.

Secondly, we have some staff this year who are going to be going on deferred salary leaves. So what we would probably do is some vacancy management and would not replace them for the first month or two of those deferred salary leaves. Again the work doesn't get done when we do that, but there are potentially some savings.

Thirdly, I suppose, we are working hard to make our office more accessible. And one of the areas where we're doing that is trying to renovate our website so that those who have web access can access us through that particular manner. And that, I suppose, theoretically could be postponed for a year. It would reduce our accessibility.

The other two areas where I guess there's always some room to manoeuvre is with respect to travel, both in-province and out-of-province. I would be reluctant to go there unless we absolutely had to, for two reasons. One is, while we endeavour

to increase our accessibility, I'm a great believer that our staff need to meet with complainants face-to-face. And I'm encouraging them to do more of that rather than less, and that means more in-province travel rather than less. So that would be somewhat down on my wish list in terms of where we would have to cut.

And with respect to out-of-province travel as well, we don't do very much of it in our office. We do it in two ways, however, where we do take advantage of it, and one is with respect to professional development. As our office's role changes somewhat to do more systemic work, for example, it is important that our staff be able to network with others who are doing similar work to increase their skill set to take on that new kind of work. And so I would be reluctant to cut back on the little bit of out-of-province travel we do.

The second area for out-of-province travel is with respect to my own. And I don't do much of that either, but for example I returned this morning from a conference in Edmonton where I was asked to speak on emerging trends and roles of ombudsman work.

There is a bit of a philosophical debate going on in Canada right now within the ombudsman community about how best to approach the kind of work that we do. And some provinces are . . . have implemented a model that is much more adversarial than is our model here in Saskatchewan.

We are probably at the other end of the spectrum in this province in terms of working with government rather than against government to be proactive. And I was asked to speak at this conference because of that, to talk about the things that we are doing in Saskatchewan which I'm proud to say I think are leading the country in some ways.

I would certainly back off on that role if necessary, but I think it's an important role for us to play to counterbalance the models that are in place in some other provinces. We're proud of the approach that we take here and the work that we do.

Someone once told me that you should never try and compete with a free lunch and I know we're after 12:00, so I would be happy to answer any questions or get any additional information that you might require. But I'll . . . as Forrest Gump once said, that's all I have to say about that. So subject to questions, I'll close down my remarks.

The Chair: — Any questions from any of the board members? There being none, thank you very much, Mr. Fenwick, for your presentation. You're invited for lunch.

Mr. Fenwick: — We also had the opportunity or had the request, the joint request from our office and the Children's Advocate with respect to the information package. I'm assuming from the comments that there's no questions with respect to that either, so okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you, and members of the board, we will recess for lunch. I just want to establish a reconvene time — 1:15 then or 1:30? 1:15. Committee stands recessed till 1:15 then. And thank you.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

Legislative Assembly Service

The Chair: — Welcome back to the members of the board. We're going to proceed then with the next agenda item, which is the review of the budget for the Legislative Assembly Service. Members will have received a document for item 6 and I assume that members will have had an opportunity to have gone through the document, but they may want some clarification. There's a couple of things that I'd like to bring to the attention of the board. Before I do that, I'd like to make some introductions.

Once again, seated beside me is the Clerk, Greg Putz. Beside him is Marilyn Borowski with financial services, and Margaret Tulloch from the Speaker's office, assistant to the Speaker. Seated in the gallery today, we have Lorraine deMontigny from visitor services; Melissa Bennett from the library, Pat Kolesar with her from the library; Margaret Woods, Clerk's office and Iris Lang, also Clerk's office; Pat Shaw from the security services; Ken Ring from the Clerk's office and Law Clerk; Linda Kaminski who is with financial services; Lenni Frohman, from Hansard, and Darcy Hislop from our broadcast services. So welcome all the branch managers here today as well.

Now before we go . . . As we go through this today, what I want to do is just bring out a couple of highlights and then we'll be asking Greg Putz to assist with the operational priorities. And there's also a couple of new initiatives that I would like to have the members get the opportunity to ask questions on. And I'll be asking Melissa Bennett to bring forward a couple of initiatives that the board probably has not had an opportunity to hear about previous to this.

I want to mention that basically that the board is responsible for approval of operational directives for the Legislative Assembly Service and for the approval of the Legislative Assembly budget. In this context over the years the Provincial Auditor has repeatedly requested that the board adopt a strategic plan which consists of setting and approving the goals and objectives which also consists of setting performance targets and measures, monitoring that progress, and defining and documenting the operational reports it expects to receive from management.

The Legislative Assembly Service has received the strategic plan back in February 2003. It was tabled at that time with the intention of revisiting it for future discussion and approval. Since that time the objectives and priorities have been updated and presented annually in the budget document and it is our intention today to recommend to the board that we do the revisiting by way of providing approval for the process.

Our mission values and vision are found on pages 6 to 7, of the estimates document. Each branch of the Legislative Assembly services uses these to guide their direction. Our operational priorities for the four service goals are presented on pages 8 through 14 of the document, and more detail for the new initiatives are detailed on pages 35 to 54. So at this time what I would ask is if Greg Putz would just give us a very brief overview of the operational priorities on pages 8 to 14.

Mr. Putz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Speaker's

outlined the four main recommendations of the Provincial Auditor went a long way in determining how we presented our budget this year. And the consolidation of our goals and objectives at the beginning of the budget document provide members, hopefully, with a more detailed and complete and may I say integrated approach to the many Legislative Assembly services in the broader context of what we're asking for in our budgetary request.

The budget is meant to present our operational strategic planning in terms of our overall operational requirements, our response to external impacts, initiatives to improve services, and of course our budget priorities. So as the Speaker's indicated, pages 8 through 14 of our budget document are meant to provide the board members with both our immediate operational priorities as well as with our longer term strategic objectives.

Our priorities focus on the continuation and improvement of the services currently provided to members in the public. And of course we are offering those in terms of our status quo budget, and we attempt to live within the resources that the board has provided to us.

The priorities, though, also reflect the factors that influence and change our operating environment. In some cases these factors require new initiatives and, as the Speaker indicated, even though they are part of our goals and objectives, we presented them separately in the back of the document as new objectives so they can be clearly distinguished from our ongoing operational requirements.

So according to the priorities of the Legislative Assembly, we've linked our budgetary estimates in basically two categories: as the main or status quo estimates that seek to continue the delivery of current services, in other words our status quo budget, and the budgetary decision items for new initiatives, in other words our non-status quo budget.

And I think most members will be quite familiar with the services currently provided to the Assembly and the members. We have about 40 or so priorities in the initial section of our budget document for the fiscal year 2007-08 which are associated with these services. And as I said, they form the basis of our status quo budget. You may want to ask questions about how we are planning to go about to adjust, strengthen, enhance, and generally improve those services. That's basically what those pages 8 through 14 encompass.

We are also proposing five new initiatives which are summarized as the proposed priorities on page 12, with the goal, be an effective, responsive organization. And those are detailed as the non-status quo initiatives found beginning on page 35.

So in the interests of being pithy — as a Speaker once . . . that was a term an ex-Speaker who is sitting here amongst us today used to use — I'll open it up for any questions you might have on our immediate status quo operational priorities and goals. And at the appropriate time, as the Speaker indicated, call forward the managers to present those budget items that require new money and are new initiatives. So with that I'll open it up for questions — if you have any — on our goals and priorities.

The Chair: — Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes thanks, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Putz. As you outline the goals and objectives then, in your judgment does the written collection of them respond to what the auditor would be requesting of the Legislative Assembly in the Board of Internal Economy?

Mr. Putz: — I think they'll go in a measure to satisfying the auditor. The auditor has asked that the board approve these and that's what Mr. Speaker is asking the board to do today. But on the other side of that the auditor of course, in those four items that the Speaker outlined, wants us to report on those. So what we propose to do if the board does agree to adopt those priorities based on what you agree to with our . . . with what you approve for our budget . . . I mean those will be our priorities, whatever you approve in the budget. Things that you don't approve of course will not be included in that list of priorities, but at some point periodically report how we're doing on each of those priorities to the board. And what we're proposing is to do it semi-annually so it would close the circle.

In this document we'll be proposing that you agree to those, and then at some point through the year we'll report how we're doing. And at the end of the year, probably about the time we come forward or the next budget to say where we're at with those, and that will help you to determine how we go forward with our next budget request.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. And when you're saying the four, then you're referring to the four that are listed between pages 8 and 14?

Mr. Putz: — No. Well yes, those are our four goals. What I was referring to was the four things that the auditor identified as matters that the board and the Legislative Assembly Service should address and those were: setting and approving our operational goals and objectives, setting performance targets and measures, monitoring our progress and achieving our goals and objectives, and defining and documenting the operational reports it expects to receive from the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service] management.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So what you're suggesting then that the mid-year and end-of-year reports that the Assembly would provide to the board would then speak to the request of the auditor. But with these goals and objectives being the ones that serve as the framework for the ongoing document that's . . . Am I understanding that correctly?

Mr. Putz: — Exactly.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes. She's a heck of an idea.

The Chair: — Further questions? Ms. Junor.

Ms. Junor: — I just have a question I think it's for Patrick but I'm not sure. It's to do with this committee room experienced an event here where one of the staff collapsed and we accessed the defibrillator. And I'm just wondering if we did a review of what happened and how our response was and could we have done better? And do we need another one on-site some place? Do we need more people trained in how to use them? Do we

need another memo to say where they are and who to get to . . . I'm just wondering if we did anything about that.

Mr. Shaw: — The response was one of our commissionaires came and did the CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] on the lady in conjunction with some other people that were here. That kept her alive basically until the defibrillator was brought down from the kiosk upstairs. Moe Riou from my office administered that. The EMS [emergency medical service] arrived about 12 minutes after they were called and the feedback we have received on that is that she most likely would have died had it not been for the CPR and the defibrillator having been used at that time.

The lady has since made full recovery. She has called both Moe Riou and our commissionaire Curtis and expressed her thanks for saving her life basically. And we found out from Mr. Backlin that promotes and runs the program that in very few cases actually out of 10 that the person even survives with the defibrillator. So we were very lucky and I think it was just the prompt response from both people that saved the woman's life. And I think that at this point the central location for the defibrillator is probably as good as we can get. Certainly if we, you know, wouldn't shy away from having two but certainly the one worked adequately in this case.

Ms. Junor: — I think since Warren and I were there — I was chairing the committee and Warren was the minister responsible — I knew the defibrillator was on-site, but I did not know where it was. And the person who actually used it, when I asked who could use it, he said he was one of four trained.

Mr. Shaw: — That's right.

Ms. Junor: — So it was lucky we had him there.

Mr. Shaw: — Correct.

Ms. Junor: — I was just thinking that perhaps we need to have the training be a little more widespread.

Mr. Shaw: — Well we've endeavoured to do that but we had difficulty getting people to coordinate with the time that the training was offered. We're in the process of trying to do that now, setting up more training. But basically anyone can use the machine. It'll talk you through it. The machine won't work unless somebody needs it. It's actually quite a machine. They have them in the major airports in the United States and probably eight out of ten usages are by people who aren't trained. So your point's well taken. Yes, we do want to have more people trained, but in a case where somebody wasn't available — which in most cases they are, the trained people — somebody could use it that wasn't trained. It talks you through it.

Ms. Junor: — So perhaps . . . When I mention to people how this all happened, a lot of people that I talked to didn't know we had a defibrillator on site. So perhaps it might be just useful to send another memo . . .

Mr. Shaw: — Certainly.

Ms. Junor: — That we all will be aware that it's here and

where it could be used. Or even that it was here. The fact I knew it was here was enough to call for it. So that was useful. But lots of people I've talked to since weren't even aware that we had one on site.

Mr. Shaw: — Well we'll put another memo out, because one went out initially when the machine was . . .

Ms. Junor: — Right. That's probably the one I saw.

Mr. Shaw: — Yes. But I'll have one put out here this week.

Ms. Junor: — I know it has nothing to do with really the budget, but I just sort of wanted to ask. Thanks very much.

Mr. Shaw: — You're welcome.

The Chair: — Just to add to that, I was . . . After getting the first report from Mr. Shaw, I was quite . . . I thought it was worthy of acknowledging the work, the tremendous thoughtfulness and the cool heads that prevailed during that whole thing. It's good to review these things and keep them in mind. And I was very pleased to put out a memo congratulating those that were involved on prompt and effective action.

Any other questions relating to status quo?

Then what we'll do is proceed to the non-status quo items, and I mentioned that there's a couple here that I think . . . that I know that board members I expect have not heard of before, and that's where I want to start. And so I'd ask Melissa Bennett to come forward please and give us an idea about the need and the concept for the metadata librarian position. And you might as well, while you're there, spend a moment on the space issue.

Ms. Bennett: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very glad to be here today. And thank you for the opportunity to speak to this decision item which is a request for a professional librarian to focus on digital collection development at the Legislative Library. This item is on page 40 of the Estimates document.

There are a couple of points that I'd like to address right from the very start and the first is that I recognize the seriousness of putting forward a proposal for new staffing. Prior to coming to the Legislative Library I worked in executive government and for Saskatchewan line departments for several years, and so I know that, generally speaking, there is always a desire to hold the line on staffing complement. I'm bringing forward this request because I do feel that there is a strategic need in the library and it warrants some attention and at least some dialogue and presentation to you.

And I would note that the library's permanent staff complement of 15 FTEs has remained constant for the last 10 years, and in the last 20 years the library has had a one-person increase from 14 to 15 people. Also during that time frame, most recently in the last 10 years, the library's non-permanent staffing complement has actually been reduced. So just to give you some background there and the context for bringing this forward.

And the second point that I would like to address right at the

start is the meaning of the title that we've given this position, digital collections and metadata librarian. I know there is a bit of library jargon thrown in there. And the first question that I've had in presenting this item internally — to the Clerk's office first and Mr. Speaker second — was, what is metadata? What are you talking about? So I thought I could briefly and hopefully colourfully describe to you what metadata means and then define its use in the library context.

Metadata is actually quite a hot term in the library field these days as well as in the information industry. I googled the phrase metadata librarian last week and I got 952,000 hits. And the hits that I looked at, most of them were job postings for metadata librarians throughout North America. When I googled the term metadata itself, I got 53 million hits, which I suppose is not really surprising given that data is what the web is all about and metadata is one of the underlying structures that really makes the World Wide Web workable. It helps us to find information on the World Wide Web more effectively. So thus it's a hot topic to web folks.

The term metadata, translated literally, means data about data. And so for example if you have a document like this Estimates document here today that you wanted to make available to future potential users, you would want to provide some context about this item such as: who authored the item, what is its title, when was it created, who published it, and what is it about? What are some of the subject contexts for it? And the answers to these questions provide a set of contextual data about your document or your data. So, thus, data about data.

What you then do with the metadata is input it into an information system where you plan to make your data accessible for future potential users. This last part of the process is actually where a bulk of the work of a digital collections and metadata librarian is concentrated. And that is ensuring that the metadata is deployed into a digital information system that offers maximum accessibility and exposure on the World Wide Web.

The work of libraries is significantly evolving in this particular respect because, for electronic content, libraries are starting to move away from some of the more traditional finding aids they've used in the past, which have been databases or catalogues that aren't deep searched, if you will, through regular web search engines. Libraries are moving towards what we would call web-accessible repositories for this type of electronic information.

So this brings me to the two changed contexts that are driving the need for a digital collections and metadata librarian. And as you know, the Legislative Library has been the official repository for preservation of all Saskatchewan government publications for many years now. And in 2005, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005 expanded this role to include electronic government publications of Saskatchewan.

In the spring of last year the Premier sent a letter to all of the deputy ministers in government, advising that they were supposed to send all of their electronic publications to the library in addition to print publications. And we've had a very good response to date. We're very pleased. Departments have been sending us their electronic materials. And I think that there

will be an expectation that the library then handles these materials in an optimal way. And that's what I'm concerned about today.

The second change driving this need is the changed expectation of the public in finding and using electronic information, mostly via the Internet, and the need for the Legislative Library to make electronic publications more accessible to the public through the Internet environment. What we would like to do is enable the people of Saskatchewan to find Saskatchewan government e-pubs through a simple Google search. That's the way that most people approach finding information on the Internet, for better or for worse.

And this is the direction that the Ontario Legislative Library is taking with their e-pubs and it's also the direction that a lot of major research libraries are taking with electronic publications. Many libraries are working in partnership on these endeavours and we also have a partnership opportunity with the University of Regina Library which I think is outlined in the document that you have there.

Queen's Printer has also expressed interest in the Legislative Library taking on a leadership role in this area. And I believe that it would also be a nice tie-in with the Government of Saskatchewan website. And we've had some informal conversations with those folks.

Essentially we would like a digital collections and metadata librarian to work on the development of an e-Pubs repository that would make the full text of these government e-Pubs searchable through standard web search engines. And the role of this librarian would involve attention to metadata as well as to the development of information systems, working in co-operation with our partner. And as the proposal outlines, we believe that the primary cost on our end is actually the human resource capacity. The University of Regina is looking at developing a system using some open-source software and they have offered the potential of essentially piggybacking on their initiative. So we would be looking at very low cost in terms of hardware, software.

The ultimate outcome would be maximum exposure of the published materials of the Government of Saskatchewan to the people of Saskatchewan, and frankly anyone interested in Saskatchewan around the globe. By way of example, the current and new head of the University of Regina Library is a former metadata librarian from the University of Oregon, and she developed one of these systems at the University of Oregon for their scholarly research publications. They had 3,000 documents put into this repository. And in a year's time they had half a million hits on them and their grad students and their faculty were getting calls from publishing houses to publish their scholarly research because they had been googled and found on the Internet. So the exposure that you can gain through this kind of a system is dramatically different than what you have through traditional library catalogues.

I think that gives you the crux of the issue and the main reason why I'm bringing it forward to you today. And I'd be pleased to respond to questions that you might have.

The Chair: — Perhaps you could also continue at this time and

just deal with the space required.

Ms. Bennett: — Sure, okay. All right. The space item is on page 50 of your Estimates document and I would like to outline one change. Page 54 indicates a request for \$152,000 in '07-08, and this is changed to \$62,000. The request for 90,000 in '07-08 for compact mobile shelving is removed.

The Chair: — Could you just identify where it is you're looking?

Ms. Bennett: — Yes, on . . . Page 54 at the bottom has a table outlining costs. I think that's the easiest place to review the changes. In '07-08 that column there is \$90,000, indicated as required for compact mobile shelving, and that is removed. So you can just cross that out. And the total request for '07-08 is \$62,000.

And what I'd like to do is give you an overview of the proposal as a whole, and then I will give you some detail as to why that change has happened. And then I'll be pleased to respond to questions.

At the outset I'd like you to focus your attention on the three key strategic elements for this item. And I think the first one is that there's a critical need with respect to Legislative Library collection space. And we conducted a thorough analysis over December and January of this past year, and we estimate a three-year time frame before the library runs out of space. We were a little shocked to find that figure. I knew this was a critical issue, but I didn't know that it was coming up in three years time. And I would note that this is in the context of already having significantly reduced the growth, the physical growth of the library by almost half.

The second strategic element is that we have been offered an opportunity by SPM to acquire Walter Scott Building space that is ideally located for accommodating Legislative Library needs. SPM advises that space in the Walter Scott Building does not come available very often. Certainly the space that we are looking at has never been available in our recent corporate memory. It's a basement space, which is the only type of space that is suitable for housing very heavy library collections. And it is not likely to come available again in the foreseeable future — at least that's what SPM is advising — if we don't take this opportunity now.

The third strategic element is that this proposal offers us the opportunity to create a strategic choice to create a long-term solution to this problem. I think some of those of you who have been around the table for some years are quite familiar with library space issues, and this problem keeps coming up. We anticipate that with proper shelving equipment, this space could address the library's accommodation needs for many years to come — we project to the year 2032.

So I would ask you to keep these three things in mind. And I'll give you just a little more detail very briefly.

In November 2006, SPM gave the Clerk of the Assembly a heads-up that they believed space in the Walter Scott Building would likely be coming available in '07-08. SPM thought that the library might be interested in this space. The space in

question is B5 of the Walter Scott Building. It's on the basement level which, as I mentioned, is key, because the excessive weight of library shelving and compact mobile shelving in particular can only be accommodated on a ground floor.

For those of you who aren't familiar with compact mobile shelving, it basically is library shelves that move on a track system that's installed in the floor, and it means that library shelves can be compressed together. You don't need aisle space between each one and you simply create your aisle by compacting the shelves where you need your aisle space. It essentially doubles your capacity for shelving, so it's a very useful tool for libraries.

B5 is directly down the hall from the library's current collection annex over in the Walter Scott Building, room B1. Its close proximity to the current collection annex and to the Legislative Building is what makes it so ideal for the library.

As I mentioned, we're advised that Walter Scott space does not come available very often. Apparently tenants like it there and don't usually leave, and this particular space has certainly been occupied for many years. At one time it housed the Department of Agriculture library which was closed, I believe, somewhere around seven years ago. But there is supposed to be some existing compact mobile shelving in the space that was installed at one time by the Department of Agriculture library. So again this is another reason why we find this particularly appealing.

With respect to our current location of collections, approximately 20 per cent of the library's collection is housed in this building, in the Legislative Building. Eighty per cent is housed in the library's collection annex over in the Walter Scott Building. B1 was acquired by the library many years ago. When it was fully equipped with mobile compact shelving about eight years ago and when this shelving was installed, the library anticipated that it would last for about 10 years, or meet accommodation needs of the library for about 10 years. And the former legislative librarian was very accurate in her analysis, because that's about when we're going to run out of space. So we have to date used 79 per cent of available collection accommodation space that the library has. A library is considered to be full at 86 per cent and, based on conservative growth projections, as I mentioned, we anticipate we will reach capacity in three years.

In the early '90s the library was estimated to be growing by approximately 860 linear feet per year. In the late '90s this had fallen to 600 linear feet and to date currently we are projecting 330 linear feet growth per year. So you can see that that is significantly less than what we . . . how the library used to grow, largely due to a transfer over to acquisition of electronic materials and that sort of thing.

Running out of space for our materials in three years' time is serious, and we are limited in the options available to us. And I would certainly be happy to discuss those options with you when we move to questions. I do believe that acquiring B5 would create an optimal long-term solution for the library. And as I mentioned, we estimate that if we installed compact shelving in this entire space — where in the majority of the space we could achieve an additional 8,000 linear feet of

storage space for library collections which could last until 2032 — this would certainly free library staff from constantly having to address space problems. We spend a large amount of our time focusing on how to juggle around these collections and it would be wonderful to be able to move our attention to more proactive issues.

Our recommendation is to negotiate for the space and use approximately two-thirds of it to house library collections and one-third to house the library's support services staff unit, which is currently located over in Walter Scott on the second floor.

There appears to be some risk that the current tenant may not vacate as planned. And no doubt you will have all noted in reading through this item that there are many different variables on overall costs and space configurations. These are due to the fact that we're in the very early stages. SPM has not been able to nail down details and they have not been willing to provide us with a walkthrough yet.

We wanted to still bring this item forward to you so that you would have the opportunity to respond and provide us with the power to negotiate with them. We prepared the budget submission based on SPM's quote and our best estimations of the outside range of the costs.

So in conclusion, I'd like to review the dollars requested. As I mentioned, we are requesting a total of \$62,000 in '07-08 — changed from the previous amount of 152,000. And as I noted, the request for 90,000 in '07-08 for compact mobile shelving is removed. That is because, subsequent to the preparation of the Estimates document, financial services talked to the Department of Finance about how you would handle a situation where you acquired an asset like compact mobile shelving — which costs a significant amount of funds — in the process of acquiring rental space. And the Department of Finance indicated it would not be appropriate to compensate the departing tenant for the shelves. So that's why we've removed it.

Finance indicated that if the tenant leaves the mobile shelves, we acquire them at no cost. And if the tenant takes them, which is possible, we would need to revise our future compact shelving cost projections accordingly.

So in summary we're asking for 62,000 in '07-08, which assumes an annual negotiated rental cost of 167,000. And that is a pro-rated amount, or we've pro-rated that amount for '07-08 assuming a late occupancy in the year. We've also built in some costs for renovations, and we've identified the outgoing costs annually for the annual accommodation fee as well as projected future costs for compact mobile shelving.

I would like to request that the wording of the recommendation be changed to reflect the changes that I have outlined, and the dollar amounts, which involves removing point three. So the recommendation would read that the Board of Internal Economy approve of the Legislative Assembly Service negotiating with SPM for additional library space in the Walter Scott Building, should it become available, with 2007-08 costs as follows: \$42,000 for pro-rated accommodation and \$20,000 move and renovation costs, for a total of \$62,000.

And I'd be pleased to respond to questions.

The Chair: — Well thank you very much then, Melissa. And I think what we'll do is proceed on to the next item. And that is . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Sorry. We're open to questions. Questions, yes. The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Glad to be recognized there, Mr. Chair. Thank you. Thanks, Melissa, for your presentation. In essence, as I understand it in your explanation, the actual need for the space wouldn't occur until the '09-10 fiscal year.

Ms. Bennett: — That is correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So that in effect what you're proposing is that in the amount of 62,000 this year, 167,000 next year, that that would be in effect to hold the space.

Ms. Bennett: — That is correct.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And within that, the assumption being that the roughly \$200,000 worth of shelving — although we don't know for certain — could come with that.

Ms. Bennett: — Yes. I have not been able to review the space or how much shelving is in there. And based on old floor plans that I have, I estimated that there was about \$90,000 worth of compact shelving there. That would be the current market value.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Oh okay. What was the 110 then? The original number had 90 plus 110.

Ms. Bennett: — Yes. The \$110,000 for the next fiscal year was an estimation of how much it might cost to install compact shelving in the remaining part of the space, assuming that part of it already has compact shelving and that the remainder of it that we would use for collections doesn't have any.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. If this does not proceed, then what's Plan B?

Ms. Bennett: — We're in the process of developing Plan B right now. I'll be honest with you — I really don't believe that there are other locations that are suitable for housing the library collection expansion. Years ago the library had to take in portions of its collection and put them in storage at Gemini, and those collections are virtually lost to the library in storage. They become virtually inaccessible, and the library spends an inordinate . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Lost because . . .

Ms. Bennett: — It becomes very time-consuming to retrieve them. There is very little capacity for library staff to retrieve them without lengthy delays. Ready access to library materials enables staff . . . Even if it's not a public space, staff are able to review what's there, to browse the material and determine if it might meet someone's needs.

When it's completely off-site in a storage location in particular, that capacity is removed. There are also environmental concerns for long-term preservation of collections in off-site storage

locations. So while certainly I think I would review those options, I don't consider them to be optimal. I would consider them to be a step backwards.

I know there was a great deal of accomplishment felt when the library's collections were consolidated closer to the Legislative Building. And, you know, to date all of the collections are either in the Legislative Building or they're over in Walter Scott, and staff have immediate access. We have staff in both of those buildings.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay. Go ahead and maybe I'll . . .

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. At current projections you estimate that we by the year 2010 will need additional space. Is that at 86 per cent capacity?

Ms. Bennett: — Yes.

Mr. Yates: — All right. How much additional . . . or how much longer would that additional 14 per cent capacity allow us to hold the collection? I know that you stated the library was considered to be full at 86, but we would still have 14 per cent capacity then.

Ms. Bennett: — I could certainly go back and work up that figure for you. But the reason for using . . . 86 per cent as a marking point for libraries for full capacity is an established benchmark in the library industry, and it's because management of your collection becomes very unworkable at that volume. Essentially you have a situation where there are so many materials on your shelves that you are constantly having to do wholesale shifts of your collection. You might shift a whole wall of books just to accommodate what you've acquired in a year, or to accommodate the influx of materials coming in and out of your collection constantly. So there's certainly sound rationales for use of the 86 per cent figure. But I could go back and make that projection for you if you'd like.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you. I think it would be useful to know. . .

Ms. Bennett: — Okay.

Mr. Yates: — Because it would give us some understanding of how long that space is there. My second question is how many, approximately how many times, weekly or monthly, would a request come that would have a volume or a book be lent to somebody from the Walter Scott Building?

Ms. Bennett: — I would say almost on a daily basis.

Mr. Yates: — Just about daily?

Ms. Bennett: — Yes.

Mr. Yates: — Just a single book, or . . .

Ms. Bennett: — We have book materials there, we have government documents there, and we also have back issues of serials there so — and as I said, 80 per cent of the collection is over at the Walter Scott Building — so I would say on a daily

basis. And we have courier runs that run twice a day between the Legislative Building location of the library and the Walter Scott Building to bring materials back and forth. During session it intensifies, but we have two courier runs a day.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — I recognize Mr. McMorris.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I just have a couple of questions on the new position, the metadata librarian — and I really just wanted to say that word because I've never said it before. Now that I've got that done . . . But the position is to set up a collection of data. Is the position then ongoing? Like I mean, this is, you know, the initial start-up of a program. Is it then ongoing, year after year after year?

Ms. Bennett: — We would like to make this position ongoing because what we would like to do is continue to add and expand the digital collections that the library has. There's great interest in looking at digitization of library resources, and so this position would be tasked with that as well. Also we anticipate that obviously we will be constantly receiving electronic publications, and one of the roles of this particular librarian would be to continue with applying metadata for those materials at a more intensive level than we do now.

Currently when we get a print publication from the Government of Saskatchewan, we catalogue that according to author, title, and publication date and we don't apply any subject headings to that item at all, simply because we do not have the staff time to do that. Having worked on the reference desk at the Legislative Library years ago, I know it was a challenge as a reference librarian to find materials if you got a question or someone wanted a piece of information, and you knew it should be in one of the gov pubs but you didn't necessarily know which one. You always really had to rely on the department name, essentially, as a subject guide because we don't currently provide any subject analysis. So one of the roles of this person would be to provide subject analysis on those documents.

But digital collection development is an area that most major libraries are moving into. They're digitizing resources, mounting them on the web, making them available. The library here has a vast array of historic materials that we could be digitizing, but we just don't have the HR [human resources] capacity to do that. And I would note as well that there are grant funds available to digitize library materials, and again we're not moving forward to create proposals at this time because we simply don't have staff available to coordinate that kind of an initiative right now.

Mr. McMorris: — My other question: I was interested when you were saying about the growth of the library and you're, I think you're calculating it in linear feet. Did you say how many linear feet it was? Could you just kind of quickly give those numbers again? Because if the growth is not nearly as substantial as it used to be in linear feet, is there any opportunity of — and you've, I think you answered it in your previous question but — reallocating human resources to look after more of the e-collection as opposed to the hard collection?

Ms. Bennett: — Well I think . . . To give you the numbers

again, the current growth rate that we estimate is 330 linear feet, and that's a mid-range between a high and a low that we estimated. I think that we will gradually see a transfer of more Saskatchewan government publications going from print to electronic and . . . But we will still need human resource capacity to manage those publications. The intellectual process of applying metadata, for example, remains the same whether it's in print or electronic form.

And what we're actually indicating too is that the degree of metadata being applied now is very minimal and we would like this new position to be able to create more advanced metadata.

This is the particular area that Queen's Printer is interested in. Queen's Printer is engaged in a process whereby they sell government publications and they have what they call a storefront. They don't preserve any of those publications and they feel that our role is critical in preserving publications and making them accessible. But they have indicated to us that there is a huge issue for them now around metadata. They don't have sufficient terminology to be describing all of these documents now that they have in a database. And they were looking to us to provide . . . to share metadata with them. And I said, I would love to share metadata with you; we're currently not creating subject metadata on these documents.

So we would like to do that. We believe it would be the best way to provide access to these materials. And I guess the spinoff would be that other agencies would certainly be borrowing from that work.

The Chair: — Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think I'd like to just pick up where Mr. McMorris left off here. The metadata is stored how? How physically . . .

Ms. Bennett: — It's stored in a software system and usually you would have fields set up based on what metadata you plan to collect. And so they would be things like author, title, subject, subject headings which is a controlled vocabulary per se, keywords. You'd have a whole set of fields.

The particular software system that we are looking at in conjunction with the University of Regina — and it's certainly not set in stone but it provides a good example — it lets you apply all of these different fields for the metadata itself, but then it also lets you attach your full-text document. So a user, when they are searching for keyword terms, they're going to be searching off of your metadata as well as your full-text material which is very unlike our traditional library catalogue, which has fields for author, title, and publisher. Those are the only fields we actually fill in data for on our government documents.

Our books are different. We have subject headings on our book material because we are actually able to download those records from other locations. And so someone else has done the work for us at national library, for example.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I don't pretend to be a computer geek by a long stretch of the imagination. Some would say bordering on Luddite; others would say not bordering. But when I try to envisage 50 years from now how electronically recorded

documents are going to be retrieved, I have no idea. I doubt that anybody has any idea really what it will be 50 years . . . how that will look.

What are the — and I'm trying to get my mind around here — the relationship between the metadata and the linear board feet? I mean, the point that Mr. McMorris raises here is that . . . Because I hear you saying that's reducing demand because of increasingly electronically formatted documents. And I'm trying to understand here how, looking down the road, what the implications are for the Legislative Library because I appreciate as well this is a provincial library. Its sole purpose is not just to serve the Legislative Assembly. So I quite accept that the library has a responsibility to house in perpetuity the documents, and what that means down the road I really am not very clear.

I remember the major investment that the board made in shelving some, I guess it was probably about eight years ago or so, and when your predecessor described the shelving there that was equivalent to the Trans-Canada Highway to the Legislative Building, I can relate to that. It's a bunch. And you're still forecasting the need for that.

But first of all in physical terms, what's the implications of the electronic storage of material? What's the physical space demands that that has? Clearly if it's books, it needs shelves. What does the electronic storage need as you look down the road?

Ms. Bennett: — Well I think what we will find is that, as you just indicated, it will vary with the format or with the type of material. So I think we will likely find that there is still a great demand for book material and we're not going to see a great migration from print to electronic when it comes to books. I think that could happen at some point in time. But certainly the industry has been a lot slower and the public has been slower in adopting e-books, for example, than migrating back issues of serials to electronic formats, which libraries certainly adopted very quickly. So I don't think we're likely to see a great diminishing of our growth rate in the area of books.

I think where it's very uncertain right now is in government publications. And both federal and other provinces as well as Saskatchewan, we have an issue ahead of us with respect to preservation as well. I think digital formats are not considered at this time to be ideal preservation formats because, of course, as your software changes that is used to read these items, you have to keep migrating your digital documents.

So we have a decision ahead of us and we still need to do analysis on this and make a decision. Do we only retain these publications we are now receiving — that are born digital — do we only retain them in a digital format? Or do we make some sort of attempt to produce them in a print form so that they're there in hard copy? I'm certainly reluctant to do that because of the manpower that will take and obviously the space that will take up. But I just will note that that is an issue and that there certainly are challenges ahead around continuously migrating electronic formats.

I think in the growth rates I've given you, you've already seen a dramatic reduction in our growth rate and I would expect that to

stay constant for a period of time. And, you know, maybe in 15 years we might be coming to different conclusions. But at this point in time I think we're still dealing with a fair mix of print as well as electronic.

Certainly I've been receiving a lot of print packages from government departments as well as electronic so I don't want to give you the impression that we've received an avalanche of electronic and no print. We've actually had departments responding recognizing that, oh, they needed to send us their documents and this meant both a body of print as well as electronic material. So I would certainly project the 330 linear feet to stay stable for the foreseeable future and . . . But that is where it gets dicey over time in terms of long-term projections.

I would also note that we are obliged to house and preserve publications received by the Government of Canada as part of our deposit provisions and we certainly still do receive print publications from them. So with respect to our serials we have really, I think, migrated our serials to electronic formats as much as we are able. We find it much more convenient to manage back files of the electronic serials rather than having to house all those. So we have already made that move.

So that's another reason why I would suggest that the 330 figure will remain constant for some time.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well I appreciate we're not the only library in the world either and, obviously, everybody is having to wrestle with this new world of retention of documents and information.

The metadata librarian deals with only electronically received items or print items transferred to the electronic or both?

Ms. Bennett: — The focus of the position at the start would be to create a repository for the electronic documents that we receive on deposit. So that would be the focus right at the start. But what I would like to see this position doing in future is looking at what we could take that we have in print and migrate to electronic format.

In most cases . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And what would be the implications for the print format that's . . .

Ms. Bennett: — In most cases, libraries continue to retain the print format. The electronic format is . . . The value of the electronic format is primarily considered to be for access purposes, to provide the public with access to documents that they would not normally see.

For example, we have a rare book vault and those materials are in there to preserve them. There are special environmental conditions in there. Digitizing them makes them accessible to folks who'd never see them otherwise. And it also prevents that original from having to be handled. But certainly we wouldn't be getting rid of those originals.

It would really depend on what material we're looking at. And if we were able to create electronic versions that could replace the print and then get rid of the print, we would certainly be

doing that. But oftentimes what you base . . . It depends on what the driving force is behind your decision and I would suggest that we probably have the capacity to digitize a small amount of materials that would be of interest to folks via the web. And we probably don't have capacity for digitizing massive quantities of material that actually would have some kind of significant impact on our accommodation requirements unless we outsource that somehow.

And copyright is also a key element here in digitization. Of course you have to have copyright permissions before you digitize material, so . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — One last question, Mr. Speaker, then. If the metadata librarian position was not put in place this upcoming fiscal year, then what?

Ms. Bennett: — You'd probably see me in the next fiscal year. I think that . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And we like seeing you, by the way.

Ms. Bennett: — Yes. Well I think, you know, it might be revised formats because I hope to see the University of Regina library moving along with their repository. They're looking at scholarly research being in their repository.

It would limit our ability to be in on the ground floor of development with them because I would be reluctant to, you know, participate in development or try to influence development if I couldn't give my full support or involvement in the project. But I certainly . . . The need will be here next year and I would continue to pursue it.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay, thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, members of the board, and thank you very much for your very insightful presentation, Melissa Bennett. Thank you.

Members of the board, there were a grand total of five non status quo decision items. I believe members are quite familiar with the second committee room proposal and also the committee research proposal. But there is some new material that I think would be valuable for us to hear about the . . . from broadcast services about migrating to digital. So at this time I would ask Darcy Hislop to come to the table and give us an overview of his non status quo proposal.

Mr. Hislop: — Thank you for the opportunity to present my non status request for our broadcast services as outlined in the brief couple of pages I presented.

The issue we're facing with the broadcast services is the broadcast industry itself is undergoing a significant transformation from its initial inceptions and analog system to the digital world, and you've probably seen this in several ways. By the most noticeable is around Christmastime when they're advertising high-definition TVs and all the latest and greatest electronics. All these latest and greatest services are on the basis of digital-based broadcast TV signals.

To ourselves as a very small broadcaster — we have a couple of

channels, the committee rooms and the Chamber itself — this really represents an issue of availability from suppliers. As the broadcast market moves to digital and large networks upgrade their equipment to digital systems, the manufacturers of course are looking for those potential markets and begin to produce many more products along those digital sides.

What that means for us is in product availability as we go to look for replacement parts for our existing systems, we find that manufacturers are no longer supporting them or beginning end of life of these products, which raises some potential risk to our ability to continually provide these services for the Assembly on an ongoing basis.

A quick example. Last year we had a request for a video server to replace a unit that was outdated, short on capacity, beginning to fail. We had researched that the previous year with the various manufacturers and selected a unit that was very cost friendly for what we do and well suited to the application. The board was kind enough to give us approval for those funds and we went to order the product from the manufacturer. And they said, oh, despite that you saw it last year and we had brochures on it, we actually stopped manufacturing this because it wasn't a high definition model. It was sort of their top-end product. And they said that it's not available, so we had to go back to the drawing board, do a little bit of research, find a different product that would suit.

It highlighted to me the issue that we run a very small broadcast system. We do it on a fairly tight minimal budget. We try and squeak every last inch of the life out of the various components we use and that down the road in the next X number of years, we could be faced with the possibility of not having a replacement product for a component that might actually entail replacing other components ahead of when we might like to — you know, ahead of when their life cycle's complete.

So I thought it would be prudent to identify sort of a multi-year plan to say over the next period of time we need to be thinking about replacing our equipment in a manner that leverages our investment the best we can but also minimizes the risk of the disruption to the systems. In consultation with my technical staff, I challenged them with the task of saying if and when we're looking at this migration, how would this be best accomplished and where would we start, given the current age of the equipment and given the amount of resources we have to do it, the time frames we have to execute that in.

And they came back and said the logical place to start would be, as I've identified here, in year one which is with our existing cameras and lenses in the Chamber which will be 10 years old, which is a reasonable lifespan for a piece of equipment that's subjected to fairly intensive use for those 75 or so days a year that the Chamber sits. That would be followed by the next piece which is the actual switcher and some of the associated distribution amplifiers around it.

Year three there's a variety of other analog equipment that we would upgrade primarily due to its age and then compatibility with the ongoing oncoming stream of digital services. By year four the existing robotic system which is digital — it always has been — will be approximately 12 years old I believe and again in its normal life span probably due for replacement.

Year five and six would then look at replacing the equipment in this room which by that time will be approximately 10 years old as well. This methodology is not inconsistent with the approach we take with our computer systems, which normally we replace the desktop computers every four years, look at replacing file servers every approximately five to six years. And again it's largely to minimize the risk while at the same time being cognizant of the investment we make in that equipment.

The implications to not going forward, I've outlined three options essentially. One is status quo. We run the system — the existing analog system — make a conscious decision that we'll leverage that, you know, as long as we possibly can and source things as best we can. You can do it. It leaves you somewhat at risk in terms of sourcing that equipment down the road and at some point in time you're simply going to have to make the investment of large wholesale change. The Assembly in 1982 made a \$1.5 million investment in bringing broadcast services to the Chamber. It's interesting to note that in today's dollars those million and a half in 1982 is worth approximately about \$2.9 million today. So it was a significant investment and one that I would like to see, you know, continues on in a way that minimizes potential risk or disruption to the Assembly. And I think that's in a nutshell what I'm looking to accomplish.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. We're open to questions and comments. Mr. McMorris.

Mr. McMorris: — I have one brief question and it's not on budget items so I don't know if that's allowable or not but I just . . . A question on the broadcast itself. It goes out through community channels around the province. And I believe it's also on Bell, is that correct, but not on Star Choice? Am I correct there?

Mr. Hislop: — That's correct. We do get our signal out to a couple different routes. Our primary one is through Bell ExpressVu. That is our distribution point. We have a annual contract with them. We do also manage to feed that . . . Access Communication and Shaw pick that up via Bell, as do a number of smaller cable companies. They're very kind in providing us channel space at no cost. We also have SaskTel's Max service pick it up and carry it at no cost.

I have checked with various folks in the industry, and we'd be looking at additional dollars to have Star Choice carry it. It would be another distribution carrier similar to Bell ExpressVu.

Mr. McMorris: — If I can further then . . . So there is a cost then through Bell, and that's worked into your budget. And you've never maybe had . . . Have there been any requests then to expand it further than just Bell? Because, you know, frankly in rural Saskatchewan it's either Bell or ExpressVu . . . or ExpressVu or Star Choice. And, you know, so it's . . . We're probably getting to half a market out there. I'm not sure. That's just a guesstimate. And has there been any requests to maybe look at the other provider to . . .

Mr. Hislop: — I have received a couple of requests from the public, out particularly in the rural areas, indicating, you know, they have Star Choice and where can they get the channel. We do get some ancillary coverage by having SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network] carry question period, and they

replay it every midnight. And SCN is covered on Star Choice as well as Bell ExpressVu so we do have some . . .

Our agreement with Bell ExpressVu is a contractual arrangement. We will be reviewing that in the upcoming year. We are working on a couple of alternatives, although it's probably premature to indicate anything with that. We also had very preliminary discussions with SCN about trying to get some additional airtime with them. So again that would also carry over to some of the other direct-to-home satellite providers.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Is there a little bit of, or maybe more than a little bit of fiscal wisdom in the planned procrastination where, by delaying purchase of equipment now puts you into position where just the cost of the equipment drops substantially, and . . . as I'm looking at your option no. 2 here which is the wait until it falls apart and then fix the whole damn thing scenario, I think. But is that as bad an option as it's painted to be?

Mr. Hislop: — You're certainly correct when you say do you get more bang for your buck with technology the longer you wait.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Yes.

Mr. Hislop: — To some degree, yes. Your personal computer, you could buy the latest and greatest and you'd be hard pressed to get it home before a newer model came out that was cheaper. I would balance that with the risks inherent in a production system.

I didn't have a chance but one of the things I thought would be an interesting way to look at, what is the risk? If you took the 57 members, the four table Clerks, the two broadcast technicians, the Hansard operators and figured out what is the hourly cost incurred in the course of business, and if you said there was interruption and the interruption was one hour, two hours, or four hours, what is the cost? Because that's the risk, as well as the potential risk of embarrassment or, you know, reduced public expectations of the Assembly business.

The technology, I understand the costs decrease and the capability increase. I'm somewhat concerned about the risk-management side of ensuring the availability of the broadcast component to the Assembly proceedings.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — So there's almost a bit of, you know, it's not quite but a bit of planned obsolescence here if you're saying . . . Because I think I'm hearing you suggest that 10 years is kind of a — in this world — is a bit of a life expectancy.

Mr. Hislop: — It's reasonable.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — For reliable performance.

Mr. Hislop: — We have pushed some components. We still have some of the original components which is incredible actually, and I think speaks to the capabilities of the broadcast techs to keep them going. From the risk side, that's starting to get a little, a little edgy. It's not unlike maintaining a vehicle or,

you know, any other piece of equipment that you depend on. There gets to a stage where the risk of it not doing the job you need it to do versus the expense of replacing it is a decision that you have to make.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Are we on the brink of collapse here?

Mr. Hislop: — I don't believe it's the brink of collapse. I think it's really trying to avoid a major capital expense down the road. And I don't think it would be appropriate to show up one day and say, I would like 300,000 or 500,000 because now we are at this point.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — At the brink of collapse. Yes.

Mr. Hislop: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Any further questions or comments? If not, then thank you very much, Darcy. And at this time, members of the board, if there are any questions or comments you might have of any of the branch managers or of the Clerk's office before we recess or adjourn into Committee of the Whole. Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well I think my question is to the Clerk actually, and it really relates to . . . because we all understand in reality there's two side-by-side budgets here — one of which is statutory and the other one which is operational. And I've been asking legislative officers here the same question this morning — which is the one that deputy ministers in executive government have to deal with it — and that's if you had to designate a 2 per cent reduction in expenditure, what would it be that would cause the least disruption in the operations on the budgetary side? Clearly on the statutory side, that's by law. There's not a budgetary scrutiny that can bring efficiencies there.

So I think that's to you, Greg, if you . . . when you think . . . I mean, I know you were talking earlier about goals and objectives and those sorts of things, which helps to create a bit of consciousness, I suppose, about the difference between those things that are core and absolutely necessary, along with those things that add, you know, sort of value-added but not, but not as essential.

Mr. Putz: — Well to answer that question, I think it would be similar to what the other independent officers were telling you this morning. There is only a small number of areas in our status quo budget, the budgetary side, that doesn't speak to our core operations. Those discretionary items would be some of the computer or technology equipment, but that would interfere with our plan. As Darcy has outlined, we have a plan to have a regular refresh of equipment so that the board doesn't see big blips in our budget every number of years, and we've worked hard to kind of flatten that out so that the board knows what to expect every year.

We have a travel budget. Other officers have identified that as somewhat discretionary. The travel is for our professional development. And in this budget again we haven't proposed anything extraordinary. It is up a little bit because of where these conferences are held. We participate in these and we have

to host them from time to time, so that's another discretionary area.

And what I would propose rather than kind of indicating on the public record without giving it a lot of thought and making rash decisions, is that I would like to work with our managers and, you know, in a consensus manner figure out where we'd best be able to target that 2 per cent. Because in looking at this we anticipated this sort of question, that there are some savings here and there, small areas here and there across the board, but whether it'd get to 2 per cent, I doubt it.

We were looking at where some of these savings might come from and 2 per cent, Marilyn tells me, it'd be \$147,400 in our budget. Now as I said our budget is, at least my way of thinking, quite lean and it would be painful to get to a 2 per cent cut. But it doesn't mean we couldn't do it. If that's what the board required, that's what we would . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Now 147 is 2 per cent of the . . .

Mr. Putz: — Budgetary side.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Of the budgetary side only. Yes.

Mr. Putz: — Right. And that also includes . . . It doesn't include the things that include in our budgetary side for the caucus administration, constituency support, and grants for members' professional development. So if you're talking about 2 per cent from just the areas that we have discretionary control, it would something more than 2 per cent. Unless you'd want the pain, so to speak, spread over all of those various areas.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Okay, thanks.

The Chair: — Are there any other questions from the members of the board? The Chair recognizes Ms. Junor.

Ms. Junor: — When we're talking about professional development and things like that that could be discretionary to remove from the budget, we're also in a market where people are highly, it's highly competitive to recruit people. So taking away options like professional development would be fairly foolhardy since then you're decreasing your ability to compete. And I think we have to remember that as an employer as well.

Mr. Putz: — I fully concur with that and just . . .

Ms. Junor: — I thought you would.

Mr. Putz: — To underscore that it would be quite painful and to say the least demoralizing as well because our staff are professionals, as you pointed out, and they benefit greatly from the professional development that we are able to offer.

Ms. Junor: — Thanks.

The Chair: — Well thank you very much, members of the board, and thank you to all the branch managers for attending. I will recess for five minutes and then we could reconvene in camera.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

[The board continued in camera.]

The Chair: — Members of the board, we will come to order again. And members have had an opportunity to discuss items 1 through to 7 so at this stage I believe members may be ready for decision making.

Item 1, a decision with respect to the budget for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. The Chair recognizes Judy Junor.

Ms. Junor: — I move:

That the 2007-2008 estimates of 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.

And that's seconded by Ms. Harpauer. I so move.

The Chair: — Thank you. Are there any comments or questions? Those in favour of the motion, please indicate. Any opposed? None. The motion is carried unanimously.

Item no. 2, a decision item with respect to the 2007-2008 budget for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. The Chair recognizes Mr. Yates.

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

That the 2007-2008 estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer in the amount of 1,174,000, which is statutory, be transmitted to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

And that's seconded by Mr. McMorris.

The Chair: — On the motion just read, those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? None. The motion is carried.

Item no. 3, a decision item with respect to the 2007-2008 budget of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The Chair recognizes Ms. Junor.

Ms. Junor: — I move:

That the 2007-2008 estimates for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be approved in the amount of 675,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, 675,000; and further that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

And that's seconded by Mr. McMorris.

The Chair: — Motion moved and seconded. Those in favour of the motion please raise your hands. Any opposed? None. The motion is carried unanimously.

Item 4, decision item with respect to the review of the 2007, 2006 budget for the Office of the Children's Advocate. The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will

move:

That the 2007-08 estimates of the Children's Advocate be approved in the amount of \$1,450,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$1,289,500, and statutory, \$160,500, for a total of \$1,450,000; and further that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

And that is seconded by Ms. Harpauer.

The Chair: — Thank you. On the motion just read, those in favour of the motion please indicate. Any opposed? None. Motion is carried unanimously. Proceed then to item 5, review of the 2007-2008 budget for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman. The Chair recognizes Mr. Yates.

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

That the 2007-2008 estimates of the Provincial Ombudsman be approved in the amount of 1,935,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, 1,775,000; statutory, 160,000; and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — And the seconder?

Mr. Yates: — Mr. McMorris.

The Chair: — On the motion just read, those in favour of the motion please indicate. And the opposed? Motion is carried.

An Hon. Member: — Unanimously?

The Chair: — I think it's unanimously. The item 6, review of the budget for the Legislative Assembly. The Chair recognizes Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — I move:

That the 2007-2008 estimates of the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$21,023,000, which includes the capital acquisition fund of \$250,000. The 2007-2008 estimates include budgetary estimates of 7,620,000, statutory estimates of 13,403,000, and capital acquisitions of \$15,000; and further that the 2007-2008 amortization expense for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$97,000; and further that such estimates and amortization expenses be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

And that once again is seconded by Mr. McMorris.

The Chair: — On the motion by Mr. Yates and Mr. McMorris, discussion? If not, those in favour of the motion please indicate. Any opposed? Motion is carried unanimously. A motion on revenue estimates?

Mr. Yates: — I have that.

The Chair: — Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Chair, I move:

That the revenue estimates for the Legislative Assembly in the amount of \$5,000 be approved for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, and that such estimates be forward to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

And Ms. Harpauer is the seconder.

The Chair: — On the motion by Mr. Yates and Ms. Harpauer, those in favour of the motion please indicate. Any opposed? None. The motion is carried. Now, yes. Separate motions. Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I will move, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That the Board of Internal Economy approve a capital acquisition fund in the amount of \$250,000 for refurbishment projects within the Legislative Assembly to be determined by the Legislative Assembly Service in consultation with the Board of Internal Economy, and further, that this fund shall remain in existence for each of the next five fiscal years as follows.

And then there's a listing of each of the fiscal years with \$250,000 assigned. And I so move, seconded by Mr. McMorris.

The Chair: — The motion by Mr. Hagel and McMorris with respect to the capital acquisition refurbishment fund. Those in favour of the motion, please indicate. Thank you. Any opposed? None. The motion is carried unanimously. Further motions? The Chair recognizes Ms. Junor.

Ms. Junor: — I move:

That a permanent research position for standing committees be created effective April 1, 2007.

And that's seconded by Ms. Harpauer.

The Chair: — The motion by Ms. Junor and Ms. Harpauer with respect to a permanent researcher position. Those in favour of the motion, please indicate. Any opposed? The motion is carried unanimously. The Chair recognizes Ms. Junor.

Ms. Junor: — I move:

That notwithstanding minute no. 1650 of meeting no. 1 of '06, the board approves additional grant funding for the Cumberland Gallery gift shop in the amount of \$5,000 to be used to host musical events at the Legislative Building for the fiscal year 2007-2008.

And that is also seconded by Ms. Harpauer.

The Chair: — On the motion by Ms. Junor and Ms. Harpauer, those in favour of the motion, please indicate. Those opposed? The motion is carried unanimously. The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I will move, seconded by Mr. McMorris:

That the Legislative Assembly Service strategic plan,

priorities, and objectives for the fiscal year 2007-08 in accordance with the approved budgetary and statutory expenditure estimates be approved as outlined in the Estimates document.

The Chair: — The motion by Mr. Hagel and Mr. McMorris — any discussion? If not, those in favour of the motion, please indicate. Any opposed? None. Motion is carried unanimously. The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded again by Mr. McMorris:

That the third quarter financial and fiscal forecast report for the 2006-07 fiscal year be received and approved.

The Chair: — That has been tabled. A motion by Mr. Hagel and Mr. McMorris — those in favour of the motion, please indicate. Any opposed? None. Motion is carried unanimously. Other business remaining. Ms. Harpauer.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. It's kind of just a quick explanation. I have an amendment motion. And it's come to my attention that the allocation of total funds that are available for accommodation under directive 3.1 does not align with the amount that is available on a per diem basis. The reason was when the directive was designed, the per diem amount was indexed but the total amount was not. So I am proposing an amendment that will then index both amounts, and they will then add up to the same amount. So therefore I move, seconded by Ms. Junor:

that effective April 1, 2007 that directive #3.1 MLA travel and living expenses be amended as follows:

That in subclause 11(a)(ii), 4,880 be deleted and replaced with one half of the amount calculated in subclause 11(b)(ii); and

that in subclause 11(b)(ii), 9,760 be deleted and replaced with the amount specified in clause 4 multiplied by 365; and

that in subclause 11(c)(ii), 9,760 be deleted and replaced with the amount calculated in subclause 11(b)(ii); and

that in subclause 11(c)(iii), 4,880 be deleted and replaced with one half of the amount calculated in subclause 11(c)(ii); and

that in subclause 11(d)(ii), 9,760 be deleted and replaced with the amount calculated in subclause 11(b)(ii); and

that clause 14 be added as follows:

notwithstanding subclause 11(b)(ii), when a fiscal year is a leap year, the amount specified in clause 4 is to be multiplied by 366.

I so move.

The Chair: — That's exactly the motion I wanted you to move. On the motion by Ms. Harpauer and Ms. Junor, any questions

or comments? Then those that favour the motion, please indicate. Those opposed? None. The motion is carried unanimously.

Just want to do one other piece of business here. And we'll try to set a date if we can for a next meeting so that we can present the dissolution guidelines, and maybe we'll have some priorities set up for you for the capital fund as well.

What would you suggest, Marilyn, at this stage? April . . .

Ms. Borowski: — April 17.

The Chair: — April 17. And this would be a supper meeting?

An Hon. Member: — It could be.

Ms. Borowski: — Yes, any time that week actually; any time during the week of April 15 to 21.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Could we meet over the supper hour on Monday?

The Chair: — Monday the 16th? Okay, let's try that for our first priority. Thank you. Any other business? There being no other business . . .

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Just the thanks to you and the Clerk and all of the officers of the Assembly for the preparation of their budgets, and we appreciate that there's a lot of hard work involved and good work has been done today. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. And thank you to the members for their scrutiny and their endorsement of the budgets.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And all of their staff, of course.

The Chair: — Of course. Motion to adjourn? So moved by Mr. Hagel. All those in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Okay. The motion is carried. The meeting stands adjourned.

[The board adjourned at 16:35.]