



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HANSARD VERBATIM REPORT



No. 9 — November 12, 2013

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Hon. Dan D'Autremont, Chair
Cannington

Hon. June Draude
Kelvington-Wadena

Ms. Doreen Eagles
Estevan

Mr. David Forbes
Saskatoon Centre

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Meadow Lake

Hon. Nancy Heppner
Martensville

Mr. Warren McCall
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

[The board met at 17:28.]

The Chair: — Okay. I would like to call this meeting of the Board of Internal Economy for November the 12th, 2013 to order. Our first order of business will be the approval of the proposed agenda. I think everyone has that before them. If someone would move adoption of the agenda.

Mr. McCall: — I so move.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. McCall. Secunder? Mr. Harrison. Any discussion? All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay, we will move on then to the minutes of the last meeting of no. 08/13. Are there any questions arising from the minutes? If not, would someone move that the minutes be adopted? Mr. Forbes. Secunder? Ms. Draude.

I guess I should comment on who is here this evening. We have Minister Draude, Ms. Eagles, Minister Heppner, the Hon. Mr. Harrison, Mr. Forbes, and Mr. McCall.

Okay. Are all in favour of the adoption of the minutes? I'm not sure I did that.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[17:30]

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Okay, we will move on to item no. 1, tabling and decision item: approval of the Legislative Assembly Services second quarterly financial report 2013-14. Any questions arising from the second report, quarterly financial report? Ms. Draude.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I notice that we're here at 44 per cent spent halfway through and it talks about underspending, knowing that there's going to be more as the legislature sits. Has there been any work within the Legislative Assembly to talk about where we could some find some savings? I know that in treasury board and other ministries we were looking to find efficiencies to make sure we're spending all our dollars as wisely as we can. Can you tell me what has been done within this area?

The Chair: — Mr. Putz.

Mr. Putz: — Most of these costs are driven directly by the sitting of the Assembly, but yes, we do look for savings or leaning as often as we can. And I can tell you about something that you'll be aware of from a memo on your desk as recently as last week, is that we're trying to cut down on the number of print publications we do by giving members the option of receiving at their desk in their binders all of their various parliamentary publications — verbatims, the orders of the day, the votes and proceedings, etc. And you'll notice that we're doing the same thing with the rule book, the new rules that came into effect today. So those are areas that we can find savings and we are trying to cut down as much as we can on our

print publications. So that's a recent example.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Okay. I know that when we have the special committees that are authorized by the Assembly, which they should be, is that considered . . . is it part of a forecast each year, taking into consideration it might be happening and when, if years there isn't, do we notice a cost savings?

Mr. Putz: — If you're referring to the special committee that's in the report, that committee has concluded its mandate and reported. It made its final report to the Assembly. And we will see that's basically the \$110,000 which will be going back to the Ministry of Finance at the end of the fiscal year unless, of course, the Assembly decides in its wisdom to mandate another special committee or one of the standing committees decides to have a hearing program.

The bulk of that money was an additional above our base funding for that particular hearing, so what we didn't spend will be going back to the ministry unless, as I said, the Assembly decides to create another special committee or one of the committees decides to have public hearings on something or another.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Can you tell me what you expect to save from the print costs?

Mr. Putz: — We don't have an anticipated savings on the print cost. That's mostly done in-house, and in some ways that's an environmental saving, but we . . . At one time we sent all of that out that's in-house. So it's basically paper cost, so it's not a significant amount, but it is a savings nonetheless.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any other questions? I think it should be noted that the majority of the costs of the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service] service are statutory costs of services to members. So they're not something that the LAS can adjust.

If there are no further questions, would someone move adoption or acceptance of the Legislative Assembly Service second quarterly financial report? Ms. Eagles. Secunder? Mr. McCall. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Item no. 2 is a decision item, supplementary funding for the Advocate for Children and Youth. Because we're in session at the present time, a special warrant cannot be issued. So we need to be able to direct the Assembly and the Minister of Finance to give consideration to a funding supplementary estimate for the Advocate for Children and Youth. I have a proposed motion and I will read it out:

That additional funding in the amount of \$261,000 for vote 076 Advocate for Children and Youth for the 2013-14 fiscal year be approved, and (1) that the said amount be transmitted to the Minister of Finance for presentation to the Legislative Assembly as a supplementary estimate during the fall period of the third session of the 27th

legislature.

And further, that the Minister of Finance shall recommend the said amount for approval as a special warrant on behalf of the Board of Internal Economy as expeditiously as possible at the conclusion of the fall period of the parliamentary calendar if the Assembly has not made a decision on the supplementary estimate.

Would someone move that motion? Mr. Harrison. Any discussion? Seconder please? Mr. Forbes. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay. Item no. 3, discussion item, Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Michael Boda. And we will start off with human resources.

After the last meeting I sent a letter to the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Boda, regarding some of the discussion that had taken place as to the staffing of his office and he sent the appropriate replies back. In dealing with that, those copies have been distributed to all of the members and I would open the floor up for any discussion. Ms. Draude.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you. I appreciated the information that was given to me, but I have a problem trying to understand the need and the way that it's addressed and how the positions are set out in a way that they are permanent positions and the costs that will be involved in it. I need to have some better information or a clearer description of what is supposed to be happening. I don't think that the people of the province were ill-served the last time and I need to know that what we are doing this time is going to be as good if not better, and that you're not just building a new group of individuals that are going to be costing people a lot of money without seeing the benefit of it.

The Chair: — Mr. Boda, if you would like to introduce yourself and your staff, please.

Mr. Boda: — Sure. My name's Michael Boda. I'm the Chief Electoral Officer. I have with me two individuals. Jennifer Colin who you have been introduced to the last time, she's our deputy chief electoral officer for corporate finance — corporate services and electoral finance. I have Ron White who has been working with us on human resources issues over the past 17 months. Some of you may have seen or know Ron. Ron has been working in HR [human resources] for 43 years, has been consulting for the past six and a half years working in the public and private sector here in Saskatchewan and internationally, and he has 24 years of Saskatchewan public service experience, last time as executive director of the HR client services within the Public Service Commission. So he has joined us here today.

So, Minister, going back to your question, I wonder . . . Your question had to do with how things were done during the past elections of 2011 and 2007, and you're wondering how things are being constructed in a different way. Is that accurate?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I think maybe I didn't explain myself right. I know how they were done last time. But I'm just looking at the positions that are set up now and the ones that are

considered permanent and how this is actually going to make our system better, the type of costs that'll be involved with it. How can people of the province know that this is something that's good value for money?

Mr. Boda: — Well one of the things that I've been articulating, and I have been articulating since June of 2012 when I first arrived, is that we are facilitating a change in the approach to election management in the province. You'll be aware that we began with what is called the Hamilton report. It was written in 2008 and published in 2009, and it articulated a number of issues that there were with past election administration with the 2011 election. And in the briefing that I provided to you, there's some background on some of the issues that Mr. Hamilton brought up.

As I came on, I began to focus on looking at elections in a different way than it had been approached in the past, based on the concerns that had been raised about 2011 and frankly going back a couple of decades within the province. And that was that the focus in the province had very much been focused on elections as an event, one general election every four years, and that there would be a ramping up for that election during the remaining months just in advance of the election.

From electoral best practice approach and the way that it is done in other jurisdictions around the country and around the world, elections aren't viewed as an event, but they're viewed as an electoral cycle. And so as a result, we began to walk down, go down the process, and we've begun to go down that path over the past 17 months in terms of focusing on how elections can be prepared for beginning in year 1 of the cycle working through 2, 3 in order to prepare for an election in year 4.

Electoral events include many events. They're not just a general election. They include boundary development. They include developing a voter register. They include by-elections that are called throughout the electoral cycle, and they include the general election itself. And so as a result, we have begun to focus on that electoral cycle, and that is how the office is being managed.

Now from a management standpoint and looking at the organizational chart that you're asking about, one of the things that I've said that we will be doing within the office, and is consistent with electoral best practice, is that we'll be broadening the management structure.

Saskatchewan, going back for many decades, has had a very hierarchical approach to its election management, and that is they've had a CEO [Chief Electoral Officer], an assistant CEO, and they've moved down from there. And the fact is, as your campaigns have modernized and they've become more complex, so has election administration. And so as a result, we've broadened the management structure so that we can sustain and build the capacity to manage a very complex electoral process that involves individuals in 61 constituencies, and of course we end up hiring 10,000 employees to support the nearly 750,000 voters in the province.

And so what I'm saying is that there are many improvements that are under way at Elections Saskatchewan, and I've

articulated that within the brief that I distributed to you. I've articulated in that brief the things that we have done in terms of developing professional human resource policies and procedures over the course of the last 17 months. I hope you've had an opportunity to take a look inside and see what we have been doing at Elections Saskatchewan over the past 17 months. And I do hope that the brief would be recorded in *Hansard* so that we can provide this to the public as well to demonstrate to the people of Saskatchewan that they are getting value for money.

[17:45]

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you. I guess my concern is we will have 13 full-time employees, if I'm reading this correctly, and probably sometime around the electoral cycle. I can see that. But I'm wondering if the positions a year after the election, year 2 and 3, I don't understand to say that this is what we're building. I don't know that . . . I think we need to know better how this is actually going to improve the system or make a difference to people's lives when we're . . . when I look at most of these perspectives from the eyes of the benefit of the people and the dollars we're spending, and to check out the positions that are considered full time are something that cause me concern.

Mr. Boda: — Well we're moving forward based on, we're moving forward based on the report that was produced by Mr. Hamilton in 2008 and then published in 2009. And the organizational chart that you see there is consistent with other jurisdictions, the way that other jurisdictions approach election management across the country.

If you want to look at how this, what we are doing compared to what's been done in 2011, you'll see that we actually, if you look at the general election of 2011, if you look at all the permanent individuals, employment contracts, and event-related temporary positions, there were a total of 47 positions that were in place for the 2000 election.

Now we went back and we had a careful look at that. We also know that other jurisdictions that are of our size are hiring more people in order to do this work. Manitoba has a permanent staff of 20, and Nova Scotia has a permanent staff of 18. So we know that we have been very understaffed and very underfunded in past years.

What we are aiming for is in 2015 to be more efficient than they were in 2011. However at the same time, what we're doing again by taking an electoral cycle approach, we're spreading this out over a four-year period so that we can manage things better, we can be more efficient, we can be more effective in the work that we do. And then we can implement a better process in 2015 or '16 whenever it comes about.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you. And I guess we probably aren't going to agree on all of it. But to have one, two, three, four, five, six, eight different positions that are really involved in operations and training and policy for full time, I guess I still have questions about it. And I don't know if I'm the only one that does, but I think . . .

Mr. Boda: — [Inaudible] . . . positions specifically do you have

concerns about?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Okay. If I'm going to look at outreach and policy and operations in your two and a half of electoral cycle, I'm wondering if that's, you know, if that's the type of value . . . What type of value are we getting for our dollars for that?

Mr. Boda: — Well as an election professional, I would articulate that you are getting very good value for money in that regard. For a process where you are in year 4 spending . . . In 2011 it was just over \$15 million. For a process where you are planning to implement an activity across 61 constituencies, and again involving this many people, including returning officers which are 62 across the province . . . You have 62 election clerks. You have 62 IT [information technology] personnel. They have to be trained and ready in order to support bringing on that staff of 10,000 who are brought in closer to the election of course. To suggest that operations is not value for money based on the staff that are there, I would just say that if we look at a comparison across jurisdiction, this is a very lean operation.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Yes. And I think I appreciate the member's questions. And I feel like I just want to interject that, you know, I appreciate the comments about the Hamilton report which drove the interviews and, you know, a lot of the discussion over the last two or three years about how to work within this. And I appreciate the comments comparing what does Manitoba and Nova Scotia, other provinces do. And I know that it's a tough situation when we see an organizational chart like this, but I think that I feel comfortable. But I appreciate the questions because we want to make sure we're getting fair value for our money and that type of thing. That's very important. But we can't forget the Hamilton report. We can't put that aside because I don't think things were great in the past, you know, within Elections Saskatchewan, and even within, you know, the last couple of elections.

I'm hoping that we can move forward the permanent election lists. I'd like to see a lot more people participate in the elections. And you know and I know, and I'm speaking from my own riding, you know, in Saskatoon, where we had to bring in enumerators because there just weren't the local people to get out and do the enumerating. So it's a different world in terms of elections, what they were 20 years ago or whatever.

But I just wanted to throw that out to the member opposite because I think it's important that we have this discussion. But that's how I'm feeling about it because I know that . . . And it was interesting, particularly around the Hamilton report, that it really opened my eyes to having somebody come in and take a look at what was happening within Elections Saskatchewan. So that's my 2 cents. I don't know if it'll pay for the bill but . . .

The Chair: — Okay. Mr. Harrison.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thanks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions around the permanent voters list stuff and then a couple around the proposed staffing arrangements later

on . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Sorry? No, no. Yes, we'll have kind of two components for the . . .

The Chair: — Can we hold the permanent voters list until we get to the permanent voters list?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Is that not where we're at right now?

The Chair: — No. We're at human resources, item (a), 3(a).

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Oh, okay. Sure. Well I have some questions around that too so that works good.

I believe this is the right part we're in, but you're talking about with regard to the permanent registered voters, that you're going to need four more staff to manage that. Am I reading that right?

Mr. Boda: — That's on which page? Ten. That's on page 10 of appendix B?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — That's right.

Mr. Boda: — Appendix A, sorry.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Yes.

Mr. Boda: — Did you want me . . . you want me to . . .

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Yes, if you could just maybe explain the necessity for these four additional folks and what we do right now that would make it impossible to continue with the people we have without adding more folks to that complement.

Mr. Boda: — Okay. Well first I'm going to ask Jennifer Colin to go through the complement of those that will be required.

Ms. Colin: — So we have indicated that implementing a permanent register would require four additional resources. One of them would be a business analyst who would be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the permanent register, would be responsible for some of the business rules and ensuring that the names of the voters that end up on the list are actually eligible voters, and we're complying with legislation.

We would also require a more technical resource — and we've indicated that to be the database programmer or database administrator who would be responsible for the technical aspects of the maintenance of the register — as well as two resources that we're referring to as data analysts who would be required to ensure the integrity of the data that we're actually implementing from external sources and loading into our permanent register.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — So would these four new FTEs [full-time equivalent], would these be in addition to the 13 permanent ones that you have right now, or would this be four additional to the temporary list?

Ms. Colin: — They are additional to the 13.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — There'd be more than 13. Because you know, a big part of the sale for me on the permanent voters list

has been kind of the, you know, reduction in costs over the course of an election cycle. So we're adding \$280,000 per year more in additional salary plus, you know, all that goes along with that by having additional employees. In the information that we had received, before showing the savings over the course of the election cycle, was this number factored into that?

Ms. Colin: — Yes, it was.

Mr. Boda: — I'll just add to that an element that the conduct or the running of a permanent register of voters is a very specialized thing. It's very complex and requires specialized staff in order to do that. And as we've indicated in our other material, we don't have the institutional capacity at present to do that because that hasn't been part of the mandate of the institution.

In terms of . . . The other employees that we have are IT specialists. We have a director of IT, and we have an information technology analyst, and those individuals are fully tasked with the other component of preparing for the electoral events. They oversee ESPREE [Elections Saskatchewan permanent register of eligible electors]. They oversee a number of different things, and they're already fully, they're fully tasked.

We do have a GIS [geographic information system] coordinator and two GIS specialists who you see. They are temporary individuals who've been brought on for an event, and that event is the boundary, the establishment of new boundaries. And we're only going through that process right now. Those individuals are on employment contracts that will come to an end when that statutory work is completed.

So what we try to do is those who are in the permanent context, the 13 that were articulated in the Hamilton report, they have very specific tasks that they are assigned through their position descriptions. If there are additional projects that come online such as a permanent registry, then we need to establish those positions.

Now in terms of the savings that are there, yes that was what we looked at in the CEO's assessment report that was there. It was, what's the cost of an enumeration? What's the cost of an enumeration that involves 3,000 people? What's involved from a technical standpoint, and does it produce a list of good quality? And what we were doing is comparing that against what would it take over a four-year cycle to have a permanent register and to maintain it in a way that ensures that the quality of the list is better than the one that we would produce if we continued to enumerate.

And what we were able to find through that particular report was there was a cost savings by going to a permanent registry. But of course there are costs, and we have to be able to maintain a quality list. And we also have to be able to interact with Elections Canada in terms of sharing information back and forth. So we have to be able to have the support in order to do that.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — All right. I'll have some more questions on the list when we get to that portion.

On page 11 of the same appendix, you kind of list some of the positions that you would seek to fill on a temporary basis in the context of an election event. I think I've said in this committee before, talking about what I would see as the appropriate role of officials from Elections Canada in that event, I really believe it's the job of political parties to engage folks and get them out to vote and do that sort of thing. That's what we're here for. That's what we're, you know, very professional at I think in most cases. If you have kind of targeted areas where we have Elections Canada staff, you know . . .

A Member: — Elections Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Sorry. Elections Saskatchewan, that are kind of working in certain particular either demographic areas or certain areas of that nature, I have concerns around that. That is something that's our job as political parties, to engage with voters and to get them to the polls.

I really don't think fundamentally that that's an appropriate role for an elections organization. And once you kind of start down that path as well, I mean there are under-represented groups, whether it be new Canadians, whether it be . . . You could probably even find occupational groups where you have an under-representation in terms of the voting turnout. I just think you start down a path that we probably don't want to go down. So I would offer that up as kind of my two cents on that.

[18:00]

Mr. Boda: — Mr. Harrison, you're talking about page 11 and 12, is that right? And I guess into 13 there. And basically what we've done in that context is . . . First of all, let me say that we have a plan in place for the electoral cycle, so that's years one through four. We have a plan in place. But no election management body has their very specific election plan in place until just in advance where the budget is submitted. Okay? So the positions that you see there are comparing 2011 to 2015. And what we would anticipate, based on what we needed at our head office, we were talking about 15 to 20 positions at our head office. We need space for those people. That's what all we were talking about.

If you look at the positions that are there, those are the ones that are listed from 2011. And we have not done our planning yet. We do not have . . . We have done planning, but we don't have the specific election event planning, project plan in place yet. That will come during 2014-15, and then we'll dovetail with the 2015 election budget that we put in place or that we put forward. Okay?

So these are illustrative, and they were what was done in 2011. And yes, there were outreach officers that were there, and that's typical of an election management body. We haven't done that planning, that specific planning yet for those positions.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Okay, well that's fine. But yes, those are my comments on that anyway.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Boda, officials. I guess having been here for your hiring and, again to sort of tag along

with my colleague's remembrance of the Hamilton report, that was certainly central to the terms in which we as a Board of Internal Economy went out and sought candidates fulfilling . . . to apply for the role of the Chief Electoral Officer in Saskatchewan. And certainly that figured heavily in the presentation that you made before the Board of Internal Economy at the time. And I think for myself it certainly played a pretty critical role in pointing to your credentials as being what we needed to bring to bear.

So on Hamilton — and again I'm glad to see in the information that you've referenced Hamilton in different places — perhaps to state the question in a different way, in terms of the HR plan that you have for the committee's information here today, what in it brings you into compliance with Hamilton, and what might be construed as beyond Hamilton?

Mr. Boda: — In terms of looking at Hamilton, it has been the foundation on which I've been moving forward and then applying electoral best practice to it. I would have to say that yes, as I was interviewed for this position that Hamilton laid at the foundation of it, and that's what I had understood I was to move forward on. I haven't . . . Over the months I've articulated that in different ways, but I understood that I was being brought on with a mandate of reform. And my goal is to maintain within the parameters of the Hamilton report, yet to ensure also — it's not yet, but — and to ensure that we move forward based on electoral practice in a way that's consistent with the way it's done across the country and around the world.

In terms of this brief and how we've been developing our human resources policies and procedures, we have tried to remain very consistent with what Hamilton was articulating. And some of those issues were articulated on the first page of the brief where we're talking about, first of all, the toll that was placed on Elections Saskatchewan prior to my arrival. It was not . . . It was an institution under a great deal of stress. Part of that had to do with the fact that there was an Acting Chief for 40 months, and a lot of it had to do with the fact that there weren't the resources in order to move forward in the way that a professional election management body would.

So what we've been trying to do over the past 17 months is lay the foundation that's consistent with the Hamilton report with respect to human resource policies and procedures so that there is a consistency that's there with the public service, so that there is . . . We're able to move forward in a way in which we can implement electoral events in a professional manner, yet at the same time we're balancing the work and life of our employees. And I think that was fundamentally missing. The past election had taken a great toll on the employees of Elections Saskatchewan, and I think it's led to a lot of the problems that you've seen at Elections Saskatchewan.

In terms of how this would go beyond the Hamilton report, I think the Hamilton report, there were things that . . . You know, it was a very short report, so it would have given direction that we need to do a better job in terms of our policies and procedures in human resources. I think that we probably pushed the bar up higher with respect to the work that we're doing to make sure that there is an ongoing consistency with how we work with the public service, yet it accounts for the fact that this is an independent, non-partisan election management body.

So you've seen some of those things that we've talked about. We've put in place foundational systems for HR that were not in place when I got there. And we've worked very carefully to get those foundational systems in place. We've sought consistency with the public service. We've followed professional recruitment and selection practices with all the positions that are listed on the organizational chart. We've adopted the public service classification plan. That plan, we've had an individual who's worked over 30 years in that area that has helped us to make sure that we have that consistency with the public service.

And then we continue to work on this. And I listed three of those within the brief, and that is we're looking at implementing a comprehensive employee orientation plan. And a lot of that goes beyond the first day: hey, you're here; these are what your benefits. It goes beyond it to talk about what's the culture of an election management body, what are the values that you should have. Because we are truly supposed to be non-partisan, and that's what we're . . . Because we want to serve you in a way in which there's a level playing field. So we have to teach our employees that there are values that we hold.

We need to shape performance management. There is going to be accountability within Elections Saskatchewan. It's very important to us that we do this in the proper manner and that there is accountability of staff. It's not a matter of, hey you've got a lifetime appointment. It's, there are deliverables that are here, that are very, very important to us. And so that performance management plan needs to be linked to a strategic human resource plan which is then linked to the strategic plan of the institution. There needs to be that linkage there.

These are things in terms of building the professionalism, the capacity of the institution that simply, just because of the resourcing level, have never been focused on. It's always been, gee we have an election in six months; how are we going to pull this off? And that leads to a lot of missteps and a lot of not being able to deliver in the way that you the stakeholders expect — in political parties, with the candidates, and frankly our voters of the province. That's really who we're here to serve. Okay?

Mr. McCall: — Thank you.

The Chair: — That's it, Warren? Ms. Draude. Go ahead.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Okay. Thank you very much. And I hear your passion and I appreciate it. I want to preface my remarks by saying that I too am really concerned about the electoral process. That's why we're here. It's to make sure that everyone in the province is involved in it and understands not only their right but their responsibility. And I think from our discussion at the last meeting, you know, when we had a conversation just before the meeting started ensuring that everyone, people with disabilities, everyone has a right to be part of this process. So I fully . . . I believe in what we're doing.

My question to you is more around the — I know we're basing everything on the Hamilton report — that the positions are ones that you had initially hired or believed in those, in the work that was set forward.

I just wondered, now that you've been there for a while, have you had a chance to think outside the box and wonder, could we do something differently that's still following the mandate? Given the outcomes that we expected or wanted to have with the change in the position and a change in the process and knowing that I firmly believe in the permanent voter's list too, is there something that you would do differently? We're talking about doing something that we can be proud of as a province.

And I also want to say before I finish my remarks . . . And I have to leave in a few minutes, so when you see me leave don't think it's because of anything you said or I said. In fact I'm already a little bit late. But this was very important to me. I needed to ask these questions. I needed to know that we're on the same page and that we're doing the very best job we can, not only for the voters, for the work in the electoral process, but for the dollars we're spending. That's my two goals.

So I need to ask you if there is anything you would do differently that could give us the same outcomes and spending fewer dollars?

Mr. Boda: — Okay. I'll go directly, I'll go to Hamilton. But just before, I'd like to articulate that, you know, that I've been involved in election administration for a couple of decades now.

And to encourage, to suggest to you, I want you to be aware of my great interest in the efficiency of election administration. And I think this goes back to a foundational piece that I worked on in the late '90s, and it was called the administration and cost of elections project, and if you were to go online, it's at aceproject.org. But we created it as an encyclopedia for election managers all around the world so that they could have a better understanding of how to conduct elections.

And fundamentally it was not just about the administration of elections, it was about the cost of elections because we were going . . . We were seeing in countries like Cambodia they were spending \$1 billion on an election and then couldn't repeat it. And what we wanted to do was put it into the hands of the election administrators that they would be able to introduce certain efficiencies.

And so I say this, I tell you the story simply because I want you to know that this is something I'm very focused on. And fundamentally from the way the budget has been done with Elections Saskatchewan in the past until the way we've been working on, I'm looking forward to presenting this next budget because we're transitioning to a different model in which we're capable of saying these are event-related costs and these are corporate costs.

And so we're also breaking it down into service lines so that we have accountability in terms of what's being spent in different service lines or the departments. We have three service lines that are there. But we're breaking this down so that there is greater accountability in the process so that I can become more efficient as your Chief Electoral Officer.

Now, Mr. Hamilton was the CEO of — I respect the work that he produced — he was the CEO of a very small jurisdiction. Their jurisdiction is the size of one of our constituencies, and he offered a very small report. And so in fact I am doing things

that are consistent with what he suggested, in the same way that we'd have legislation and then you have people who implement things according to the legislation. That's what I'm doing in this context. And so what he's saying, what he was saying is your staffing level is very, very low for a jurisdiction of your size. And I'm saying it's very, very low; in fact it's probably not enough when you look at other jurisdictions our size. They have more staff.

But I'm willing to work within the parameters that he laid out because that's what I was hired on, and I'm going to make this work. But we also have to improve the quality of the election. And so how do we do that? We're looking at efficiencies, how we can do it, and we're looking at . . . I mean already if you look at the brief, you can see that we had . . . Without going back to 2011 and doing the homework, which I know the Speaker was asking about this last meeting, we were more efficient. We're doing this more efficiently than they were doing in 2011. But I don't take 2011 as my standard, I take how other good jurisdictions do it around the country. And they're using more people. But we're saying, how can we be more efficient, yet at the same time as the election manager, you've hired me to make sure I do the job right and that the people are served well.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[18:15]

The Chair: — Okay. Anyone else have questions? If not, I do, which is nothing new. The Hamilton report formed the basis for how we envision moving forward in the future. And the CEO's office, when Mr. Hamilton initiated his report, had seven permanent employees. His report suggested that we should be moving to 13, which is what the board subsequently approved, and that's the position that we are at today. So the board basically in that time frame, from 2009 to today, has doubled the number of people, permanent positions, at the CEO's office.

One of the issues that I noted in your response to the letter I sent was that the contracting of staff was taking place when you were hired on. And that was indeed the case because the board had made the decision, in searching for a replacement Chief Electoral Officer in 2008-2009, was that the board felt the new CEO should be able to hire their own full-time staff. And our anticipation at that point in time was that we would have a new full-time CEO in 2009.

Unfortunately that was not the case, and we had an acting for 40 months. And so it was not our vision that we would have contract employees in there on a permanent basis for the remainder of time, but rather they were there as a temporary stopgap measure while we searched for a new Chief Electoral Officer. And so I think it was probably our expectation that the contract would diminish once a new CEO was in place.

So that was just some of the thoughts of where the board was going when we approved the hiring of contract employees in 2009. The . . .

Mr. Boda: — Did you want me to respond?

The Chair: — Sure, if you would like to.

Mr. Boda: — So yes, you had asked in your letter about why I haven't been appointing permanent employees, given my desire to develop the professional capacity of Saskatchewan's independent election management body.

I think that I've been very clear about what I've articulated publicly and to our staff, that the institutional design of Elections Saskatchewan and our HR practice must be professional and run according to HR best practice. As we've shown in tables 6 and 7 of appendix A, every permanent position that we've recruited and hired for has been developed, advertised, screened, interviewed, and hired based on HR best practice.

We currently have 9 of 13 staff hired in an ongoing role, and the CEO's been hired based on legislation, and we have two orders-in-council appointments hired by previous administrations. We have completed hiring 6 of 13 of these permanent positions according to HR best practice. We are currently in the midst of recruiting for three of these, and one is currently vacant. The employees who have been engaged in this way have been hired on a five-year employment contract, with full knowledge that I'm continuing to work through this issue on a legislative level, and they have been hired as permanent employees.

The use of employment contracts has been ongoing at Elections Saskatchewan, as you referred to, since November of 2008. And for 40 months the acting CEO wasn't allowed to hire people by order-in-council and therefore used employment contracts, on the advice of the LAS, to hire his staff.

In the fall of 2012, shortly after my arrival, a request went forward to the Board of Internal Economy to support a change to *The Election Act* that would allow the CEO to appoint staff in a manner consistent with the current authority afforded to the Provincial Auditor.

That model follows an electoral best practice approach. I'm not suggesting we create a new approach, but simply to duplicate what already is in place in the province. Assurances were given on both government and opposition side that there was a willingness to move forward, so Elections Saskatchewan waited to proceed with hiring until March of this year with the expectation that the necessary change would be forthcoming. But that wasn't the case and there hasn't been any resolution.

So I continued to avoid using orders-in-council mechanism and use instead long-term employment contracts because an order-in-council approach, it contradicts electoral best practice. It's no longer acceptable in other jurisdictions in Canada and abroad, and it gives a very clear perception of partisanship.

So that's where . . . I mean that, I hope answers your question in the sense that I'm waiting for a resolution in this regard, but I have fundamental problems with the order-in-council approach.

The Chair: — Well I don't disagree with you on the order-in-council situation. And as you know, we've talked about some solutions, and I think probably around this table there is an agreement that the order-in-council approach is perhaps not the direction to go. But there is still a desire I think at the board here that we look at ensuring that the employees of

the Chief Electoral office do receive all the benefits that the permanent employees of both the LAS and executive government receive.

Mr. Boda: — And that is the case. All of the employees that have been hired under these long-term employment contracts receive exactly the same benefits as employees within executive government. They've been hired based on the knowledge that they get equal benefits, and they have been hired based on the fact that they know that we're currently trying to resolve this particular issue and that they are permanent employees with us. Although I know you don't like that term, but I don't know what to use otherwise.

The Chair: — That's a personal thing.

Mr. Boda: — And I could extend the employment contract to 100 years, but I don't think that would be appropriate.

The Chair: — No, then you become . . . You've seen my permanent employee in my office.

Are all of the employees that you have under staff, are they all treated the same as LAS or executive government staff in regards to tax implications — CPP [Canada Pension Plan], UI [unemployment insurance], etc.?

Mr. Boda: — Just to make sure . . .

Ms. Colin: — Yes.

Mr. Boda: — That's a yes. Okay, that's a yes.

The Chair: — Thank you.

Mr. Boda: — We use the public service as our model, and so they would be treated the same as executive government.

The Chair: — You keep talking . . . Go ahead.

Ms. Colin: — I just wanted to clarify that the employees who are under contract are paid through MIDAS [multi-informational database application system] in the same way that any other employee is paid, and so statutory deductions are taken from every paycheck.

The Chair: — Okay, good. Because that was one of my concerns was to . . . Because since they're only employed by the Chief Electoral office, they have, by Revenue Canada's definitions, an employee relationship, not a contractor relationship.

One of your employees, one position I should say rather than employees, strikes me as not being a temporary position but rather what I would consider a full-time or permanent position, and that's the receptionist. You list your receptionist as a temporary position. Can you explain that?

Mr. Boda: — You're saying it strikes you as it should be a permanent position? Okay. The role of receptionist grows significantly as we get closer to the election and then in the post-election period. So it is not a permanent position. We currently have an individual sitting in that role because it's

backfill for the executive coordinator and the manager of administrative services, which is currently vacant. And so that individual is picking up a lot of the work that's done by those two individuals until we're able to fulfill that position. That said, that receptionist position becomes very important because the number of calls that go through our office increases dramatically beginning 12 to 18 months before the election.

So that position is there in the same way that the electoral operations officer for warehouse and delivery is a temporary position. We did have an individual in that position on a full-time basis while we needed them to fulfill certain elements of the event, and then that person went away for a number of weeks. And now we have an individual who's in there on a part-time basis on an as-needed basis. We don't have the person there all the time. It's on an as-needed basis.

As we get closer to the election, that person, whose name is Val, right now, they won't fulfill the full-time position. We will go back and we will hire a full-time warehouse person who has a warehouse background because you're managing a very large, complex process with 61 constituencies. We'll hire in an individual with greater experience and bring them in along with the others that are part of our event plan when that's introduced, because of course you won't be able to do it with one warehouse.

The Chair: — So you're saying your temporary position of receptionist is backfilling the duties of the manager of administrative services?

Mr. Boda: — We're going to be hiring into that position, and then that individual is supporting the process within human resources of hiring 122 people. We are currently, by the end of this process of hiring returning officers and hiring our election clerks, we'll have done over 400 interviews across the province. And this needs to be . . . There's administrative function that's involved there. We certainly don't want to use high-level resources that we're paying a lot of money to in order to do the administrative functions. We prefer to use a less expensive resource and that's what that individual's involved with, among some other administrative projects.

I'll give you the example. When I arrived, this . . . We had an office full of files. There had never been any management of files at Elections Saskatchewan going back to 1999, I believe, is when that all began. In 1997, you'll know that that was the first time that we went into this building, and so we had piles, reams of materials that had to be dealt with. And so we partnered with Saskatchewan Archives at the time. We went over. We established a partnership so that we could clean out these materials because we simply . . . They don't have enough room to run the election as it is, and then they have additional files that were there. Well this individual was dealing with that institutional capacity that we didn't have. It was just sitting there and we had to figure out how to do it and do it in a way that was consistent with what the Archives would require.

The Chair: — So if I was to phone your office and someone answers the phone, would that be the receptionist or the manager of administrative services?

Mr. Boda: — It would be one of . . . Eventually or currently?

The Chair: — Well what your hope is.

Mr. Boda: — Well it would be . . . We have two individuals. We have an executive coordinator and a manager of administrative services. And when the executive coordinator is not answering the phone, then the manager of administrative services would, during the down period of the electoral cycle. And then when we begin to ramp up, the receptionist would come on board, take over that element, and the manager of administrative services would turn to servicing and engaging 3,000 polling sites and all of the management that's related to the electoral process. And the executive coordinator would be ramping up as well in support of what's going on within the executive team.

The Chair: — Okay. So how would this . . .

Mr. Boda: — I'm sorry. You asked me who answers right now?

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. Boda: — So it would either be the receptionist or the person who's currently the executive coordinator.

The Chair: — Okay. So how would the salaries compare for the executive coordinator, the manager of administrative services, and the receptionist?

Mr. Boda: — I'm going to let Jennifer answer that question.

[18:30]

Ms. Colin: — The receptionist position has been classified as an MCP1 [management classification and compensation plan]. The manager of administrative services has been classified as an MCP3.

The Chair: — Okay. And how about the executive coordinator? Did you give me that or was that the . . .

Ms. Colin: — That's an MCP3 as well.

The Chair: — MCP3 as well. Yes. The reason I'm asking that, I'm just wondering why you do not have a receptionist because obviously you're going to need those administrative services performed all the time. You need somebody to answer the phone.

Mr. Boda: — No. We do. And that's what our executive . . .

The Chair: — And you need somebody to do filing and you need somebody to prepare letters and documents and those kind of things.

Mr. Boda: — Absolutely.

The Chair: — So I'm wondering, you know . . . And I don't know what the salary differences are between an MCP1 and an MCP3, but I'm wondering why you're using more management-level people, if they are management-level people, to perform the receptionist duties.

Mr. Boda: — Yes. I guess to be clear, that is that . . . The person in the receptionist role right now is doing the backfilling. That's to begin with. And secondly, in the downtime between the elections, we've concluded that is very manageable. It's very manageable for the executive coordinator and the manager of administrative services to back us up. It's really the executive coordinator who's focused on answering the phone. The manager of administrative services will be backing up during the hour when the other individual goes to lunch and that sort of thing.

The Chair: — Maybe it's the terminology that's bothering me. Would, perhaps for my purposes, a better description of the executive coordinator be a senior admin versus a junior admin for the receptionist? Would that better describe in my mind the positions?

Mr. Boda: — You'll have to repeat it. You're saying the executive coordinator is better . . .

The Chair: — Senior admin, and that the receptionist would be a junior admin.

Mr. Boda: — I suppose that's possible except for the executive coordinator is fundamentally a key fundamental player in that they are coordinating the executive team and their schedules and has to be capable of doing, has to be capable of doing the correspondence, doing all the minutes for executive team meetings, for management team meetings, and is also involved in supporting the service line that is outreach and policy and producing publications and producing briefs and that sort of thing. So they have to have quite a high level of skill. So I don't think . . .

Elections Saskatchewan is very small and as a result, we have to have individuals, even myself, who are capable of doing administrative things, yet being able to look at the bigger picture and take on larger level tasks. That's the whole concept of an election management body, that really we have this accordion style of hiring and as a result, you have to have a very strong core that is competent. Yet we also need to have individuals who are competent that support us, that are in the community and we know we can draw on as we begin to ramp up for that election.

Mr. White: — I'd just like to add something to that, Mr. Speaker. If you were thinking about the senior administrative role and a junior administrative role, if you went into a ministry of government, the deputy minister's secretary would be that senior administrative role or executive coordinator, and the person who's probably greeting you at the door and answering the phone would be a junior administrative person or a receptionist basically. So if that's a good comparison for you . . .

The Chair: — Okay. Your temporary receptionist, do you expect that position to not be filled then at a certain point or the 24 months that you're not into the preparation for the election and past the six months post-election?

Mr. Boda: — I would say, in the next election cycle, that would be where we want to go. What I've talked about with that particular individual who's a retired schoolteacher and very

capable, what we've been trying to do is get rid of the backlog of the many years of things like files that we're dealing with Sask Archives. We're trying to build the capacity of the institution, but we have to get rid of some of the dysfunction of the past. So I would agree, yes, that's the goal is to have that core.

Yet these permanent positions which are articulated on the organizational chart right now, these are the ones that we currently have. And there are others that are part of all the event planning, yet the goal on those . . . Not the goal. This is the way it's going to be is that these are . . . There's a beginning date and an ending date. And I think that that's been a drawback of the institution in the past, that people have floated around from one thing to another to another, and they haven't been appointed for a particular position based on the skill set that they have. We are trying to introduce that, that element, where there isn't this constant . . . There's some floating around because you have certain people with expertise and again you don't want to lose those people. They may be retired. You don't want to lose those people because you want to engage them during the election, in advance of the election because you don't want to start all brand new. You want to have the same people who have a competence. But at the same time the core people are there on an ongoing basis. And the others, they have a beginning date and an end date for a project. And then you, of course, have other contractors and they come in and do specific projects as they arise.

The Chair: — When you're doing your HR hiring, your advertising, have you consulted with other agencies in government to do a comparison of similar positions, similar benefits, similar salaries? Or have you discussed that with the LAS or executive government to find out, you know, what they're paying for comparable positions, what benefits they're offering, etc.?

Mr. Boda: — I'll let Ron answer that.

Mr. White: — We haven't specifically consulted, Mr. Speaker, but as Michael said earlier, every position of a permanent nature that's on that organization chart has been initially described and then classified using the management classification plan that's within the Saskatchewan public service. So that plan sets the level and also sets the compensation, and therefore is completely consistent with the Saskatchewan public service whether it be the executive government or LAS, for that matter.

In terms of benefits, Elections Saskatchewan mirrors the Saskatchewan public service. So whether it's group life or long-term disability or public employees pension plan, whatever is available to a public servant here in Saskatchewan is available to ongoing appointments with Elections Saskatchewan.

The Chair: — The reason I ask that is I've heard some grumbling about poaching from one area to another, and with concerns by other agencies that your offerings are higher than what they're paying.

Mr. White: — No, that's certainly not the case. Because I mean we know, and Michael knows, that the appropriateness of classification decisions is important. Because what we can't do,

as an agency attached to the public service in some way or another, is be different from them and set our own rates. So that's why the management classification plan is being used to set appropriate compensation. So if you took an executive coordinator with Elections Saskatchewan as an MCP3 and compared that to the job and the level of every senior administrative individual reporting to a deputy minister in government, exactly the same level.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you. On page 11 of your responses there, you have a graph showing the number of employees that were hired in 2011 and what you project for 2015 — 2011, you show 47; and 2015, you're projecting 33. I'm wondering if you can give me some kind of information as to how long those 47 people were hired. Was it a one-month period, a three-month, a six-month, as compared to what you envision for the 33 for 2015?

Mr. Boda: — I'll let Jennifer answer that one.

Ms. Colin: — The 34 temporary positions that we refer to in the table on page 11, the average number of months that they were engaged before the election was 13 months, and many of them stayed on well past the six months after.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you. Are there any other questions? Oh I do have one. Sorry. You have talked about an HR plan. The Legislative Assembly and through its powers, this board, has a responsibility for the Chief Electoral office, the same as they have for all the other officers of the legislature. So your HR plan, who has approved your HR plan?

Mr. White: — Well if you're talking about a strategic HR plan like ministries would submit along with their budget to Finance, we don't have a strategic HR plan at this point. So there's been no plan approved. Next week Elections Saskatchewan is pulling together a strategic business plan for Elections Saskatchewan looking out over the next three to five years. Any planning from a human resources perspective, particularly with regard to long-term, ongoing employees, would be developed kind of in linkage to and aligned with that strategic plan. So we're looking at probably the spring of 2014 before we would actually have one in place.

The Chair: — So would this just be a high-level HR plan or would it deal with particulars as well of how staff are dealt with?

Mr. White: — It would certainly be a high-level strategic HR plan, no doubt about that, but there's plans for HR at kind of various levels, so when you start talking about HR planning for an event such as a general election, that would be much, much more detailed. But the strategic HR plan is much more of a broad, higher level view of what Elections Saskatchewan needs to do, not only from an individual position perspective or employees but what would they need to do in terms of building a better organizational culture, making sure that performance management's done properly. All of those kinds of things is also part of kind of meeting the strategic business plan.

Mr. Boda: — So to add, there's really the element of building the capacity of the institution, and that particular strategic plan, in terms of an HR strategic human resources planning

document, that will come out of the strategic planning document that we intend to produce for January. And then we will be working on that strategic HR plan as part of that coming into the spring.

In terms of the specific event plan for a general election — we have other events as well, keep in mind — but we'll have an HR component in that of course because as I keep saying, we have to hire 10,000 people. So there needs to be a plan in place and there never has been. So that will be an important element of that. In terms of who will approve it, that will be brought forward to me so that I can evaluate it.

The Chair: — And what I'm . . . More than just the 10,000 for the election itself, more of an ongoing policy for your office — the 13 permanent positions, the temporary positions, how you deal with successor issues, how you deal with cases where employees are not available, you know — so that you have a full-blown HR plan in place to deal with all of the contingencies.

Mr. Boda: — All right. We've articulated some. If you look back at the brief on page 3, this is where we've basically . . . We have established a foundational policy which says we're seeking . . . we have consistency with the public service and then, growing from there, we are establishing the policy and procedures framework. That has already begun, and we have a basis on which to move forward.

All of that policy and procedure, that framework, we're continuing to build that and have been building that over the course of the past few months. And we'll have that in place. That's one of the things that Ron has been working on as part of his mandate.

[18:45]

The Chair: — Okay, thank you. I would suggest that once that is in place, that it should come to the board for an approval. Okay, any other discussions on item 3(a)? If not, we will move on to item 4(a), Elections Saskatchewan head office and warehouse facilities.

Mr. Boda: — Could I ask one more thing, Mr. Speaker? In terms of the brief that I put forward, is it possible to have that accepted within *Hansard*?

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. Boda: — Thank you.

The Chair: — It will be tabled with the board. You're talking this one or the other?

Mr. Boda: — No, I'm talking about the brief that I put forward on human resources.

The Chair: — Oh, the human resources one.

Mr. Boda: — The full brief.

The Chair: — We'll get a clean copy. I've written all over mine.

Mr. Boda: — Okay. I can provide an electronic copy if you require.

The Chair: — Please. Okay, any questions on the — I lost the page — on the warehouse facilities? Ms. Heppner.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you. There's an estimated cost for the warehouse lease of \$432,000 I think was the information from the last meeting. I'm wondering how many square feet that represents. And I don't understand metric, so if you have it in feet, that would be great. I was raised on imperial.

Mr. Boda: — Jennifer's been doing some work on that particular file.

Ms. Colin: — I apologize. I don't have it. It is 9,000 square feet. I don't have it in metric. I do have a conversion though . . . [inaudible interjections] . . . Sorry, it's 9,000 square feet.

Mr. Boda: — We have troubles with metric too.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — [Inaudible] . . . calculator. It just seemed really expensive space for \$432,000 estimated cost for 9,000 square feet.

Ms. Colin: — The monthly lease cost was \$12,000 per month, so this 432 is over four years.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — That's not per year?

Ms. Colin: — No, that's four years.

Mr. Boda: — That's four years . . . [inaudible] . . . the last time around.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Okay. Because the way it was written up . . .

Mr. Boda: — Sorry?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — The way our information looks, it looked like it was per year.

Mr. Boda: — All of those costs are over four years, including the parking which was asked last time.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Right. Then I have no further questions.

Mr. Boda: — Okay.

The Chair: — Okay. We will hold the decision on that item temporarily while we look at the permanent register of voters for Saskatchewan presentation. Do you wish to make a presentation on this?

Mr. Boda: — Yes, please.

The Chair: — Go ahead, Mr. Boda.

Mr. Boda: — At our last meeting on October 29th, my submission and presentation of a CEO's assessment detailed the operational and financial impact of implementing a permanent register of voters and offered a recommendation that the

province should consider pursuing it.

Board members on both sides of the Assembly articulated their support in principle for moving forward, but they also asked that Elections Saskatchewan offer an assessment of a scenario which our office had considered but did not include in the assessment document that has been distributed. The scenario was based on the following expectation: that the next federal election, scheduled for October 2015, will not be delayed and that the next provincial election, currently scheduled for the same time period, November 2nd, '15, will instead be delayed until April 4th, 2016, as is contemplated in section 8.1(3) of *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2007*.

Board members suggested that voter data within the federal register of electors will be of good quality following the federal election envisioned within this scenario and that this data might act as the basis of a voter register to be used during a provincial election in April of 2016. I agreed to prepare a brief and return to you with an assessment of the risks involved in that scenario.

As you read in the advanced copy of the CEO's assessment provided a couple of weeks ago, the cost of conducting a final door-to-door enumeration in 2011 was \$2.58 million, and that's simply compiling the list and not making any revisions to it. If an enumeration could be avoided and a good or better quality list of voters was available, it would clearly be worth saving public funds. The brief I provided shows that there are savings to be had, although it's clear that these savings are reduced by additional costs required to expedite the introduction of a provincial register in a way that ensures voter data is secure, it's reliable, it can be updated efficiently, and that the approach leads to a list of better quality.

The scenario that's been proposed was considered in the writing of the assessment report, as I've said, that you've read. But as I alluded to in the last meeting, it was excluded based on five risks that had been identified in the brief. I'd like to quickly review those risks before tangibly considering how the scenario might be implemented.

A first risk has to do with the legislative timing. Until our last meeting, there was a great deal of ambiguity with respect to the permanent register. With decisions being delayed on the matter since 2004, the early adoption of federal data in a provincial register will only be possible if the political will exists to give the required amendments priority and allowances are given for the appropriate time needed to prepare the human and technical infrastructure needed. As Chief Electoral Officer, I do not directly manage or control legislative timing, as you know.

A second risk has to do with how Elections Canada approaches data sharing agreements. It will not even talk about an agreement until legislation for a permanent register is passed in Saskatchewan. If the legislation is passed quickly, we still need to negotiate an agreement in a timely manner in order to move forward.

A third risk relates to the timing of the federal election. As you're aware, there is no certainty that the election will be held in October of 2015. Fixed-date elections were introduced by legislation in May of 2007, but neither the October 2008 or May 2011 federal elections were held according to the dates

established. Seven Canadian jurisdictions are legally scheduled to hold elections in the fall of 2015, and the Prime Minister may just decide that it would be appropriate to allow them to proceed on schedule rather than having a federal election disrupt their timing. A potential change in the date of the federal election to spring of 2016 constitutes a risk that I do not have control over.

A fourth risk has to do with the current in-house capacity of Elections Saskatchewan. The provincial election management body is presently on a path for renewal and is already challenged in recruiting specialist staff capable of conducting a modern election. The assessment report has proposed a more methodical and risk-averse approach which would allow adequate time to recruit and hire the necessary resources for implementing a permanent register, allowing new hires time to learn the skills necessary to professionally manage register updates from multiple sources while steadily building the capacity of the organization.

A final risk has to do with what's known as the civic address register that the Government of Saskatchewan is scheduled to finalize by March of 2014. The subscription rates are under the control of ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] and contain data which is untested, of uncertain quality, and of uncertain completeness. The CAR [civic address register] data will be an essential element of processing records in our permanent register because it ensures that records are accurately georeferenced.

Having an authoritative list of addresses is a key element of the permanent register because the majority of register maintenance work will consist of updating the address information of previously registered voters and accurately moving them to their assigned constituency and polling division. The risks involved would be lowered by enabling the CAR data to mature for several years before depending on it as a central component of our register.

So these are five risks I had been considering. And they are problematic, but they can also be mitigated by expediting the necessary amendments to *The Election Act*, by securing early access to the province's civic address register, by providing formal authority for Elections Saskatchewan to secure the necessary staff and contracted resources to implement the voter register quickly in a way that both facilitates short-term success while building long-term capacity, and by recognizing, if the October 2015 federal election is delayed to 2016, that extra efforts and fiscal resources will be needed to update the register's contents by undertaking a greater amount of targeted enumeration in advance of the provincial election.

At this point, I'd like to consider some specific legislative and technical barriers that are addressed in section 4, 5, and 6 of the brief that I distributed.

In section 4, there are really two legislative issues identified that would need to be addressed in fast tracking. One has to do with the current six-month residency requirement of Saskatchewan voters. Under a scenario where the federal election is held October 2015, the provincial election in April 2016, voters who register for the federal election could not be added to the provincial register because less than six months will have

passed. Our recommendation is that the eligibility requirement be reduced to perhaps four or eliminated entirely as it has in other jurisdictions in the country.

There's also the issue in provincial legislation that qualified British subjects are also to be included in the provincial register. This is not the case with the federal legislation and, I'm told, in every other jurisdiction in the country. To be consistent with federal and other jurisdictions and to eliminate a workaround that would be required in feeding our data back to Elections Canada, our recommendation is to remove this section from *The Election Act*.

Section 5 draws attention to the fact that there's presently no correlation between the geographic building blocks at the provincial and federal levels. In fact this does make sense. The two jurisdictions haven't collaborated in the past, so the two voters lists have been constructed in fundamentally different ways. Canada has 15 electoral districts in the province, with fewer than 2,000 polling divisions within those districts. The staff at Elections Saskatchewan are currently working with 61 constituencies, and we're in the midst of recruiting, appointing, and assigning returning officers to start the process of demarcating about 3,000 polling sites with the objective of having electoral maps in the hands of our political stakeholders by early 2015.

The foundations of the two systems, the building blocks, just aren't the same. So Elections Saskatchewan is going to have to do the heavy lifting needed to convert the list so that each voter is in the correct constituency and polling division.

Section 6 offers additional information on the challenges related to address standards and georeferencing. Our staff have met with officials from emergency management and fire safety who are scheduled to launch the civic address register in March of next year. We are encouraged by these developments, but two barriers remain. First, we do not have clarity on whether we'll be permitted to partner with emergency management in order to make the database even more comprehensive and accurate, and we don't know whether the subscription fees to be set by ISC will make it prohibitive for Elections Saskatchewan to participate or subscribe. Second, because the data's only coming online in March of 2014, we don't know how comprehensive and accurate that data will be for our purposes.

[19:00]

So section 6 then goes into quite a bit of detail. I hope you have a look at section 6 of the brief. It talks about the barriers Elections Saskatchewan would need to overcome with respect to georeferencing to establish a permanent register for a 2016 general election in the province.

So I have been clear that there are risks and some barriers involved in expediting the establishment of a permanent register for use during a scenario where a provincial election's not held until April of 2016. But are we suggesting that an early adoption cannot be achieved? The answer is no.

Looking at the required timing for the projects, section 7 of the brief, beginning on page 6, lays out a tight yet realistic strategy for fast-tracking the transition to a permanent register. The

implementation plan, which clearly needs to be expanded and refined, shows a path forward where, looking at point no. 15 at the bottom of page 6, starting in April of 2015 there are to be regular monthly updates to a provincial voter register.

It's at that point, following an orderly and disciplined assembly of the register's components, that our register would at a minimum include the voters of the national register of electors with those voters being reallocated to the correct provincial constituency and polling divisions. At that juncture, decisions would then be made as to whether to incorporate other public sources of data, whether that's driver's license, health records, vital statistics, marriage and death information, and whether we would introduce the capability to register online via Elections Saskatchewan's website.

So if the federal election is not held on October 19, 2015, the provincial election will be held as scheduled on November 2nd of '15, so an even more aggressive than ordinary targeted enumeration would be instituted. If the federal election is held in October of 2015, the province will instead be moved, the provincial process be moved to April of 2016. In this case, post-election updates from Elections Canada would have to be processed in a timely manner if the provincial register is to be completed and to be current.

Turning to potential cost savings involved, expediting the development of a permanent register in time for the next provincial general election does offer potential for significant cost savings, which Mr. Harrison asked about during the last meeting. Our team has looked at this carefully since we last met and have provided a sense of those savings in section 8 of your brief. The table on page 8 notes the costs of conducting the enumeration in 2011 — \$2.58 million — a figure that simplifies things by leaving out list revision costs of \$645,000 because that amount applies to whether you do a last enumeration or you expedite the permanent register. As you can see, the price of fast-tracking the permanent register will include costs for systems development, annual maintenance, and contracting a specialist team of technical advisers.

Elections Saskatchewan has to grow the capacity to develop and implement a permanent register. An expedited model involves a team of specialists who already have the understanding and skill set of a permanent register and can fast-track the process while also building into a newly hired permanent team who will run and maintain the register once it's in place.

Potential net savings for simply getting the permanent register in place are estimated at \$1.1 million. But I want to be clear here, that the total of \$1.48 million listed on page 8 in the table is the cost of constructing the permanent register. Once you are close to the election, we estimate there will be an additional \$384,000 in costs related to targeted enumeration.

As in all briefs and the assessment reports that you get from my office, the goal is to provide an understanding of election-related issues from the standpoint of electoral best practice. We've endeavoured to do just this in this brief.

As Saskatchewan considers whether to complete one last enumeration in 2015 in the process of establishing a permanent register or to expedite the construction of a permanent register

in time for the 2015 general election, I've been careful to lay out the risks and barriers involved through both the CEO's assessment that you read earlier and the brief provided for this meeting.

My recommendation on expediting the permanent register focuses first on whether bilateral political will exists within the legislature which would allow Elections Saskatchewan to keep to the timeline outlined in the brief. If the political will exists and there are clear assurances that the necessary monetary staffing and data resources required to pursue the path described will be available, I'm willing to commit to expediting this process.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Boda. I believe that the members have indicated to me that they wish to have an in camera discussion on these two items. So if someone would move that we go in camera. Mr. Harrison. Secunder? Mr. Forbes. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Okay. The committee now moves in camera.

[The board continued in camera from 19:06 until 19:18.]

The Chair: — After some discussion with the committee, the committee has made some decisions on item no. 4(a), the Elections Saskatchewan headquarters and warehouse facility. The committee is prepared to move ahead with that with the following provisos. They wish to have further consultation between your office and Central Services on both the renovation costs and the furniture expense.

So the board is prepared to move ahead on the funds, excluding those two, come back to the committee at a later date for a decision on the renovation costs and the furniture once discussions have taken place with Central Services as to the value of the furniture that is currently there, whether or not that furniture has a charge against it to some other ministry or not. That's unknown at the present time.

Mr. Boda: — And in terms of a timeline?

The Chair: — Pardon?

Mr. Boda: — In terms of a timeline?

The Chair: — Quite short. We'll take a short recess.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

The Chair: — I'd like to inform the meeting that we have lost quorum. Therefore this meeting is adjourned to the call of the Chair.

[The board adjourned at 19:25.]