



**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

**MINUTES AND VERBATIM REPORT**

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Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Glenn Hagel  
Speaker



**No. 4 — MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1996**

## **BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

Hon. Glenn Hagel, Chair  
Moose Jaw North

Bill Boyd  
Kindersley

Hon. Joanne Crofford  
Regina Centre

Myron Kowalsky  
Prince Albert Carlton

Hon. Eldon Lautermilch  
Prince Albert Northcote

Harvey McLane  
Arm River

Grant Whitmore  
Saskatoon Northwest

## BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Room 10 Legislative Building  
9:08 a.m. Monday, December 16, 1996

**Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy**

Hon. Glenn Hagel, Chair  
Mr. Bill Boyd  
Hon. Joanne Crofford  
Mr. Myron Kowalsky  
Hon. Eldon Lautermilch  
Mr. Grant Whitmore

**Staff to the Board**

Marilyn Borowski, Director, Financial Services  
Greg Putz, Deputy Clerk  
Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk  
Deborah Saum, Secretary

**Officials in Attendance****Office of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

Judy Brennan, Assistant Legislative Librarian  
Chris Hecht, Systems Analyst  
Linda Kaminski, Director of Personnel and Administrative Services  
Marian Powell, Legislative Librarian  
Patrick Shaw, Sergeant-at-Arms  
Geoff Tober, Supervisor, Financial Services

**Office of the Provincial Auditor**

Wayne Strelieff, Provincial Auditor  
Fred Wendel, Assistant Provincial Auditor  
Sandra Walker, Manager of Administration  
Heather Tomlin, Assistant Manager of Administration

**Office of the Provincial Ombudsman**

Barbara Tomkins, Provincial Ombudsman  
Murray Knoll, Assistant Ombudsman

**Office of the Children's Advocate**

Deborah Parker-Loewen, Children's Advocate

**AGENDA** Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Kowalsky, that the proposed agenda be adopted. Agreed.

**MINUTES** Moved by Ms. Crofford, seconded by Mr. Whitmore, ordered, that the Minutes of Meeting #3/96 be adopted. Agreed.

**ITEM 1** **Table Item - Report of the Review Under Subsection 50(4.2) of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, Respecting the Member for Yorkton**

The Chair tabled the report and advised the Members of the conclusion.

**ITEM 2** **Table Item - Audit Opinions of the Government, Opposition and Third Party Caucuses for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1996**

The Chair tabled the Audit Opinions of the New Democratic Party, the Liberal Party, and the Progressive Conservative Party's Caucuses for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1996.

**ITEM 3      Information Item - Review of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly's Proposed "Racial, Ethnic and Gender Harassment Policy"**

The Speaker presented the draft policy.

Moved by Mr. Whitmore, seconded by Ms. Crofford:

That Members of the Board consider the proposed policy for legislative employees and provide any comments, questions or concerns to the Chair; that the Chair finalise the policy and implement it for legislative employees; and that the approved policy be tabled in the Board at a subsequent meeting.

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

Minute #1394

**ITEM 4      Decision Item - Request by the Minister of Finance for the Board to Review the Budget for the Office of the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate**

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

That, effective 1997-98 fiscal year, the Board of Internal Economy review and approve the Estimates for the Offices of the Provincial Ombudsman and Children's Advocate;

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

Minute #1395

**ITEM 5      Decision Item - Review of the Independent Legal Opinion of Robert Thompson, Esq., Barrister and Solicitor, as Directed by the Board of Internal Economy on May 28<sup>th</sup>, Mtg. #3/96**

**Statement by Chair**

At the last Board of Internal Economy meeting you passed a motion directing the Chair to retain independent legal counsel, preferably from out of province, to review the potential for recovery of public funds concerning various criminal charges and/or conviction.

I said at that meeting I would carry out the order but, as Speaker, it would be improper for me to act in any way that would jeopardize the confidence of the Members of the Legislative Assembly and of the public. Consequently I said that I would not be providing a recommendation related to the legal opinion. It is an important principle of the Speaker's requirement for neutrality that the Speaker neither act against the interest of Members or the House, and also attempt to avoid a perception of action against Members or the House.

In fulfilment of the direction you assigned to me, all Members of the Board have been provided the written report from Mr. Robert Thompson of the Calgary firm of Bennett, Jones, Verchere. You have also received his supplementary opinion regarding some of the legal issues surrounding how the Board deals with this report.

It is my responsibility to remind the Board that Mr. Thompson indicated that there may be no parliamentary immunity in this Board and that client/solicitor privilege would be lost if his report is released, and that some of his comments are intended for Members of the Board only.

That concludes my report.

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Whitmore:

That the Board of Internal Economy instruct the Chair and his office to retain legal counsel to seek recovery, through civil action, of funds misappropriated from the Legislative Assembly by former Members of the Legislative Assembly and others, where:

- (a) Those persons have been convicted of misappropriating funds;
- (b) full restitution has not been ordered by the court; and
- (c) legal counsel indicates to the chair that there is a strong likelihood of success in civil action to recover public funds; and that the cost of conducting a civil action to recover these public funds is reasonable relative to the likelihood of recovery.

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

Minute #1396

**ITEM 6      Decision Item - Special Warrant Request for 1996-97 Fiscal Year for the Legislative Assembly**

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Whitmore:

That a Special Warrant in the amount of \$113,000 be requested for the 1996-97 fiscal year.

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

Minute #1397

**ITEM 7      Decision Item - Review of the 1997-98 Budget for the Legislative Assembly:**

**ITEM 7(a)      Review Budget Document**

The Board reviewed the Budget submission in amounts as follows:

A - Budget — \$14,832,280

B - Budget — \$ 201,045

**Budgetary Estimates**

The Board agreed to the following:

- 1) A reduction in the Information Technology Budget Request (page 5.1) for a total of \$70,000 (\$50,000 for Application Development and \$20,000 for CDSL support for Constituency Offices).
- 2) A reduction in the printing of Committee Hansards in Committee Support Services (page 55) in the amount of \$39,120.

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

That the Board meet “in camera”, for Item 7(b), Personnel Request and Item 7(c), Sergeant-at-Arms B-Budget Request.

The question being put, it was agreed to, and the Board accordingly met in camera at 11:45 a.m.

The Board agreed to the following:

**ITEM 7(b)      Personnel Request (in camera)**

Moved by Mr. Whitmore, seconded by Ms. Crofford:

That, effective April 1, 1997, a new full-time non-permanent position of Assistant Secretary, Office of the Speaker be established.

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

Minute #1398

Moved by Ms. Crofford, seconded by Mr. Whitmore:

That the two Special Constable positions be converted from contractual to permanent effective April 1, 1997 and that the classification of the positions be established as Professional Level 2.

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

Minute #1399

No Mover found for the permanent position request of Computer Systems Analyst.

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Ms. Crofford:

That, effective April 1, 1997, the permanent position of Reference Librarian be reclassified from Librarian 1 to Librarian 2.

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

Minute #1400

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

That, effective April 1, 1997, a new permanent position of Reference Librarian be created and that the classification of the position be established as Librarian 2.

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

Minute #1401

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Whitmore:

That, effective April 1, 1997, a new non-permanent position of Supervisor, Financial Operations be created, and that the Assembly work with PSC to determine an appropriate classification level and that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly approve the classification level for this position.

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

Minute #1402

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Ms. Crofford:

That, effective April 1, 1997, a new permanent position of Payroll/Payment Clerk be created and classified as an Accounting Clerk 2/3.

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

Minute #1403

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Whitmore:

That, effective April 1, 1997, a new non-permanent position of Members' Services Clerk be created and that the hours for this position be established as 75% of full-time, and that the position be classified as an Accounting Clerk 2/3.

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

Minute #1404

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

That, effective April 1, 1997, a new non-permanent position of Supervisor, Administrative Operations be created, and that the Assembly work with PSC to determine an appropriate classification level and that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly approve the classification level for this position.

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

Minute #1405

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

That, effective April 1, 1997, a new permanent position of Personnel Administrator be created, and that the Assembly work with PSC to determine an appropriate classification level and that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly approve the classification level for this position.

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

Minute #1406

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Ms. Crofford:

That, effective April 1, 1997, the non-permanent Junior Administrative Services Secretary be converted to a full-time non-permanent position of Secretary, Personnel Services.

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

Minute #1407

**ITEM 7(c)      Decision Item - Sergeant-at-Arms B-Budget Request (in camera)**

Moved by Mr. Whitmore, seconded by Ms. Crofford:

That the B-Budget request for mail-room equipment in the amount of \$68,480 be approved.

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

Minute #1408

The Board resumed Public meetings at 3:15 p.m..

**ITEM 7(d)      Decision Item - Legislative Library B-Budget Request**

Legislative Library B-Budget request was tabled. The Board, in coordination with the Legislative Librarian, will follow up with the Minister of SPMC to work on a long term solution for the Legislative Library storage space issue.

**ITEM 7(e)      Decision Item - Motion to Approve Revenue Estimates**

Moved by Mr. Whitmore, seconded by Ms. Crofford:

That the Legislative Assembly Revenue Estimates of \$47,000 (after a reduction in revenue for Committee Hansards of \$3,000) be approved for 1997-98 fiscal year;

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

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1409

**ITEM 7(f)      Decision Item - Motion to Approve Budgetary and Statutory Estimates**

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

That the Estimates of \$14,791,640 including a B-Budget item of \$68,480 be approved for the Legislative Assembly, for the 1997-98 fiscal year, as follows:

Budget to be Voted	—	\$5,083,130
Statutory Budget	—	\$9,708,510

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

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1410

**ITEM 8          Decision Item - Review of the 1997-98 Budget for the Office of the Provincial Auditor**

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

That the 1997-98 Estimates of the Provincial Auditor be approved as submitted, in the amount of \$4,220,000.

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

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

Minute #1411

**ITEM 9      Decision Item - Review of the 1997-98 Budget for the Offices of the Provincial Ombudsman and Children's Advocate**

**Provincial Ombudsman**

Moved by Ms. Crofford, seconded by Mr. Whitmore:

That the 1997-98 Estimates of the Provincial Ombudsman be approved as submitted, in the amount of \$987,000;  
And that such Estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

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

Minute #1412

**Children's Advocate**

Moved by Ms. Crofford, seconded by Mr. Kowalsky:

That the 1997-98 Estimates of \$534,000 for the Children's Advocate, as submitted, be reduced by \$34,000 for the position of children's advocate assistant, and approved in the amount of \$500,000;

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

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

Minute #1413

**ITEM 10      Information Item – Other Business-Items As Raised by Members of the Legislative Assembly**

The Chair noted a number of items raised by Members regarding the allowances and undertook to bring forward a package of recommendations to the Board at a subsequent meeting.

With respect to the interpretation of Communication Directive #4(5)(e) regarding books and subscriptions, the Board advised that the interpretation that such subscriptions must be received at the office was overly restrictive. The Chair undertook to revise the interpretation and advise Members.

The meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.



**The Chair:** — Okay, I'll call the meeting to order. We have quorum. Mr. McLane will be hoping to arrive later today. He's . . . I talked to him just a few minutes ago and he's still stuck at home in the storm, but will be intending to make it later in the day. But we do have quorum and we will proceed.

And the first item before us then would be to adopt the agenda. I've given you the recommended agenda with 10 items, and so I put it . . . the question to you is to whether it would be in order to have a motion to adopt the agenda or to amend it in some way. Is there a motion? So Lautermilch; Mr. Kowalsky. Discussion? Those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried. Okay.

Review of the minutes of meeting #3/96, those were distributed in advance and I will assume that you had a chance to read them. It's recommended to you to adopt them as recorded. Is there a motion to adopt the minutes as recorded? Ms. Crofford. Is there a seconder? Mr. Whitmore. Discussion? Question? Those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried. Motion is adopted.

Item . . . Sorry?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — I said we're whistling right along here.

**The Chair:** — All right. Okay. Well we were until you spoke up and we got stopped here.

Item #1, report of the review under subsection 50(4.2) of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, respecting the member for Yorkton.

The secretary of the committee . . . of the board I should say, is circulating to you a tabled item relating to that which is my communication to Mr. Serby related to this. And I would like to make a statement to the board to accompany this tabled item.

This represents the first request for a review that has been received pursuant to the amendment to The Legislative Assembly and the Executive Council Act and it establishes the process to be followed in the future. And I think that is certainly one of the significant characteristics of it as well.

A copy of my report, of my direction to the member, and now of the conclusion of the matter, have been provided to you as well as to the member for Yorkton, and my information report at this meeting constitutes my public statement on the matter.

The request for review related to the use of office facsimile by the member for Yorkton. I decided that there were sufficient grounds for me to conduct a review, and subsequently concluded that the communications allowance provisions regarding content of communications apply, and that the member's office's use of the fax machine did not comply with board directives, with the cost of the violation amounting to \$1.20.

The member for Yorkton did not appeal to the Conflict of

Interest Commissioner, and I then subsequently directed him to make payment of \$1.20, at the same time returning to him a cheque for a larger amount, which he had provided in trust.

Today I am advising that the payment of \$1.20 has been received and I now consider the matter concluded. In conclusion, to you, the members of the board, I want to emphasize that this review has clearly established the principle that the communications directive criteria regarding content do apply to facsimile communications, and I urge you to ensure your caucus members will be made aware of this.

And that is my report to the board accompanying that tabled item.

Item #2, tabled item. Audit opinions of the government, opposition, and third party caucuses for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1996, and those are provided to you for your information.

Members will be aware that next year of course, the requirement of the caucuses for tabling related to financial statements will have changed effective July 1 with the adoption of the McDowell recommendations, and that it will require next year the audited statement for the period of July 1 until the end of March. So this is provided to you as required by the previous . . . by the directive that's in force for this period.

Item #3, which is an information item, review of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly's proposed racial, ethnic, and gender harassment policy. And if I can just ask you to turn to that item that's been provided to you and if I can just highlight what you will find on the first page for the record, and then recommend to you the motion that is listed at the bottom.

The Legislative Assembly racial, ethnic, and gender harassment policy was initially developed to meet the legal obligations of an employer as outlined in The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 and the regulations. Meetings initially were held to develop a harassment policy that were conducted by the Legislative Assembly's Occupational Health and Safety Committee. Several drafts have been developed to reflect the government's policy, as well as the Legislative Assembly's administrative structure.

The attached draft policy that you have then at this point, incorporates features from both the Saskatchewan government policy and the Ontario Legislative Assembly policy, with which we consulted to consider other possibilities. This draft policy has been approved in principle by the Legislative Assembly managers and the Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

So therefore I want to recommend to you, as listed there, that members of the board consider the proposed policy for legislative employees and provide any comments, questions, or concerns to the Chair; also that the Chair finalize the policy and implement it for legislative employees. And finally then, that the approved policy be tabled in the board at a subsequent meeting.

There is an alternative there if you would prefer to have it approved at a later date by the board, as opposed to authorizing the Chair to approve it and then table it for your information later.

And I also, in addition to what you have listed, would want to encourage you as well to have your caucuses review the policy with a view towards adopting it for your own caucus. That's an option which would be available to each individual caucus. There's no reason that caucuses all have to be the same, but it's an option available to each individual caucus to adopt the same policy as the Legislative Assembly Office, but perhaps with some minor amendments to meet your circumstances.

If you're interested in that, I would be happy to meet with your caucus or your caucus office, perhaps with the Clerk as well, to explain it and discuss it with you. So I would urge that as you are reviewing it, that you would also consider that possibility and therefore the implied eventual possibility that we may have a harmonious and consistent policy throughout the entire building. The recommendation is there.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Yes, just with respect to the process, given the fact that we're looking at a Saskatchewan overall government policy and, I'm assuming, looking at some of the initiatives in terms of the Ontario Legislative Assembly Office, I think if you would bring it back for your approval, we would probably want to do some comparison between the Ontario legislature model, and if there are any differences with respect to Saskatchewan government policy overall, I would like to see this come back in its final stage for approval. That would meet the wishes of the board. Or I don't know if it creates any administrative problem for you?

**The Chair:** — The only difference between the two options I give to you, the one I recommend is for you to authorize the Chair of the board or the Speaker then, to approve it and then report back. The other, which I think is what you're referring to, is to just deal with a tentative basis and bring it back for a motion of the board to adopt at a later date.

The reason I recommend the first option, is that it does . . . we have already done the comparisons to the Saskatchewan government and the Ontario legislature already in developing this proposal, and it puts the Legislative Assembly in a position where in the relatively near future . . . and I'm anticipating . . . I would like in fact, that at a full staff meeting that we're anticipating early in January, to present it to the Legislative Assembly as not a tentative policy but in fact the one that we will work with.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — But before implementation, some input? Caucuses would be able to have some input, caucus members?

**The Chair:** — Yes, yes.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Okay, then I have no problems with that.

**The Chair:** — Before given it . . . if you approve the

recommendation before I approve it, I will take it into consideration, not only the response of the Legislative Assembly staff — much of which has been worked through already because the occupational health and safety committee has been considering it — but I would wait for input from the three caucuses before I gave approval for the Legislative Assembly. Just administratively, it puts us in a definitive position probably a little earlier.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Then I support the recommendation.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, I just had a question, Mr. Chair. How long was the Ontario process in place?

**The Chair:** — For several years.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — So they have quite a bit of experience with actually operating it. Well that's good. Okay, no, that's all I wanted to know.

**The Chair:** — And we also need some . . . we took advantage of their experience to not . . . our policy here is not the same as theirs. And based on their experience, we felt there were one or two gaps that became more obvious that they will have to deal with that we have failed in this. So yes, it's been there for several years.

Any further discussion? It would be in order then to have a motion. Mr. Whitmore? And the motion is to . . .

**Mr. Whitmore:** —

To read the recommendation that the members of the board consider the policy for the legislative employees; provide any comments, questions or concerns to the Chair; and that the Chair finalize the policy, implement for legislative employees; and that the approved policy be tabled in the board at the subsequent meeting.

**The Chair:** — Is there a seconder for that? Ms. Crofford. Discussion? Those in favour? Opposed? That's carried. Okay, thank you. Item #4 which is a . . . oh yes, okay.

The secretary is handing out an attachment related to item 4 which is a decision item: a request by the Minister of Finance for the board to review the budget for the Office of the Ombudsman and the Children's Advocate.

Members will be aware that this comes to the board with the recommendation of the Minister of Finance; and there are listed for you on your agenda item #4, three questions that the Chair asks you to consider in the motion that you would bring to the board.

There's not a recommended motion for you on this one. The decision is required then, one: does the board agree to take over the review of the budgets for the Office of the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate; secondly: does the board wish to have a Treasury Board analyst review the budget and report to the board. And if so, does the board wish to provide guidelines to

the analyst; and thirdly: does the board wish to have the Treasury Board analysts, Mr. Rubinoff and Ms. Boire, attend the board meeting for the review of the said budget.

So those are the questions. And you have the request of the Minister of Finance before you, and what is the wish of the board in this regard?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Just with respect to the three issues raised, certainly I think the board can be and is an appropriate place to preview these two budgets.

One of the initiatives that I guess we wanted to achieve before this year's budgetary process in terms of the auditor's budget, Legislative Assembly budget, and these two I guess now if we agree to accept these budgets for review, is that we would have an audit committee of the . . . an audit committee set up, which process has not taken place.

I think, having looked at both the Ombudsman's and the Children's Advocate's budget, they're not a very intricate piece of work and I think we would be able to proceed with them this year. Next year hopefully we would have in place an independent audit committee.

With respect to the other two issues — whether we require an analyst — certainly members of this side of the board don't really feel that it's necessary to have either two or three, but believe we can proceed with the budgets as they are.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Is there any further discussion? I think what I'm hearing, if I may recommend words, unless you have words before you then, from what you've said, it sounds to me as though it would be in order to have a motion:

That effective 1997-98 that the Board of Internal Economy review and approve the budgets for the Office of the Ombudsman/Children's Advocate.

That it would be in order to have that motion. Mr. Lautermilch. Is there a seconder? Mr. Kowalsky. Discussion? In favour? Opposed? And that's carried. Thank you.

Item #5, a decision item: review of the independent legal opinion of Robert Thompson, Esq., barrister and solicitor, as directed by the Board of Internal Economy on May 28, meeting #3/96.

Perhaps before attending to this item, initially, if the Chair can make a related statement. At the last Board of Internal Economy meeting you passed a motion directing the Chair to retain independent legal counsel, preferably from out of province, to review the potential for recovery of public funds concerning various criminal charges and/or convictions.

I said at that meeting I would carry out the order but, as Speaker, it would be improper for me to act in any way that would jeopardize the confidence of the members of the Legislative Assembly and of the public. Consequently I said that I would not be providing a recommendation related to the legal opinion. It is an important principle of the Speaker's

requirement for neutrality that the Speaker neither act against the interest of members or the House, and also attempt to avoid a perception of action against members of the House.

In fulfilment of the direction you assigned to me, all members of the board have been provided the written report from Mr. Robert Thompson of the Calgary firm of Bennett, Jones, Verchere. You have also received his supplementary opinion regarding some of the legal issues surrounding how the board deals with this report.

It is my responsibility to remind the board that Mr. Thompson indicated that there may be no parliamentary immunity in this board and that client/solicitor privilege would be lost if his report is released, and that some of his comments are intended for members of the board only.

That concludes my report. And I ask then, how does the board wish to proceed?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for your comments and for your advice. I believe, and government members believe, that in keeping and in the spirit of the directive passed by this board, members and people who have been convicted of criminal activity should make full restitution to the government. Therefore I will move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Northwest . . . Maybe what I should do is pass around copies of my proposed motion.

**The Chair:** — Yes. I'd appreciate if you would. We'll get the secretary to pass them around for you. If I can have the signed copy of the motion.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — I have the signed copy.

And the motion will be:

That the Board of Internal Economy instruct the Chair and his office to retain legal counsel to seek recovery, through civil action, of funds misappropriated from the Legislative Assembly by former members of the Legislative Assembly and others, where:

- a) those persons have been convicted of misappropriating funds;
- b) full restitution has not been ordered by the court; and
- c) legal counsel indicates to the Chair that there is a strong likelihood of success in civil action to recover public funds; and that the cost of conducting a civil action to recover these public funds is reasonable relative to the likelihood of recovery.

**The Chair:** — That's moved by the member for Prince Albert Northcote and seconded by the member of Saskatoon Northwest. Is there further discussion?

**Mr. Boyd:** — Well having reviewed Mr. Thomson's report, I think this is in keeping with what his recommendations are, so we would have no difficulty with it.

**The Chair:** — Any further discussion? If not, do you want me to repeat the . . . I guess everybody's got the written motion so it doesn't need to be repeated. Those in favour of the motion please indicate. Down hands. Opposed? And that's carried.

Item #6, which is a decision item. It has to do with the special warrant request for 1996-97 fiscal year for the Legislative Assembly, and you will have had that item previously distributed to you. And it would be in order to deal with this, if you wish, to have a motion that a special warrant in the amount of \$113,000 be requested for the 1996-97 fiscal year. The floor is open to members of the board.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, I just wanted to ask a few questions about this budget. I'll maybe just start by saying I was a little bit concerned about the trend in all of the budgets for increases across the board, in every area. And given the fact that all the departments of government are still under a fair bit of constraint on expenditures, this is a bit outside the norm of what's happening in other areas.

So I wanted to be really clear, particularly in this budget — the special warrant — how much of this is money that's already committed and expended and how much of it is authority to expend money that's not yet expended? Is this all money that's already been expended or is it . . .

**The Chair:** — In response to your question, Ms. Crofford, if I could just sort of walk through, the legal fees has not been paid at the moment but is committed, but is an obligation. The staff costs have mostly been paid, but this is . . . it also includes anticipation of, regarding current circumstances that will take us through to the end of the fiscal year.

The caucus telephone expenses — that's a forecast based on current actuals. So that's above and beyond. The members' secretary will come into play if the next sitting of the legislature occurs before the end of the fiscal year because of the change in numbers due to the by-election. So that's a consequential occurrence which is statutory.

The Legislative Assembly Office, that amount relates to . . . has not . . . none of that 38,000 has, none of that has been spent, but it is in the special warrant in the anticipation that the legislature will reconvene before the end of the fiscal year.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — That's based on number of days?

**The Chair:** — Yes, yes, because we've not . . . we budget here on the assumption of 76 days, is the assumption in our budgeting. That's a standard amount always used. We've used 58; we've sat, in this fiscal year, 58 days. So there is anticipation here that the House will reconvene and therefore expenses will be higher than budgeted for.

The contractual replacement for the Law Clerk has, that has been paid in its entirety; that's because of an illness.

On the Legislative Library, the 25,000 has mostly been spent, but some of it, again, is anticipated because of current demands. The 7,500 is clear, and then the 40,000 reduction is what is

anticipated because of the change in McDowell payments to MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, and the fact that there have been less intersessional meetings than were budgeted for. So that's taking into consideration McDowell as well as the actual events.

So this is anticipated to be a very accurate and realistic number if we are assuming that the legislature will reconvene sometime in the month of February.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, so it would be fair to say that most of these costs couldn't have been anticipated?

**The Chair:** — Yes.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I guess the point I'm making is, whatever can be anticipated should be in the regular budget and most of this seems to be stuff that couldn't have been anticipated.

**The Chair:** — Most of it. Those that relate to the days that the legislature is sitting, say we . . . It's not unusual for us to have a larger number. But when we budget we always use 76 as a standard number.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — You've got two employees here who were out on various leaves. Is there nothing in the budget that . . . in anticipation of people using their benefits . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well usually when people have benefits assigned in their agreement, there's usually a portion of money that we anticipate would be typically spent in a year on people using the benefits that they have.

**The Chair:** — These are not costs related to their benefits, but the fact that they're replacements for them and there was no budget for the replacement.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — So that's an unanticipated budget issue again.

**The Chair:** — That's right. Yes. So that it would be not correct to consider those charged to the incumbents in the positions.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes. Although that would be the case usually in any office when someone goes on one of these leaves, is you usually have to hire to cover.

**The Chair:** — Right. But in our budget we don't anticipate in the expenditure that there will be extended leave that requires replacement. And the same is true in the budget that will come before you on the next agenda item; will not anticipate any replacements for leaves.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay. Thanks.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Yes, a couple of things. Staff costs, financial service administration in the Speaker's office, is that just directly related to the changes McDowell . . . and directive 24 in terms of additional workload there for staff requirements?

**The Chair:** — Some of it will be, but it will be larger than that.

A fair amount of it will relate to administrative costs having to do with inclusion of constituency assistants in the benefits plan.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Okay. Yes.

**The Chair:** — That will be the largest single one. I think it's fair to say that we got . . . I don't know if caught off-guard is the right word, but that the consequent work to that has been substantial. The inclusion of constituency assistants in the benefit plan then, for purposes of administration increased the number of staff being serviced by over a hundred — sorry, by 90 — several of whom are part time, and part-time employees in an administrative world require more time dedicated to serve them unfortunately than it is for full-time.

So that will be the largest single . . .

**A Member:** — They're all non-permanent.

**The Chair:** — Right. And all of whom are non-permanent, yes. So that will be the largest single. But there certainly will be McDowell. The consequences, just the fact that items need to be signed and occasionally come in with a signature missing; it has to be checked, returned, handled again. That's a factor to it. As the more detailed reports on the travel allowance required, they all have to be verified, and sometimes they're not consistent or they're not within the numbers approved. So that has to be checked.

So what has happened is that the amount of time on the desks of the staff in financial services here, but also the time on the phone to constituency assistants . . . and that may ring familiar to some of you, talking to your constituency assistants, as well. There is a small amount of this as well, or a portion of it, that will relate to the fact that we've added some part-time help in the Speaker's offices — office, I should say — which will relate to a request for increased staffing later on there too. But we've just, with the increased activities of the Speaker, have not been able to handle with the incumbent staff as well.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — So the \$25,000 then, this is the other one, the caucus telephone long distance, is that . . . Why is that . . . Is that just due to more contact then with the CAs and that in terms of the offices?

**The Chair:** — No. This would be the caucus use of phones.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Okay.

**The Chair:** — Yes. So that won't . . . it won't have anything to do with the LAO (Legislative Assembly Office) use of phones but of the three caucuses in combination, the use of telephone, which is not restricted. Long-distance charges have been higher than anticipated, and projecting to the end of the year, we see the true expenditure being \$25,000 higher than was budgeted for.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Is that normal, to see an increase like that from a previous year, or is this an aberration in terms of what's gone on?

**The Chair:** — Is it normal? I guess the answer is no. But when it comes to telephone usage, the reality is it's rarely normal. The telephone usage by caucuses is not a consistent item and I would think the members of the board would probably be able to better explain why uses might be higher or lower than the Chair of the board can explain because it'll have to do with the activities of the caucuses.

So it's hard to describe telephone usage as normal because it does tend to swing a fair amount. It'll have to do with what is seen as necessary by the caucuses in order to do their jobs.

And also then there have been some increases in service fees related to changes in numbers of MLAs and staff, and so service fees will have been part of that as well. And in this . . . no, that would be I think the total number of factors that . . .

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Okay, the service fee one is interesting then, because we have fewer MLAs overall now from '95.

**The Chair:** — Yes, but phones are changed.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Oh, okay.

**The Chair:** — Okay, related to the installation of phones. Is there anything else?

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — With respect to the reference librarian hiring, is this projected to go on into the next budget as well?

**The Chair:** — The answer is yes, and that is part of the proposal in the budget related to increase in staffing. So this is the 1996-97 expression . . . sorry, yes, 1996-97 expression of the circumstances that lead to the request for increase in staffing that we'll consider when we get to the full budget. It's expected that this is ongoing.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — And would it be correct to assume that the leave that has been granted to the member services librarian is contractual in nature? It's paid leave, I assume.

**The Chair:** — It has to do with the expenses for replacement of a staff person who has been on long-term disability. I'm not sure if that answers your question because I don't know what you meant when you said . . . by contractual.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Well I was assuming then that we were paying two people and that's why we have an increase here rather than a budgeted increase of 25,000.

**The Chair:** — Perhaps, yes if I could just ask who would . . . Marian, can you? Or . . . Okay, I'll ask Ms. Brennan to just give us an explanation on that.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — That'll be fine.

**Ms. Brennan:** — The explanation is that the member services librarian has been on rather indefinite long-term disability for two years and we expect that to continue into the third year. Her health is such that she's been able to come back part-time and we expect that part-time to increase a bit, but we're not certain

that it will continue at the higher level. It's very indeterminate what's been happening with her health.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Thanks, Judy. Any further discussion?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Chairman, one question. To clear prior years' prepaid expenses, what does that reflect?

**Ms. Borowski:** — That was with the change to accrual accounting that occurred in 1992-93 and now expenses are being accrued, and this is for prepaid expenses that the library would incur when they have their subscriptions. That is to be budgeted for in the normal course of the budget. But because that process was so new, it was hard to tell, with the volume of library subscriptions, exactly how much might be prepaid. We've now, after having three or four years experience with it . . . we know that we have set it too high and so we have to clear the balance sheet accounts for this. And that would be the expense for that.

**The Chair:** — So in this case our accrual accounting has become cruel accounting. Any further questions or discussion?

I don't think we have a mover for the motion. I do recommend to you that a special warrant in the amount of \$113,000 be requested for the 1996-97 fiscal year. Mr. Lautermilch, can you move that? Is there a seconder? Mr. Whitmore.

Further discussion? In favour, please indicate. Down. Opposed. That's carried. Thank you.

Item # 7, which is a decision item with six parts, review of the 1997-98 budget for the office of the Legislative Assembly. And let us now proceed then to item (a) which is a review of the budget document. I do want to advise you in advance, as you will see on your agenda, that there are two items within this . . . there are decision items that we will do in camera. One is related to personnel and the other is related to security.

So if I can refer you now to your other book or your other sheets. And what I'm going to recommend we do, as consistent with past practice, is to walk through the budget proposal in its entirety; then proceed to our B-budget items, and that we'll do the review before entertaining motions. So that when you make your motion or motions, that they will be in the context of having considered the full proposal of expenses and revenues.

If I can just refer you then to summary page no. 1 before we begin, which has to do with analysis and the assumptions that are incorporated into this budget proposal for you. The budget then, proposal, is for a total, including the B-budget proposal, of \$15,033,325. And then as we look at the budget basis, as we said earlier in our discussion, this proposal is based on what is a standard number of days for budgeting purposes of 76. That's been the number used for several years and we continue to use for our assumptions here, and consequently, if we anticipate the numbers to be larger than that, it has special warrant implications, as we saw earlier in this meeting.

There have been 58 sitting days to date in this fiscal year and the estimates now are based on a 58-member House, with all

constituencies being occupied exactly as they are represented today. The estimates assume that there will be no cost of increase . . . of living increase for legislative staff salaries, and it assumes, based on our best projections currently, that there will be a cost of living impact of 1.75 per cent; and that the recommendations of the McDowell commission, which have been previously adopted by the board, will in fact be followed.

So those are the assumptions that are being made within. You can see in a summary, on the right-hand side, of the changes that are proposed to you in personal services and so on. You see those precisely listed. So that gives you the ability to determine precisely what are the increases and exactly what are they applied to. And then on the statutory estimates based on the 1.75 per cent, what are the consequential increases there.

You'll see two reductions; one related to members' committee expenses as a result of the implementation of the McDowell recommendations, and also you see a proposed reduction in the statutory because of the assumption for sessional per diem claims. And that's as per the McDowell recommendations.

So this outlines for you . . . If you want to just keep that handy, it will put the changes into perspective. Other than those things you see listed there, everything else would be considered status quo.

I don't propose then to deal with, on the next page, the summaries. You may want to come back to those then when we get to the end, because those will bring into focus then all of the categories.

And I propose then as we turn to page 1, that this be then an item that we deal with in camera because it is to do with personnel. So I'll recommend to you that we'll come back to this one. It would be inappropriate, in my judgement, to be dealing with personnel issues without being in camera, in fairness to employees.

So what I will recommend to you then is we move to page 2, general administration. And I think to expedite your deliberations on the budget — I'm assuming that you've had the chance to review this before — and what I'll propose is that we go through and on each page, any questions or comments that you would like to make, just catch the eye of the Chair and we'll get those from you. And then we'll deal with the motions as we get to the end. We won't blaze along, so that we're sure that you have a chance to give scrutiny as we're proceeding in the area of general administration.

Then you see the summary page, and in each case the summary page is followed by the more detailed, on a code-item basis. So is there anything on the summary page for general administration?

If not then we'll go to page 3 and the Assembly administration summary page, which is a summary, and then we'll move to specifics. Anything on the general administration summary page?

**Mr. Whitmore:** — The drop in equipment and fixed assets by

\$100,000.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Do you want to just . . . Can we just hang on to that, because we'll have more detail as we move through. That will be answered for you as we get to code item no. 6, if you don't mind. Anything else on page 3? Okay.

Then Assembly administration then, page 4 — personal services, contractual services. Any questions or comments there?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Just with respect to personnel services or personal services, we will have some questions on that.

**The Chair:** — Yes, and that's obviously a significant factor. And there are proposals for changes in personnel that we'll deal with in camera. Exactly. This is precisely what I was referring to earlier. Anything else on page 4?

Page 5, continuing; anything on page 5? That's contractual services. Okay, page 6, advertising, printing and publishing, and then travel and business. Any questions or comments there?

**Mr. Whitmore:** — We just . . . page 5.1 which we just received today . . .

**The Chair:** — Oh, sorry.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — . . . an informational technology budget request.

**The Chair:** — Right. Yes, sorry.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Could we go through this? Because we just received it today.

**The Chair:** — Okay.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Just have an understanding of what's going on here.

**The Chair:** — Yes, and I'll ask the Clerk to proceed through this for you. My apologies and thanks for catching that, Mr. Whitmore.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — Now what we're proposing this year is very close to last year's approved budget. Last year, where our approved budget is in the very first column, 395,000; and this year our request is for 401,500.

You'll see that last year we asked for — you know, beyond our regular operating requirements — we asked for further funding to establish the Internet web site for the Legislative Assembly. And that is well under way.

We do expect to have our web site up and operating for the upcoming session. What we are going to . . . we have quite extensive plans for putting a lot of information available on that site, but initially we hope to have the *Hansard* for the House, the *Hansard* for the committees, and we will be putting up the

daily *Votes and Proceedings* and the order paper on the web site.

And we will be adding information about our public, you know, our public information brochures and about the structure and operations of the Assembly. We will have the lists of MLAs and constituency numbers and addresses and so on.

We hope to have links to caucus sites that each caucus is putting up; so that people who are looking from another jurisdiction, for example, for a member will quite often come through the Legislative Assembly. But they'll be able to come through our site and go to a more detailed information in the caucuses. This is well under way. We have purchased the necessary hardware, and the installation and design and so on is well under way.

What we're going to be needing then in this area in the next year, and on an ongoing basis, is sufficient staff with the ability to monitor and maintain and operate not only the Legislative Assembly computer system — that's our network throughout the legislative office — but also the web site itself.

One of the things we're asking for then, you see right in the very first code, code 130 out-of-scope permanent is — and we'll be coming back to this in the personnel request — establishment of a permanent position within the Assembly to provide some computer support. That's going to be at a daily operating and somewhat junior level, and we will still need more senior consulting expertise which you'll also see in the next codes, code 272.

Under the code 272, management consulting services, you'll see \$50,000 for a precedent application. Now that's the development of the procedural precedent database that we have been asking for for quite a number of years and it is . . . each year we have delayed it. We'll keep asking for it. But at this point we have removed the request for a new application to do the *Hansard* index. And that's something that remains necessary but we won't . . . we're not asking for funds to proceed with that this year.

The other 273, service bureau requests, are ones that we have no control over. That's our links to the government human resource and expenditure systems, computer systems. Telecommunications, we also have very little control over that. Hardware maintenance is, we feel, fairly standard at this point because most of our equipment that is new is under warranty, and so it's just maintaining the material or the items that are not. Supplies is standard.

Training, we will have ongoing needs for training within the staff. As we get more sophisticated, then training becomes a larger component. The special training for Richard that's listing there, Richard Peers is the person who will be our computer support permanent position that we've mentioned up above, who was in the library and now we're grooming him and developing him to be our first line of support.

And code 280, support services. The CDSL (Co-operators Data Services Limited) call centre support is the service that we

contracted for last year to provide for software support for all the legislative office terminals, all the employees. We now can phone up CDSL whenever we have a problem with the system, and they have a great deal of expertise in assisting. And if you recall, during the session, that was also extended to caucus offices so that caucus staff may access it for the same dollar. We are proposing to continue that service in this fiscal year. We find that it's a cost-effective way to get expertise that we just don't have on site.

The next item, constituency office support, is a new item, and that's \$20,000 as a proposal to extend this CDSL phone line support to constituency offices. Right now, as you're aware, most of the constituency offices really have almost no avenue to gain support unless they purchase some sort of software support locally.

And there is . . . as we provide more information on our web site, and the constituency offices will want to be getting more sophisticated as well in taking advantage of the new communication options that are there, they will again be needing some expertise. Because these are largely one-person offices and they just can't have all the expertise that is needed to make their offices more efficient. They can do that if they can access the software and the systems that are available to them. So this would be expanding the CDSL phone support to constituency offices.

Internet consulting. Again, this is the amount . . . the 15,000 is for ongoing development and service enhancement that we hope we'll be developing; our links with the caucuses and perhaps with members in terms of an individual home pages, over the next year. And we do need some funding for continuing the developing of our Internet service.

System consulting. Again here the 25,000 is the specialist support that we need to contract from time to time depending on the issues, but Internet is one of them here.

The next section, computer hardware, you will see there some . . . at the bottom line for total for code 641 in that section, that we are reducing the request for hardware this year because we did purchase a good bit of it last year — down from 125,000 to 65,000. We still will need to do ongoing changes, replacing the older printers and older PCs (personal computer), and there's the central fibre repeater switch, is a part of the Internet network system that needs to be upgraded.

And the next items: computer software, a standard \$30,000 for maintenance upgrades. They come out with, you know, new versions that we have to keep up with or we can't find that we can maintain our kind of . . . things that don't work well with pieces that you haven't upgraded. So we do require ongoing funding for that.

And that's largely it. You'll see there under that code 645, the Internet server was budgeted for last year and purchased and is now gone from this year's request. So, Mr. Whitmore, your question earlier about equipment is largely reflected in the reduced requirement or request for hardware in this computer code.

**The Chair:** — Okay. And in that explanation then you'll note of course, this pulls IT (information technology) out from . . . puts all of the IT items related together and pulls them out from the other budget items.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Could you give us an estimate of how many years you feel this is going to require extra money over and above what we . . . we're looking at a regular budget. Like this last year, I believe was something that was new and it was added, or . . . Yes, that's right. That was last year, over and above.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — No, last year was actually down a little bit from the year before. But we're never going to get rid of these.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Are you anticipating a decrease? Put it this way: are you anticipating a decrease in the amount required for informational technology into the future, as we get equipped and get knowledgeable about how to handle the stuff, or are things just developing so rapidly that we think it's going to go on for a while?

**Ms. Ronyk:** — I think we're reasonably stabilized at this level, but it always depends on what kinds of things we might wish to be doing. And you don't, you know, we've discovered that you don't buy equipment and then not have to expend for three or four or five years. It just doesn't work that way. The technology is changing so quickly that the 486's that we asked you for — not last year but the year before — are now needing . . . They're to the point where they're . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, they're getting to be obsolete in some of our applications.

What we find is that in some areas of the Assembly we don't need necessarily the high level. For example, in *Hansard* they need . . . they have the new equipment that they need, but their needs won't change over the next three or four years. So they can kind of absorb some of our older equipment. But it's in key areas — in the library where the information technology is just changing kind of daily; in financial services where we need to be using the more sophisticated databases and spreadsheets and so on — where the pressure continues to grow.

What I can show you is that in '95-96 was the big year, where the board approved the replacement of our key hardware. And expenses that year that were approved were 555,000, and then last year we came down to 395. And then our estimate that we gave you last year for this year and next year was 436 in both of those years.

So you can see that in the second to the last column on the sheet that you have, 5.1. What we estimated for this year, last year was the four thirty-six, but we are coming in at the 401,000. Because things change, we sometimes find they cost less by the time we get to it.

But in this year's budget, the \$50,000 for the precedent application is discretionary. That is not something that we need to operate and keep the system operating. I mean it's a new application. It's a database for retrieval of procedural precedents. And that is . . . So I think if you remove that, and you look at what we're asking for is basically 350,000, you'll



see that our, kind of ongoing operational needs are coming down somewhat. But they're likely going to stay kind of in that range for some time.

Now we have some significant pressures also in this item. The \$20,000 for the CDSL phone support for constituency office is another new, and I assume, discretionary item. And again, that is not for the core Legislative Assembly system, but to provide some kind of cost-effective assistance to constituency offices.

So that the 50 under the precedent application, and the 20 there, are in addition to our, kind of basic needs to maintain and . . . the system that we have, and develop the Internet service that we're proposing here.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I've just a question about developing the Internet service. Does that all have to be keyboarded in or is there a technology they can use just to transfer the images quicker?

**Ms. Ronyk:** — Mostly now, as we create, you know the *Hansard* and so on, we create it electronically, and it would just merely be electronically converted into the Internet language — the HTML (Hyper-Text Markup Language) language — so that will be easy. But what we also want to do is put on back years of *Hansard*, so that we have, for researchers and caucuses and so on . . . you'll be able to go back into, you know, *Hansard* from 10 years ago.

But there's also technology . . . We do have some of that on electronic basis that will just need to be converted to . . . through the appropriate software now. But even when we don't have it on electronic, you can now scan-in the printed page so it doesn't have to be re-keyboarded.

We don't know just how successful that will be because some of it depends on the quality of the product, and it may be quite labour intensive to make scanned material correct because it does . . . seems to incorporate a fair bit of errors in the scanning.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Do you have any cost estimate as to how much it would cost to scan-in the past *Hansards*, to go back?

**Ms. Ronyk:** — We haven't done, we haven't gone . . . We did initially. We went out to look at what companies there are out there that do this. And at that time, if I . . . I know, Chris, you got the figures for us some time ago but it seemed to be fairly expensive at that time; but that was a few years ago. And we do now have a kind of a low-level scanner of our own. And it might be the kind of thing that we will be experimenting with.

Once we get the current stuff up and operating, then we'll be looking at going back to have the older sessions available electronically. And we have to keep in mind too, that as we provide Bills and *Hansard* and other legislative documents on the Internet, we will be offsetting our cost with printing savings.

We indicated to you last year we had a study that kind of showed where we might find savings as we stopped printing as

many documents. And this year we will be looking at not printing committee *Hansards* if . . . We'll be asking you, as the board, to make a decision in that respect at this budget review. What we're proposing is for the House *Hansard* and the House documents we would like to do initially a parallel for the first year, because at this point, we're still not absolutely positive that all of this is going to be able to be done and working.

We'd like to use the committee *Hansard* as a trial basis this session because the committee *Hansards* aren't something that are done every day. It gives us a little more time to fix a problem if there is one before the next committee meeting.

But by next year we should be able to alert our public, alert our subscribers, and try to promote our electronic site to users and then cut off the hard copy except for, more or less, in-house for members and committees and in-house use. And that will save us substantial dollars in the printing end.

What we'll do is demand printing. If someone out there from the public wants the *Hansard* for a certain Bill or a debate, we will photocopy it and send it to them. They won't have to subscribe to the whole year to get the pieces they want.

**The Chair:** — On this whole area we see ourselves positioned as not being leaders in the nation — more followers than leaders, I think really — taking advantage of the experience of other jurisdictions that have progressed a little further than we have so as to avoid the cost of learning. But as the Clerk says, we really are on the verge here now of being able to, at the same time, increase the access to *Hansard*-ed records by providing it on the Internet, and at the same time then, without jeopardizing public access, reduce some of the costs on the printing side.

So we are on the verge of being able to use technology to reduce costs and increase access. That's the position we're in at the moment.

Anything else, Mr. Kowalsky?

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you very much. Sounds like we're into a rather an exciting . . .

**The Chair:** — Well it is. But as I say, we're not proposing to lead the nation here. We're proposing to kind of follow the nation.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Yes. I guess I just have a few observations to make. And I recognize that there are other jurisdictions that are much ahead of us with respect to technological development and how they're handling this kind of technology and the information flow. But I think we, as well, have a different circumstance here in Saskatchewan. And I don't want to continue to remind us of the magnitude of our provincial debt — we've made some successes but we still have, I would suggest, a long way to go.

In '95-6 when we approved the new technology and the new computer hardware and the new computer system, it was my hope that in subsequent budgets we would see some fairly

substantial reductions in terms of the costs of delivering those services. But what I see this year is an actual request for an increase from the '96-97, and if I just do a rough calculation of the breakdown here, about a half of this \$400,000 budget is for consulting and support services.

We're being asked to add a permanent employee plus \$8,000 of training. And I guess what I had been hoping was that the costs of our hardware would be decreasing, but also that the staffing levels would be somewhat impacted based on the ability of these computers to be able to better manage.

But what I see is we're increasing staff. We're increasing the capital expenditures on an ongoing basis. And I'm not looking just at this fiscal year. I'm looking at over a period of time back to '95-6, where we approved, as you indicated, Gwenn, I think 555,000. And I guess what I'm saying is, I would have hoped that over a period of time we could have looked at less cost and, being through the new technology, delivering a better service. And I guess my question would be, have you made any projections for '98-99, '99-00? If there were no incremental demands on this service, where would this budget be going?

And I guess my other question would be with respect to systems consulting, consulting services; is there any way to decrease given the fact that we're going to be putting, you know as per the request, a permanent employee in here? What can we look at with respect to consulting services and why would those numbers not have decreased this year as opposed to what I see here to be in some areas a fairly substantial increase here?

I just look under item 280, support services. I believe you expended fifty-three thousand five roughly on an approved budget of seventy-six five, but again we're looking for seventy-six five this year. And then if I go to 272, in which '96 year was approved 55,000, the expenditure was 89,008 and we're looking for this year, 72,000. I'm not seeing a trend that will tell me that the contracting and the support services to this is going to be decreasing. And I would wonder if you could maybe give me a comment as to where you see this headed and if we couldn't do something less with respect to the contractual services that we're using.

I mean given the fact that we're asked to put a permanent employee in here, would tell me that on the other hand there should be somewhere where we can effect some cost savings.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — I think that is exactly what we were trying to do with the establishment of the permanent position. As I mentioned, it's a more junior . . . or an analyst position, but that position will be able to handle some of the daily routine, lower level support that the Assembly system requires, and therefore will be more highly paid.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Well where is that reflected here in your requests? Maybe you know, we just got this piece here but I don't see it here.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — Well the 35,000 was being spent last year or some of . . . we had a person help Richard, coming over on a

non-permanent basis last year to provide us with some support; and the 35,000 that you see there is actually a part of the personnel request that we'll be dealing with later on.

But the reason you don't see a reduction in the amount of expertise that's required is because we're moving to a more sophisticated system, and the Assembly has never had anyone, no employee, not even one, with any systems expertise. We've always had to contract out our systems expertise.

And believe me, we do an amazing job with that because most other government departments, if you look at them, will have a number of full-time employees. For example, Executive Council has four or five doing systems consulting and systems support where we have none. Now what we're proposing is to go with one permanent position so that we don't have to pay consulting dollars to do basic stuff. We can do it more cheaply with a permanent person.

Now the more sophisticated or high-level of expertise in the other consulting dollars is because we are still developing our Internet service and it's something that doesn't just . . . you just don't do once and then you stop doing it. It is an ongoing requirement. That system has to be twiggged and maintained every day. We do want to also enhance our services in that area.

The more highly expert services are also needed for our planning and knowing what the market is and knowing what the trends are in software and hardware. So that we don't go out there and have the Clerk, who knows not too much about this stuff, making decisions about what we're going to use and buy and so on in the field of computer hardware.

Now we have wrestled with whether we could provide that same service by having . . . hiring a full-time or senior person. But it's very difficult in today's market to get the all-round sort of person that you need, that knows not only the technical stuff with networks and so on, but also help . . . can help us with the software applications and choices and can do our budgeting and planning and advising. So right now we still feel that we're wisest to stay with consultant dollars for that higher level support that we need.

But I don't . . . You know, I can understand how you'd like to see these going down, but it just isn't the way of the world. But what we feel, is that our expenditures on information technology, including the staff to make it work for us, is reflected in savings in other parts of the Assembly. It's what makes the financial services people able to do the amount of work and absorb the amount of work they've absorbed over the years and keep doing more with the same staff — because they've been able to automate.

The same in all of the other offices with clerical support, with the library. What they can do now with information technology dollars is amazing compared to when they had to do it with people in manual sorts of resources.

So I think even though it's costing us some dollars for info tech staff, I think those dollars are really reasonable compared to other organizations' use of info technology. And it's not . . . it's

something that's necessary to make our investment in the information technology worthwhile. I mean we can have all that equipment sitting here, but if we can't make it work and make it assist us in making our work more efficient and more professional, then we've wasted our money.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Just . . . and I don't want to get into the personnel specifically because that is an issue that we've historically dealt with in camera, and I think rightly so, because we don't want to be talking about people's positions, salaries, and whatever in . . . I think a public forum is not appropriate.

When I look at just the number of personnel that are being requested — this, you know, certainly being one of them — and I recognize that there is some pressures on the Legislative Assembly Office because of the recommendations from McDowell — certainly I am assuming that that's creating more of a paper flow. I know it is in my constituency office, and I'm sure from others.

I'm afraid I think I see something growing over there, and I just . . . I make this as an observation. The technology hopefully would have improved our ability to handle paper flow. Certainly McDowell will be putting some pressures on your office. Recognize that. But what we've got is incremental expenditures — costs to the government more in terms of capital equipment for computers, more staffing — and I guess I don't see an end to this.

And at some point in time . . . And I know the technology will change and I know the demands on your office; if you want to be current, you're going to need some capital expenditures. We turfed out an old, antiquated computer system. We put in what I understood, and not knowing computers — being computer illiterate, frankly — I thought we were putting in place a system that would help us to maintain costs, and I just don't see that.

So it's one of the questions in terms of the overview here that I will have, Gwenn, as we go through the budget.

Because I'm not satisfied that I in any way see an end to . . . you know, I don't know where this is going, and that really does concern me. Because I think every arm of government . . . and you know, we can all lecture ourselves. I mean there isn't an arm of government that hasn't been asked to share in terms of a decrease, never mind the status quo or zero-based budget. And this one, I sometimes wonder why this one seems to continue to grow.

And you know, the Legislative Assembly Office has got maybe somewhat of a different role, in that your demands are changing all the time, and it's never consistent and you never know. But I'd like to at some point in time know that we're going to come to some completion of this kind of an incremental process, and I haven't been able to feel that. So I guess I think we need to discuss how we get to that point here and is there a way to get to that point.

**The Chair:** — I guess I can just respond partially to the sentiment that you raise as well, Mr. Lautermilch, because I do understand very clearly the desire to hold costs. And to maybe

repeat a point that was made earlier by the Clerk, there are two consequential things that are quite important that come out of the use of information technology here. One is the ability, which I think we'll see the beginnings of in this upcoming fiscal year, in which we'll be able to reduce printing costs, which aren't included in this portion of the budget but in another portion of the budget. So there is a consequent reduction that we can see and that we can forecast increasing next year over this year. Point number one.

Point number two is that it is relevant to us as well, when we're looking at the implications, that we recognize the role that information technology plays in the provision of information to the public. Because there is a significant consequence here which has to do with access to information by the people of Saskatchewan to the goings-on in this building. Some of it having to do with the proceedings of the Assembly or of committees, but certainly what occurs out of the library is not inconsequential at all.

I think members will realize, if you just think back five years even, in terms of the speed and the amount of detail available for resource information to members from the library, which has increased substantially — I think dramatically is probably not an overstatement — but also part of our library mandate for the Legislative Library here, as we've discussed in other committees previously, is to be a source for the province. And that has improved substantially as well.

Now that's not something that has to do with the function of the Chamber, but it sure has to do with the function of what occurs within the building here to meet the needs and the wishes for information by the people of Saskatchewan.

So it is, I think, really quite accurate and fair to say that with these expenditures, we can foresee some reduced costs, but perhaps even the bigger story is the increased access to information by the people of Saskatchewan. And not to belabour the library point, but as the library system is experiencing its own fiscal pressures within Saskatchewan, there is a consequent increase in pressure on our library here, which is a unique one in the province.

So I think as we deliberate on these things, the questions you're asking are all fair and legitimate, and it's also appropriate to consider them in the context of reduced costs elsewhere, and significantly increased access.

I know as I get around to high schools, and in the over 50 presentations that I've made to high schools in the past couple of months, I frequently refer to the fact that the *Hansard* will, within the next 12 months if not less, be available to people on the Internet. And our schools are on the Internet now. And that always meets with a very positive kind of response because it is an access not only through our school system, but to any others to know what is going on in the Legislative Assembly. And I think from my point of view as Speaker, the more that we can increase the public's access to the proceedings of the Assembly to see for themselves and draw their own conclusions, that is a relevant mandate for us to be considering what we're achieving here too. So I want to put that into a context. Is there anything

more you wanted to add?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Chairman, if we could, I think members suggest to me that they would like to perhaps take a 5-, 10-minute break.

**The Chair:** — Did that explanation wear you out, Mr. Lautermilch?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — It was no lengthier than my question, but it did wear me out — not down though.

**The Chair:** — All right. Members, want to take a 10-minute break? Okay, we'll reconvene at 10:45.

**The committee recessed for a period of time.**

**The Chair:** — Well if it's time, the 10-minute break is now up. We'll reconvene.

Before we do, I just want to apologize to members for not having introduced all of the Legislative Assembly staff people who are here, most of whom you know and perhaps all of whom. But perhaps for the record and for your information, just let me introduce the nine Legislative Assembly staff people who are here and then attend to one practical matter and then we'll proceed.

And I'll just ask that they nod here so that you know who they are, because I've not got them written in the order in which they're sitting: director of financial services, Marilyn Borowski; and Geoff Tober, who's the supervisor in financial services for payments and payroll; Marian Powell, Legislative Librarian; and Judy Brennan, assistant legislative librarian; and Greg Putz, the Deputy Clerk; and Gwenn Ronyk, the Clerk; Linda Kaminski, director of personnel services and administration; Chris Hecht, who is the systems consultant. And having stuck his head in the room and now he's departed — he's out being secure somewhere, I'm sure — Pat Shaw, the Sergeant-at-Arms. So those are the Legislative Assembly staff who are with us to assist in the deliberations.

Just on a practical matter, we have arranged for lunch to be brought in. So that we will take a lunch break but that we won't all have to dash away. And we'll be able to take a lunch break and then proceed along so that everybody resist the urge to go and get involved in something else. And who knows, if you drag a 10-minute break out to 20 minutes, who knows what you'd do to a lunch-hour. So we'll try to head off that little possibility. Okay.

Is there anything more on page 5.1, the information technology summary?

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — One more question, Mr. Chair, directed to Gwenn Ronyk. On the top of the page there, you've got \$35,000 for computer support and another \$72,000 for computer support. What would happen if that amount was not totally forthcoming? Suppose there was only half of that amount granted, how would it affect your operations?

**Mr. Ronyk:** — We would be in extreme difficulty because we not only need the daily, routine support from the \$35,000 allotment for that position, but we need the expertise that we get through the consulting dollars that we have. I mean if the thing goes down, there's nobody else that can fix it but those two people. And if the thing goes down, there's a whole lot of things we can't do. Like we can't process payrolls and we can't communicate. And we're in that situation that many organizations are today, where you rely so heavily on your computer systems that you're almost crippled when the thing doesn't work. And so it's a matter of, I mean if we cut these dollars, we would have to go out and find somebody to fix it and spend them anyway.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Is the \$72,000 contractual or would it be, sort of a contract that you would sign ahead of time, or would it be something where you would be requesting service calls if necessary and just pay a fee-for-service basis?

**Ms. Ronyk:** — This is not hardware support; this is software and analysis support and it is a contract on an hourly basis. So it's only however much work we require that person for.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Right. So if things are going really smoothly, you might spend less. If you get into crashes . . .

**Ms. Ronyk:** — Yes. That's right.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — It may end up more. Thank you.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — I do hate to say this, but there's a bit of bad news that I would like to alert the board to because I think it's pretty critical when you're looking at information technology dollars.

While I can argue that I think we have reduced our capital expenditures and that they're going to be stabilizing at a moderate but still some level — probably in the 50,000 level, in terms of capital hardware — and I feel that some of our expenditures we've proposed this year are discretionary and will not necessarily have to be incurred if that's the board's wish, I do want to alert you to something that is not covered in this budget.

And that is the potential for some costs that we're not aware of how much they may be, but we are knowing that they will happen within the next year or two years. And that is due to our link with the University of Regina library system.

We have . . . we got a real good deal from the University of Regina quite a few years ago when we joined their NOTIS (Northwestern Online Total Integrated System) system, which provides automated library services and a number of needs that the library needs to operate — cataloguing and circulation.

And we were able to join in with that consortium, along with the Department of Health library, at a very good rate and it has enabled us to have far fewer costs than it would have if we had to do it on our own or if we'd continued the more manual systems that we used to have.

However the University of Regina is replacing its system. They've decided that the old library technology system is not adequate and it needs to be replaced. They're currently doing a search and they're doing all the reviews and so on that are necessary. But when they do decide what they're going to do to replace their system, it's very likely that we'll be paying a share, a proportional share I expect, of the costs. And that will be a big, one-time hit.

At this point we have no idea what that will be and we have no idea how much we'll be able to negotiate with the university. But given their funding circumstances, I'm not sure we're going to have a whole lot of luck negotiating any cushy deals with them.

And that's just something that I wanted to alert you to. And we will keep you informed, as we do have staff involved in the two committees at the university that are doing the search and the analysis. So that we do know, you know, what's going on, what they'll be looking at. But we will be reporting to you once we have a little more detailed and factual information down the road. But it may not be in this year or it could be later in this fiscal year or the next.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Thanks, Gwenn. Anything more then specifically on the IT page? So the IT has just been pulled out, all those things in the Assembly administration related to IT summarized together. We'll go back to the Assembly administration budget then and I refer you then to page 6 — advertising, printing and publishing, and travel and business. Are there any questions there?

If not, then page 7 — supplies and service, equipment and fixed assets, debt and loans. And, Mr. Whitmore, you had asked before about equipment and fixed assets. Your questions may have been answered in the IT review there. Is there any other questions related to page 7?

Okay, if not, we'll move to personnel, and on page 8 you have the summary of personnel, with the exception of the budget request in the lower right-hand corner which we'll deal with in camera. Are there any questions related to page 8?

If not, then moving to caucus administration, you see the summary page in page 9 with details to follow. Any questions there?

Then to page 10 — personal services, contractual services. Are there any questions on page 10?

If not, page 11 — advertising, printing and publishing, supply and services. Questions?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Chairman, just one. The estimate for caucuses, government, opposition, and third party, with respect to telephone and fax, I see the three budgeted items here are, for the government, eighteen three; for the third party, a little less, fifteen seven; but for the opposition caucus, some \$30,000, almost twice the third party and the government caucus. I'm not sure if I understand how that works or why that would be so much.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — We do not control the caucus expenditures on telephone and fax. And I expect it just has to do with how they operate. And it is quite traditional that the official opposition are higher expenditures in these areas just because of the kind of critic type of responsibilities and so on that they carry out. But we don't have any more information. This is based on usage, and as I said, we don't set any guidelines or limits to them. We come to the board for that.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Is that ratio historical, where the opposition is spending somewhere in the neighbourhood of twice what government and say the third party is?

**Ms. Ronyk:** — I don't think it's usually quite that much, but always more. This is maybe a little higher than the normal ratio, but the official opposition has traditionally been the higher spender, especially compared to government.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Okay.

**The Chair:** — Any other questions, page 11? Okay.

Page 12 — members' secretaries. This is according to formula. Questions there? Okay. And that concludes then, caucus administration.

Constituency office administration, the summary on page 13. And on page 14, contractual services, equipment, fixed assets. Those will be based, not on the assumption that all MLAs will be using all of the allowance available to them, but I think an educated forecast based on an actual experience, and directive 24. Yes, this is all directive 24.

Any on page 14? Okay.

Accommodation and central services you see summarized on page 15 and you see detailed on page 16. Any questions there, page 16?

And on page 17?

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Gemini is part of the costs that directly relates to the library?

**Ms. Ronyk:** — No, this one is the Assembly storage.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Okay.

**The Chair:** — I think the library Gemini storage is under library. We'll come to that under library.

And contractual services, page 17? Okay, that concludes accommodation and central services.

Moving along to Legislative Assembly Office. You see the summary on page 18.

And then if we can move to Clerk's office, which you'll see the summary on page 19 and then in more detail on page 20 on the . . . and again on the . . . Those items related to proposals for change we'll deal with in camera, under personnel. We see on

page 20 then, personal services and contractual services; any questions there?

**Ms. Ronyk:** — Well there are no requests for any change in the Clerk's office in personnel.

**The Chair:** — All right. Okay. There's none of those here. Okay, good.

Page 21, advertising, printing and publishing, and travel and business. Questions?

Page 22, supplies and services; page 23, miscellaneous obligations; and then page 24 is the personnel for the Clerk's office, and these are all . . . Yes, these are all status quo.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Excuse me, back to . . . Mr. Chairman?

**The Chair:** — Sorry, yes.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Page 23.

**The Chair:** — Page 23?

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Yes, the question of grants and the Saskatchewan branch of CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association). I think last year that was the start of some increases there because of the conference we're going to be hosting this year. I suspect that's why the additional costs here this year too.

**The Chair:** — Yes, the request last year was divided into two years — last fiscal year and this fiscal year. And so the amount has been retained and there will be . . . It has not all been expended to date, but a high percentage of it will be by the end of the fiscal year. But in total it is expected . . . We're operating on the requirement that we live within budget. Okay?

Okay, and then staff, on page 24. Clerk's office.

Then we move to *Hansard*, summary on page 25, and then we go to detailed study on page 26 with personal services and contractual services. Questions?

Page 27, advertising, printing and publishing, and travel and business; page 28, supply and services, and equipment and fixed assets; and page 29, staffing.

Okay. Then to broadcast services on page 30. We summarize on page 30 with details starting on page 31, with personal services and contractual services.

Page 32, advertising, printing and publishing, travel and business, supply and services.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Last year there was discussion, when we were going through the budget, in terms of the area of broadcasting — the idea of the network expanding into more rural communities in Saskatchewan, basically putting it into every constituency in Saskatchewan where it doesn't exist now.

7And I remember then there was some cost involved, or there was some discussion of cost and I don't know whether that took place or not. But what is the status of that? Will that be up and running for the next legislative session and does it depend on whether those communities take up that service or not?

**The Chair:** — The answer is yes and yes. And the reality will be that when the House convenes, that every single member of the legislature for the first time ever, will have the legislative channel carried in at least one community in his or her constituency. We've expanded from 8 sites to about 35. I don't remember the exact number; it's in that neck of the . . . I think it may be in the 30's, just off the top of my head; I don't have that in front of me. But it will be, in each case for each MLA, the community which has the largest number of cable subscribers in that constituency will have the legislative channel carried live.

As I've been getting out, as part of the Speaker's parliamentary outreach, to constituencies, and I've been to, in the last two months, 25 constituencies, a good number of the members of the legislature, I've joined with them in making the announcement in their local media about the access to the Legislative Assembly channel.

It's been very well received, I report to you. I've been to over 50 schools. It's been enthusiastically received within schools because they see potential for social studies usage. But the media people in the rural areas are very enthusiastic about it.

The net cost . . .

**Mr. Whitmore:** — This is because they haven't seen it.

**The Chair:** — Well we'll let them judge for themselves, but perhaps the soap operas will come under intense competition now as they go head to head with the legislative channel all around the province of Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Because they know us.

**The Chair:** — That's right. And then the actors will be in place for approximately four-year stints anyhow. But there has been a small cost related to equipment costs to make it possible. This really has come about because of the advance in technology and renegotiation of our contract with SaskTel as our deliverer. As the signal is delivered by satellite as opposed to through the cable, it has been able to be done more inexpensively. And so we've been able to manage this without significant cost involved to the Legislative Assembly.

So in my mind it's this kind of thing — the expansion of the legislative channel, the movement of the *Hansard* to the Internet — which truly does help us to serve democracy. If with a democracy we believe that a characteristic of a democracy is access to information for an informed public, then I would say that we are doing that in a very concrete and proactive kind of way through the use of technology in the mid-1990s right now. So I think that's good news for democracy, quite frankly.

Anything else on page 32? Page 33, equipment and fixed assets.

Okay, that's broadcasting.

Moving to visitor services — page 34 is your summary, beginning in detail on page 35, personal and contractual services. Any questions there? Page 36, advertising, printing and publishing, travel and business. And page 37, supplies and services, equipment, fixed assets. Okay, that's visitor services. And page 38, the staffing.

Moving then to the Sergeant-at-Arms, Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms, beginning in summary on page 39. And you will see on the summary on page 39 there is a B-budget request, and because it relates to security, on this one actually I will insist that we deal with that in camera. We will come back to that.

Page 40, beginning in detail then on the A-budget, personal and contractual services. Any questions? Page 41, advertising, travel and business, supply and services; page 42, equipment and fixed assets, debt and loans; and then page 43, staffing.

Okay, moving along then page 44, to the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk summary; in detail beginning on page 45, personal and contractual services both; 46, travel and business; 47, supply and services, equipment and fixed assets.

Okay, now moving to the Legislative Library. Page 48 is your summary with your B-budget request. And I'll propose that we deal with the B-budget request after we have gone through the A-budget. We'll come back, but that's summarized for you, and you may just want to flag that or fold your corner on the page because that gives you the summary of the B-budget request with its implications for the next subsequent two fiscal years to follow. Because the B-budget request does not totally solve the problem but is requested as the first step, which will be about half the total cost related to storage services or storage for the library.

Moving to page 49 then, personal and contractual services are listed there. Questions? Page 50, contractual services continued, advertising, printing and publishing. 51, travel and business. 52, supply and services, and equipment and fixed assets. Okay, 53, that's your salaries, continuing on page 54. And that concludes Legislative Library.

Page 55, beginning, committee support services summarized there. And I just draw your attention on page 55 to the summary, advertising, printing and publishing — what is given to you here, which is up about 10 per cent in that single category, is that's assuming that we continue to publish as we are now the printed copy of the *Hansard* on committees. That can be substantially reduced if you make a decision to publish that on Internet and then make available only to caucuses and copies of specific things on request.

So there is . . . The figure you have here, we referred earlier to potential savings by the use of . . . by not having the printed copies of *Hansard*. But this figure here includes it, with it included. So there is potential there to reduce that number. And that's the summary number. I draw it to your attention, page 55, because that's all the committees combined.

Then as you go to page 56 for Regulation, and Crown Corps, page 57 for Public Accounts and other committees, and page 58, which is just the carry-forward of the Independent Committee on MLA Compensation, but this carried forward because there was an expenditure last year. So obviously fall off the page next year.

Okay, moving to indemnity allowances and expenses to members. And this . . . we're now into the statutory portion of the budget and you see that summarized for you then on page 59 — indemnity allowances and expenses to members. It assumes the McDowell recommendations are followed.

Then moving to the subvote, indemnity allowance and expenses for members, page 60 is summarized and in more detail then begin on page 61 for personal and contractual services. I think you can see that there. Any questions?

Page 62, travel and business. See the assumptions there. Page 63, moving to allowances for additional duties summarized on the front page. And on page . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Sorry?

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Sixty-two.

Travel allowance, and we've gone now to the new system of McDowell, and from '95-96, where it's seven forty-nine, we go to the new system, seven fifty-seven. And under McDowell in that report there was an anticipation that costs would decrease. He assumed that possibly this would decrease costs, going to this system, going to actual costs.

**The Chair:** — I don't think Mr. McDowell assumed costs would decrease. He assumed that accountability would increase. This reflects the fact that there's been a by-election and a change in the configuration of members. So that's what's reflected here. There is in this budget, one more private member than there was in the last budget. And so this is based on actuals to do with the formula for each member.

McDowell, as all members will be aware, recommended a system which has created a ton of paperwork for MLAs, constituency offices, and the Legislative Assembly Office. And clearly that's happened, but it never was anticipated by McDowell, to the best of my knowledge, that there would be reduced costs.

In fact although I'm not forecasting something at this point in time, in speaking with members who are actively filling out their forms on a regular basis and sending them in, I've had several members indicate to me that their claims will expire for their total allowances substantially before the end of the fiscal year.

And I think as a result of what McDowell has required the members to do, it's looking to me as though it may very well — we'll let you know when we get the figures at the end of the year — but it may very well be that if we were paying members mileage according to their actual usage, that in fact the cost would be substantially higher than is budgeted for.

But that's why I've asked members of all three caucuses, even though they may expire the use of their allowances before the end of the fiscal year, to continue to fill out the forms and send them in so we've got some real numbers to be able to consider for possible future consideration of other options by the board.

Okay, anything else there on page 62?

Okay, allowance for additional duties, summarized page 63, and then in detail on page 64. And these are then as determined by your previous approval of the McDowell recommendations.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** — Sorry.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Chairman, just with respect to McDowell and its impact on the budgets — and I know and I recognize that we probably couldn't come in with some kind of a comparative analysis. And I think it's something that we would want to do at some point in time. You refer to the paper flow. I look at the request for personnel. And at some point in time, I think we have to take a look at the costs associated with those recommendations. And I don't know when we'd be in a position to bring that forward. I would assume it wouldn't be appropriate until we've had at least a year of operations, and then based on that, be able to do some kind of a comparison.

But I think we really need to look at that. We all are very, very cognizant of the desire to increase accountability, but I think it's also important that we recognize the cost to the taxpayers in terms of administration. And I think we have to look at that, as we do with all areas of cost to government and ways that we might be able to create some efficiencies, if there are — and there may not be; I don't know that — and still maintaining the principles of McDowell and accountability.

**The Chair:** — I take it, it's a fair point, and it has a certain amount of accuracy to it, there's no doubt about that. Just if I may, just unwittingly jump ahead for a comment on agenda item no. 10, I think it is, and forecast to you the fact that I have received from members of the legislature, from all caucuses over the past several months, what is a fairly long list actually. And I will report to you when we get to that point, a list of things that in my view have been very clearly annoyances experienced by members in their constituency offices, which also at the same time have nothing to do with transparency or accountability.

There is absolutely no doubt that the paperwork and the amount of work involved in achieving transparency and accountability by members in their constituency offices has risen substantially and then consequently in the Legislative Assembly.

I'll just let you know now what I will do in a little more detail then, but I will want to recommend to you that we just hang in there for a while longer and give ourselves a little bit more experience, including when the House is back in session. Because there is a part of the McDowell recommendations that we've not actually used yet, and that's to do with the whole matter of per diem claims, which has gotten substantially more

complicated.

And what I am thinking makes the most sense, is that at some point down the road, some time in 1997 not clear to me at this point in time yet, but what I would like to do is to come to the board with a comprehensive list of recommendations, based on things that have come to my attention, that I'll want to recommend you consider on the grounds that they don't reduce . . . making changes would not reduce accountability or transparency, but would make the world a little simpler. And perhaps at that time, we'll be in a position to give some analysis about the cost implications here in the Legislative Assembly as well, related to that.

I'm not sure about that yet, but we'll certainly take that under advisement.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — To add to that, your list may grow longer. Mr. Kowalsky and myself as members of the board and our caucus reps, have undertaken to send out memos to all our constituency assistants and MLAs; if they have problems or comments or concerns, is to come to us with them so we could . . . There's been no way of gathering this information, to know, and trying to centralize that and then to sit down with yourself and members of the third party and the official opposition and see where we can fine-tune things to.

But one of the problems, and I know I've seen copies of letters that you've received, is that it's been a shotgun approach and we're trying to focus it and trying to see where there are similar problems of things like this.

**The Chair:** — I'll welcome that. And I think there's 11 things on my list right now that I think are worth attention of the board. But this is not the time to do it expeditiously, I don't think.

Thanks, Mr. Whitmore. Anything else on page 64?

Okay, page 65, members' committee expenses. And that's down because of the McDowell recommendations.

Page 66 in more detail then on Committee on Regs, Crown Corps, and Public Accounts.

Page 67 then, Board of Internal Economy in summary, with the detail beginning on page 68, personal services, and travel and business.

Okay. Page 69, third party caucus and office of the third party in summary, with the detail on page 70. This is all according to formula.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — What is the formula?

**The Chair:** — Order.

Page 71, government caucus in summary, and page 72 in detail. This is also according to the formula.

And then page 73, opposition caucus and office of the Leader of



the Opposition in summary . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order, order, order. Members will come to order here.

And the detail on page . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order, order. This is all statutory, I remind the hon. members, and it's according to formula on page 74.

Page 75, the office of the independent member. And that then concludes the expenditures of the budget.

Moving then to revenue estimates. This is a much shorter section. In fact one-third of it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well we haven't considered selling tickets yet, Mr. Boyd. You will note that fully one-third of the document related to revenue estimates is the title page. Then the summary on page 1 and the detail on page 2. Okay. Any questions there?

Okay. Now having had opportunity now to review the budget . . . We're on item . . . I remind you item 7(a) is what we've achieved. And we'll now move to item 7(b), which is personnel requests, and (c), Sergeant-at-Arms B-budget request, both of which we'll deal with in camera. Oh, before we go in camera . . .

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Before we move in camera, I just have one. And I don't want to itemize them by page; I don't want to go through it. But just with respect to out-of-province travel, I'm wondering if we couldn't, just as a general principle, send one person to a conference as opposed to a number of. And I mean there might be different arguments based on different conferences, but . . .

**Mr. Boyd:** — Which conferences are you referring to? All of them?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — I think all of them. I don't know why we couldn't get away with just the one person travelling.

**Mr. Boyd:** — The CPA?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Well CPA I think is here this year, is it not?

**A Member:** — Yes, here this year.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — But I mean just with respect to this budget. I'm not suggesting that this be done in perpetuity. We might be in a position at some point in time where we want more . . .

**The Chair:** — That will occur in only two budgets. And perhaps I can ask the Clerk to just comment, to give you the rationale as to why there is a request for more than one in those two circumstances, because the rest all are only one attendee.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — As the Speaker has mentioned, we basically do try to send only one person to a conference compared to what we used to do.

The only two instances where we still are proposing to send two is in *Hansard*, where we send both the director and the

production manager because they do focus on slightly different elements of the process. And it is the only opportunity that those people have of, first of all, keeping up with what other *Hansard* operations are doing in terms of technology and so on. And there really is no other place to get any sort of professional development for *Hansard* production people or *Hansard* staff. There's just no other place where that kind of function goes on.

The other area where we propose to send two is in the Clerk's office. We have two conferences this year. It's the Canadian Clerks' professional development seminar, which is every year; and we have three Clerks in the office and we usually try to send two because it is the opportunity we have for training of our junior people. And it's also important that some of the senior people go to make sure that there is a contribution to that meeting each year from more experienced Table officers.

And it also is the only opportunity that Table officers have of some professional development. It enables us to kind of keep up with procedural changes that are occurring in other jurisdictions. We can come back and hound our Rules Committee into establishing a calendar, something like that.

It is extremely valuable we feel, and is quite appropriate and really an opportunity that we don't have very often. Those costs vary because the conference is hosted in a different jurisdiction each year, and if it happens to be close like it was this year, in Edmonton, it doesn't cost us as much. This coming year it's in New Brunswick, I think it is, and that costs us a little more.

This year also we have a second conference which is the Canadian/American Clerks that's held only every two years, and we are proposing to send only one to that one because we feel it doesn't measure up quite as valuable as the Canadian Clerks' meetings do, but is important as we try to keep informed about developments in the United States which seems to becoming of more of interest to our own members as well.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — So it's a reasonable and rational argument.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — I do have an out-of-province travel summary here that you might be interested in as well. And because our travel is split from all these branches, it's hard for you to see what the totals are that we're actually budgeting for. And this year our totals across our whole budget — all the branches — for out-of-province travel, which are mainly these professional development conferences; none of these are fun trips, believe me, they're fairly substantial . . .

**The Chair:** — Order, order.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — The total cost of our . . . across the board is approximately \$17,000, and for that amount we are sending 13 professional staff to these events. And you can see that we do it very economically. These aren't lavish trips.

**The Chair:** — Anything else you'd like to ask, Mr. Lautermilch?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — No that's fine. I'm sold.

**The Chair:** — Thank you for asking.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — It's my job.

**The Chair:** — Okay, now are you prepared to move in camera now? Okay. Lunch is around and about and I think I'm going to suggest we plunge ahead here, but at some point in time, either before we're done item 7 or at the conclusion of item 7 at the latest, then I'll recommend that we use that as lunch-break time.

So I'll be guided by your suggestion and we'll now move in camera and you will have . . .

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I would move:

That we go in camera for items 7(b) and 7(c).

**The Chair:** — Yes. Is there a seconder? Mr. Whitmore. Discussion? In favour? Opposed? Carried.

So I'll ask all except the Legislative Assembly staff who have been previously introduced to please leave then while we meet in camera.

**The committee continued in camera.**

**The Chair:** — Okay, members of the board, having moved out of meeting in camera, we'll now proceed to item 7(d), decision item related to Legislative Library, B-budget request.

Members have had a chance to review this, and also I appreciate that members of the board have responded to the invitation of the librarian to observe the shelving circumstances. So I think probably there has been a good opportunity to orient members to this already. So perhaps, Marian, if I could ask you to very concisely summarize this for us, I think members will be pretty familiar with it.

**Ms. Powell:** — I'd like to echo the Speaker's comments. I really appreciate the time you and your staff have given to us to review the situation of the shelving.

I'll summarize with a few points. First of all, the library has been functionally full now for a number of years — that means 85 per cent of shelving capacity is full. As of October of 1996, we were 92 per cent of capacity; we were in gridlock.

So we have taken a move which we did not take lightly. And in order to give ourselves approximately two or so years of functionality, we've closed a large American government publication collection, boxed it — that was the Gemini item in the budget for \$4,000 that you saw — and we'll be paying that and more in perpetuity until we have space.

But it has given us two or so years of breathing space during which time we felt it necessary to bring forward really the first proposal this board has ever seen relating to the collections base of the Legislative Library. What you have before you is a proposal to install mobile shelving over a three-year, phased-in period at the Walter Scott Building, which is our most efficient storage facility with the greatest potential.

Over the years we've been struggling with this space problem in a number of ways. And one of them has been to replace, where we've had funds and where it's been available, long runs of material by microform or CD (compact disc), which is now one of the new formats.

But that's not a cost-effective way to make space. According to our proposal here, it would cost us approximately \$27 per square foot for shelving and \$40 a foot to buy micro replacements. So immediately you can see that replacing things in other formats that are smaller isn't necessarily the cost-effective way to go. And a great deal of our very important back file collections simply are not available in any other format, nor will likely be.

So we're asking the board to consider that we begin planning to deal with the shelving situation in the Legislative Library. Our proposal, if it were to be approved this year or next year — we recognize this is new to the board and it is a substantial sum of money — would begin to address the space issue and would see us achieving enough efficiencies of shelving to carry us forward to at least 2005 in a functional manner.

And I'll be happy to answer any questions.

**The Chair:** — All right. Thank you, Marian. And members of the board, you'll see then on page 3 of the proposal with the recommendation, the request, the B-budget request this year, which is in total, 114,505. And it would have with it two consequential expenditures over the next two fiscal years after that to achieve the entire objective. So it should be considered in that context.

Questions or comments related to the B-budget request for the library?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Just, Mr. Speaker, if we could. You know I've looked at the logistics here. We've got storage space in one, two, three different buildings and I'm not sure, Marian, if all of this suits your needs in terms of, I guess, a long-term storage facility.

I'm wondering if it wouldn't make some sense for us to put together a comprehensive package where we've got a centrally located storage, where you've got climate control, where you've got the kind of facility that would be a long-term solution as opposed to, you know, what may not.

I know this won't take you out of your difficulty in terms of storage space in the short term, but I guess my question would be, is this the kind of a facility you would choose — where this stuff is housed now — would you choose this with respect to the atmosphere conditions inside of it and the logistical arrangements or would you choose another scenario than this if you had your druthers?

**Ms. Powell:** — Well I'll answer the first question. Is this what we'd like to see for a long-term development? Now logistically, it's very good for us. The reason that the Walter Scott Building has been targeted for the mobile shelving development is, it's within a five-minute walk of this building. We retrieve from all

these locations on a daily basis.

The old Health building is truly terrible space, as those who visited the location with me saw. And it really is our storage point of last resort, except that now you'll notice the box called Gemini where we have 1,100 boxes of U.S. (United States) government documents that simply are not accessible at all. The proposal we have here would allow us to repatriate the material from the old Health building and the Gemini Warehouse and have one off-site location, which certainly would be highly desirable to us.

In terms of a broader proposal, you're absolutely correct. We're not dealing at this point in any way with climate controls, security, water alarms, anything like this, and we would like to have that. Regarding that kind of a proposal, we've been working for a number of years on several broader proposals with the Provincial Archives, with the Provincial Library, and none of it has gone ahead.

And the result is we've not had any improvement in our stack facilities. And I think that although we're looking — for us — we're looking at quite a long range to the year 2005, it really is a bridging period, and one would hope that these agencies and perhaps some others could come together with a shared solution for collection management down the road. But we have to do something in the next two years or we're in gridlock again.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Just if I could make a suggestion, I know that SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) has been attempting to rationalize a whole pile of government space — in the last four and five years in particular — and it might be . . . there might be a situation created for us whereby we could bring some of this, you know, the whole package together. I would like to see this deferred for one year, but that this would come back as an alternative if we can't in fact find, you know, find a broader solution to this for next year.

**Ms. Powell:** — We would certainly be happy to work with SPMC and the other agencies because the truly long-term solution will not just be this.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Well if we can do anything — you know I will probably move then a deferral to this or a non-supportive motion anyway — but if we can be of any assistance in terms of putting together the broader package and trying to rationalize some of the utilization better and maybe encompass some of the other documents to try and achieve a long-term solution to this, then I think that would probably be the way to go.

**The Chair:** — Procedurally, I'm not sure how you . . . you would either need to defeat the recommendation or just not move it. I think procedurally that would be the way of handling it. Is there any other questions or discussion.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — I guess dealing with the question of procedure though, Mr. Lautermilch has indicated the idea of bringing it back next year or, you know, a different alternative. Does that have to be put forward in another recommendation or

can we simply agree that . . . an understanding that that will take place?

**The Chair:** — I think we can agree to that and it's also on the record and will be reviewed. And if that's where we end up, it will be reviewed and acted on accordingly within the Legislative Assembly Office.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, if I can, I think that we would probably take the initiative to speak with the minister responsible for Property Management Corporation and coordinate the different bodies and see if we can't work together to make . . .

**The Chair:** — Okay, I guess I'm getting the impression here then that the government members of the board are committing to an undertaking to deal with SPMC, to coordinate that with the librarian to address this in a specific way prior to the next budget proposal; and with the expectation that there will be a library budget proposal next year, either this again or some alternative as a result of discussions with SPMC.

Okay is there any further question or discussion? Does anyone wish to move the recommendation? If not, then we will proceed.

Item 7(d) we will pass on.

Then to item 7(e), motion to approve revenue estimates. You will have on the final, on the summary, page of your revenue estimates, we do have . . . there is a matter to consider because there has been some thought given to eliminating committee *Hansards* as a way of reducing expenditure. There is a consequential reduction in revenue. We're not making big money selling committee *Hansards* but we do make some, and it's \$3,500.

So at least I would advise that if as part of the plans in the expenditure it is expected to reduce the cost, then we'd also have to reduce the estimate. And in that case, it would be \$47,000 would be the revenues.

So it would be in order to have a . . . it would be in order then to have a motion that the Legislative Assembly revenue estimates of — and then either \$50,500 or 47,000 — be approved for the 1997-98 fiscal year and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Does someone wish to move one of those? And which version, Mr. Whitmore?

**Mr. Whitmore:** — The one with the reduction to \$47,000.

**The Chair:** — Okay. And is there a seconder? Ms. Crofford. So the motion before you:

That the Legislative Assembly revenue estimates of \$47,000 be approved for the 1997-98 fiscal year and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Discussion? Mr. Boyd.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Would there be no recording then of Public Accounts and that, is that what you're saying, official record of?

**Ms. Ronyk:** — No, Mr. Boyd. There still will be a committee *Hansard* record produced. We just won't print it and distribute it in hard copy. We will be distributing it in electronic copy outside of the building . . .

**Mr. Boyd:** — Fine.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — To members of the committees and internally, we will still be producing a photocopied record. And we do have to address some concerns about what we want to keep for kind of a historical paper copy. We'll be doing that with the library.

But it will just mean we don't distribute it to subscribers and the public and so on in printed form, unless they — on on-demand basis — if they want one piece or one thing, we can photocopy that day or number of days for them. But they won't be able to subscribe any longer to the full committee record, although it will be available at their libraries, for example, on Internet.

**The Chair:** — Okay, for discussion. You've heard the question then. Those in favour please indicate? Down hands. Opposed. That's carried.

And now 7(f), a motion to approve budgetary and statutory estimates would be in order then. Now I know members have been giving some consideration to the budgetaries — sum 2 — and statutory is sum 3. So those . . . it'll be the total budgetary and the total statutory that will be listed for you there.

It would be in order to have a motion that a budget of, and then your dollar amount, what's proposed to you as a total of . . . If I can just refer you to sum 3 first of all. The total vote proposed in the A-budget is 14,832,280. And you have given approval in B-budget in the amount of 68,480. So that's the total amount that's proposed to you, and then that's broken down into budgetary and statutory.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I would like a motion to read that amount less the \$50,000 from someone reduced from item 4 — \$50,000 reduced from item 4, of someone, and \$20,000 from . . . Oh pardon me, I should refer directly then to the other . . . it's easier to identify them on . . .

**The Chair:** — I think you're on page 5.1.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — 5.1, yes.

**The Chair:** — Yes, I think if you'll do that, that will be clearer.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — The \$50,000 from 272 on page 5.1; subtract the \$20,000 CDSL phone support for constituency office of item 280 on page 5.1. And then the 39,120 of printing costs — and I'm not certain where that is best identified.

**The Chair:** — That will be under — somebody give me a page here for committees — page 55, if you look there, Mr. Kowalsky. On the summary, page 55, advertising, printing and publishing.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — That would be the figure there, 39,120 under advertising, printing and publishing.

**The Chair:** — Okay. All right. So reducing by those three numbers and then adding by the number . . .

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Adding the amounts for the scanner.

**The Chair:** — Yes.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Scanner, which is . . .

**The Chair:** — Yes, I think we'll just leave it at that because we'll deal with that in camera. So if we can just pause for a moment and get somebody to give me the number that achieves what you want.

There is no change in statutory, but there are the three reductions and one addition in budgetary, right? Okay.

What I recommend to you then, Mr. Kowalsky, is that your motion would read:

That a budget of \$14,791,640 be approved for the Legislative Assembly for the 1997-98 fiscal year as follows:

Budget to be voted, \$5,083,130; statutory budget, \$9,708,510; and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Do you wish to move that?

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I'll so move.

**The Chair:** — Is there a seconder? Mr. Whitmore. Discussion? Those in favour please indicate. Down hands. That's carried unanimously. Thank you very much. And that concludes item no. 7.

Let us take a 15-minute break and then we'll proceed to item no. 8, the Provincial Auditor.

**The committee recessed for a period of time.**

**The Chair:** — Okay, let us reconvene, having quorum. The next item on our agenda, item no. 8 then that you have before you, is a decision item to review the 1997-98 budget for the Office of the Provincial Auditor.

I'd like to introduce to you four people who are here related to this consideration. First of all to my immediate right, everyone will recognize the Provincial Auditor, Wayne Strelloff; and to his right, the assistant provincial auditor, Fred Wendel. And I want to introduce two officials that you may or may not know: Sandy Walker, who is the manager of administration — which

is Sandy? Sandy, do you want to give a nod there? — and Heather Tomlin, who is the assistant manager of administration from the Provincial Auditor's office. So welcome to all of you.

I will now turn over . . . everyone has received in advance the business and financial plan for the year ended March 31, 1998, as well as an annual report on operations for the year ended March 31, 1996. And I will now turn the floor to the Provincial Auditor to present to you his proposal for budget. And the precise number you will find on page 5 of your financial plan, 1998, at the top there in the amount of \$4.22 million. So to the Provincial Auditor.

**Mr. Streliaff:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, members. Good afternoon. As the Chair mentioned, there's two reports — our annual report on operations for the year ended March 31, '96; and then our business and financial plan for the '97-98 year.

My focus of my brief remarks will be on the business and financial plan, and it has three components to it. The first component, beginning on page 1, deals with a narrative explanation of what we do and why, and some of the financial trends. Appendix I, which begins on page 31, provides detailed information supporting our business and financial plan with comparative amounts for prior years. And appendix II contains information in response to questions posed at previous meetings of the Board of Internal Economy as well as the Standing Committee on Estimates.

So beginning on page 5 as the Chair mentioned, our proposal is a funding . . . has an appropriation of \$4.22 million for '97-98. This is approximately a 2 per cent reduction from last year, and we plan a further 2 per cent reduction in '98-99 as set out in this business plan.

The first part of the document refers to our work with members of the Assembly and how members can assess the quality of our work, the effectiveness of our work. It moves on to who we serve, on page 6, of course the Assembly. The chart on exhibit 1 we've included for the first time to try to give a schematic presentation of what we do and the purpose of what we do.

The first part of our office, of course, is 80 per cent of our resources is used to hire people. So our key input is the knowledge, skills and abilities of our employees. The types of outputs — using the jargon of the day — the outputs our office produces, which is assurance to members on financial statements; on compliance with legislative authorities and management systems. We provide advice in terms of recommendations, and we serve the standing committees and provide them assistance, particularly the Public Accounts Committee.

As well as, we produce trained professionals for service elsewhere in the public sector and private sector in Saskatchewan, and outside of Saskatchewan. And then we go into some intermediate outcomes of why we do what we do. Some of the purposes, the results of our work. And the final outcome being better parliamentary control, better program performance, and leading to improved public confidence in our system of government in terms of what we're working towards.

Page 8 moves to what we do — the types of reports that we issue; the types of examinations; our working with standing committees. Page 9, at the bottom, goes into the types of reports that we issue. We issue many reports to government officials and management, both elected and appointed, and those reports get summarized in terms of a fall and spring report to the Assembly.

Then we talk about the impact of our work in terms of helping the Assembly in its ability to hold the government to account, as well as the government's responsibility to use sound management systems and practices.

The key ingredient to our office is our abilities and knowledge, which is set out in paragraph 29, some of the objectivity of our office because of our independence from executive government; the knowledge of how government works, as well as some of the issues facing government organizations.

Page 12 gives a brief schematic of our organization in terms of the five groups in our office, that each have a focus in terms of their working. There's a finance and Crown corporation group, value-for-money group, a health and education and a professional practice group. Beginning on page 13, we describe what we plan to do, and 14 and 15 talks about our goals, objectives and strategies. So when we carry out examinations, here's — on page 14 and 15 — is some of the reasons for why we carry out those examinations.

In terms of what we're trying to achieve, three main goals: fostering well-managed government, encouraging better reporting by government, as well as a third goal which focuses on our own office, and that is to try to manage our own business as effectively as possible. And then we set out the objectives of each of these goals and the strategies that we have in place to move them forward.

We also of course, monitor our performance and report on our performance in moving forward these goals and objectives. And of course our annual report and operations is the other part of a plan, the planning document and then the performance report. So on page 14 and 15 we set out some of the . . . well the three main goals of our office.

Then our values. The factors . . . On page 16 the factors that affect our work plan that we're proposing. Of course the work plan reflects the information that we know as of August 31st, when we finalize this one, related to the '96-97 revenue and spending patterns, the number of government organizations, the quality of the government's management systems and practices, the government's use of appointed auditors, the cooperation we expect to receive from the various government officials and appointed auditors, and the knowledge of that information as of the end of August and September.

Then we set out some of the key forces and trends that affect what we do, because they affect government organizations and elected officials — the increasing pressure on scarce public resources and changing demand for public services, the increasing demand for improved public accountability, a more powerful and user-friendly technology, as well as increasing

concern about the effect of society on our environment; and how those factors, those forces, impact what we do.

Page 18 sets out our '97-98 action plans in terms of our plans to examine and report on government organizations, auditing each government organization. When appointed auditors are in place, we plan to use the recommendations of the task force on the roles, responsibilities, and duties of auditors; the three kinds of examinations that we perform at every organization, which relates to the reliability of government financial statements, their compliance with the law, and the adequacies of their management systems and practices.

Page 18 and 19 goes into more specifically some of the work plans. And then on page 20 and 21 and 22, we set out the systems and practices that we have in place in our own organization to make sure that the goals and objectives that we've set out will be achieved and will be achieved with due rigour. And we look for these kinds of systems and practices in other organizations to ensure that they're able to achieve their goals and objectives in a rigorous and measurable way.

On page 23, we set out how we measure our own performance in terms of the three basic outputs or products of our office: the assurance or the audit reports that we provide, the advice, our recommendations, and of course the trained professionals for public service.

In paragraph 83, we set out in more detail the way we measure our performance in terms of the quality, completion, and cost of our audits or products, the use of our staff time, the outcome of our work in terms of the recommendations that we provide, and the support for those recommendations.

One of the key performance indicators that we have is that what we recommend is accepted and adopted both by the government and also supported by the Assembly. And that of course, is reflected in our annual report on operations where we set out our performance.

The success of our hiring and training program — being a training office, people come into our office, get trained as professional accountants, and then they move on to other jobs. As well as the last item in paragraph 83, of course we constantly monitor our own working environment to make sure that those working in our office believe it's a good place to be.

Our financial plan begins on 24 and 25, setting out, on table 1, setting out the pattern over five years, what we've proposed in our work plan budgets from '94 to . . . and then the last column is '98-99. The large decrease from '94-95 to '95-96 reflects our plan to carry out our responsibilities following — when we're working with appointed auditors — following the recommendations of the task force on roles, responsibilities, and duties of auditors. That task force has helped us carry out our work more efficiently. And also the reduction from '95-96 to '96-97 reflects trying to do our business more efficiently and effectively.

Page 26 to 27 sets out our summary of our spending trends and how we financed our spending over the same five years. The

appropriation of 4.220 is there underneath the '97-98 budget proposal.

And then we move to appendix I, which just provides far more detailed information about each of the budget requests, the actual spending and forecasts, and then for each of the years that we are examining, and all the different government organizations. And again the two appendices: appendix I provides more detailed information about our spending plans and appendix II sets out answers to questions previously posed in these committees.

We also provide the results of our budget versus actual comparisons for the previous four years in the appendices right near the end of this document.

Now that's a pretty quick overview of what our proposals are. I think I'll turn it over to the Chair and just be prepared or try to be prepared to answer your questions.

**The Chair:** — Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Strelieff. I just add one point of information to the Provincial Auditor's presentation. On page 27, you'll notice that the request for appropriation is not the same amount as the plan for spending; that there is the proposal that some interest revenues would be applied to that total. Okay?

So the floor is now open. The request is in the amount, as the Provincial Auditor said, on page 5 of \$4.22 million and the floor is now open for questions or discussion.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you very much. My first comments, Mr. Speaker, would be to commend the auditor on going in the right direction when it comes to budgeting. We've been asking many a department to look at ways that they can reduce their expenditures and still do the work that they are . . . that is necessary and to make some tough decision and priorities. And I see that you've indicated a reduction of 2 per cent and you propose another 2 per cent for the following year. I think that's a good move and it should be noted, and I think we should try to even look for a little more because it's such a good direction to go in.

I notice specifically on page 36 that you saved some money by using appointed auditors to three health . . . appointed auditors that were used to audit the three health boards. I'd like to know which three health boards those were.

And also I notice on page 40, item . . . Appendix I, item 4 there where you refer to, again to three districts. I'm not sure if those are the three districts, but here we're talking about savings of 95,000; 25,000; 115,000; and 20,000. I'm not sure if some of that money that's included in item 4 is a repeat of the . . . what is mentioned on page 36.

But at any rate, that's not the significant part of my comment. The significant part is, have you looked at . . . are there any other areas or departments where you think that there may be such savings available?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Mr. Chair, Mr. Kowalsky, on page 36 where

we say the . . . (inaudible) . . . increase of 82,000 results from government using appointed auditors. What that means is that instead of our office doing the work and being funded for the work, the district health boards would be paying for the work directly. So in that sense, it still costs taxpayers money, but it's not money that is coming through our office; it's coming through district health boards instead. Is that correct, Fred?

**Mr. Wendel:** — Yes.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Now page 40 is . . . no. 36 and 40 referring to the same district health boards. So the three district health boards that we're referring to on page 40 are the same district health boards.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — That's the Regina, Saskatoon . . .

**Mr. Strelieff:** — No.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — What are those boards?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — I thought we were getting which three? Do you remember which three?

**Mr. Wendel:** — I'm going from memory here, but there's Twin Rivers and there's Pipestone, and there's another one.

**A Member:** — Moose Jaw.

**Mr. Wendel:** — Moose Jaw-Thunder Creek, I think.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — So instead of our office paying the cost of the audits, the district health board did themselves.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Okay. I have a further question. On your detailed work plan for the 1996 budget for Health . . .

**A Member:** — Got a certain page there, Mr. Kowalsky?

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Oh, I'm on page 38. Is this the best page to go to to get your estimates for the Department of Health for this year?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Yes it is.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — So that would be . . . is it the 642,000 that we're looking at or is it the 719,000?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — 719.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Okay, it's the 719. Now of that 719,000, can you give me a rough breakdown of how much of that would be to audit the Department of Health and how much to audit health boards?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Mr. Chair, our quick estimate is about . . . the district health boards, a little bit more than a half. Some of the work that we do at the department integrates with the district health boards. Part of the work that we're doing at the department relates to the provincial Health information system and implementing that system. And then that links with all the

district health boards.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — The amount you spent on it last year, would that be about the same ratio, roughly, 50/50 for three boards?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — For 30 boards.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — For 30 boards.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Thirty district health boards and the Department of Health.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — But only three of those had appointed their own auditors then, is that . . .

**Mr. Strelieff:** — All of the district health boards have appointed an auditor, other than Regina. For the Regina District Health Board we do that work directly. For the other districts we carry out our work with the auditors appointed by the districts following the recommendations of that task force on roles, responsibilities, duties of auditors where we oversee the audit.

We meet with each of the district health boards to agree on audit plans and we work with the public accounting firms to make sure that the work gets done. And then at the end of the year when the audit reports are ready to be presented to the boards of district health boards, we attend those board meetings. So we're at all 30 district health boards each year, as well as the department.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — So what you did is you saved the 80 — it's either 82,000 or 75,000, depends which page we go to here — by picking up the audit . . . pardon me, or 95,000; it's either 82,000 or 95,000 depending on which page you go to here — by using the auditors directly . . . the audits directly from three boards.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Well what that means though is that our office is not paying for the cost of those audits, but the district health board is. Doesn't mean that the costs are not being paid for by the taxpayer; it's that it doesn't flow through our budget.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Okay, what about in the other health boards — not the three now that we're talking about — but the others, that other group? They still have to have their own auditors, do they not? With the exception of one that you mentioned, which was Regina, I think.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — That's right. Our office is . . . The one district health board that we're doing directly is the Regina District Health Board. All the other 29 ones are working with public accounting firms, usually public accounting firms that are resident in the community of the district. And when we moved that way, one of the ideas was to try to foster an environment where the district health boards could hire public accounting firms from their own community rather than us having to do all the work or hire other firms from other cities.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Well I interpret then that you could save more money as well by doing what you did with the three

health boards, following the same procedure with the other 29 minus 3, with the other 26 boards.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — But remember . . . Let's see . . . That savings means that we're moving from a situation where we're paying the cost of those three district health boards to a situation where the district health boards themselves are paying the cost. The cost, the total cost, could be the same.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Are you saying that for those 26 boards they are not . . . the district health boards are not funding any of the auditor's costs?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Yes, they are paying the cost of those audits.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — And to whom are they paying it?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — To the public accounting firms; they're not paying it to us. I mean we're not paying the cost of the other 26.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Well that's my point.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Okay.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — That's my point, which is different than is the case in the three boards that you've saved — you say — you've saved money for.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — We said we reduced our costs because we didn't have to pay them directly; someone else is paying.

So when we don't have to pay a public accounting firm directly, we don't need the money for that, but then the money then goes through the Department of Health.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — But you also did a slightly different type of an audit there?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — No.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Exactly the same?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Yes. There's no difference in the audit. It's just where the money is coming from: is it . . . should it come from our budget or should it come from the district health board budget? And so over the last year or two we've moved to a situation where all the public accounting firm costs are coming from the district health board budget other than the Regina District Health Board, which we're still doing directly.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Okay. Now dealing with the health board budgets, about how much time was spent on the financial portion of the audit compared to the non-financial audit . . . (inaudible) . . . health boards.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — So there's three components to our regular audit. One is . . . The same three components are done by the public accounting firms as well.

Three questions that we try to answer: are the financial statements of district health boards that they publish publicly,

are they reliable; two, are they complying with the key financial legislative authorities that govern their activities; and three, are their basic financial management systems and practices adequate?

When we carry out an audit or we work with a public accounting firm to carry out an audit, those are the three objectives of the one audit.

Now they're all financial-related objectives — financial legislative authorities, financial statements, and basic financial management control. In our office that's one audit, but with three objectives.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — So it could be split three ways, I suppose. There's no way of . . . there actually isn't a way of setting the financial audit aside from the non-financial aspect of it, is what you're saying? The cost to . . .

**Mr. Strelieff:** — In our way, we manage. It's integrated because we want to carry out one examination at one time rather than coming in three times. So it's just integrated into our audit approach.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — So it would appear to me then that . . . Would it be fair to say that it takes a third of the time for the financial audit and two-thirds for the rest?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — It depends of course, on the quality of the district health boards' management processes. But I'd say between 10 and 20 per cent should be the cost of the non-financial statement component to the three examinations, because a lot of the work is interrelated. If you're looking at transactions to determine whether the financial statements have been prepared well, you also look at similar . . . the same kind of transactions to the extent that you can, to see if they've complied with legislative authorities.

And when you're looking at the financial statement accounting systems for an organization, you're also examining whether they have budgets and contingency plans and are they reconciling their banks and a whole series of basic financial management controls.

So it's 10 to 20 per cent is what . . . But in some cases, particularly the district health boards, it usually takes a little bit more than . . . because of the quality of their financial management systems. They're not very . . . they have a lot of work to do still because they've been . . . They're so new. They're newly created, and they've only had a track record of maybe two years now and they're still getting, to a large extent, their basic financial management practices in gear, kind of thing, because of the newness of those boards.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — How much time do you think would require health workers who are employed by the boards to work with you to do that non-financial portion of the audit? Is there any way which you can give me an indication of the cost of the district boards, of that?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Mr. Kowalsky, remember I said that the one



examination with three objectives, that's all financial. I mean that's all, do you have good financial statements, do you have good financial management, and are you complying with the key of mainly financial legislative authorities surrounding your operation? So it's all directed towards sound financial management practices.

Now how much time do officials within district health boards have to spend to make sure that they do have sound financial management systems and they know what are the key legislative authorities that govern their practice and are able to prepare reliable financial statements? It really varies depending on the quality of those district health boards.

I know some of them in the past year, and particularly a year and a half ago, no doubt had to spend hours and hours to put together reliable financial statements because they were using 10, 20 different accounting systems. They had people in different hospitals that were feeding in information and the people at head office in the district health boards had a real hard time putting all that together.

Now that was for the year ended March 31, '95. They had a really difficult time. What we've gone through for the year ended March 31, '96, is that just a general signal . . . In '95 some of the district health boards weren't able to even publish financial statements until 6, 9, 12 months after the year end. Now that we've gone through '96, the time period is more like 4, 6, 7 months after the end of the year. So that signals to us that they have significantly improved their basic financial management practices and therefore, in terms of working with us and public accounting firms, they're having to spend less time getting their practices in order.

The better managed an organization, the less time that organization would have to take to work with our office or public accounting firm. I mean that's a key signal for our office whether an organization is strong or is weak; and that is, are they able to prepare financial statements?

And the signal that we look there for, one of the earlier signals, is do they prepare monthly or quarterly financial reports to their boards? I mean if they got that in gear, then they're more likely to be able to prepare good financial information or statements at the end of the year, which of course makes the work of the public accounting firm and our office far simpler.

Now so your starting point there was, how much time does it take for management to work with the auditors to make sure the audit gets done — well directly related to the quality. I mean we've been into boards where the boards of directors have not received quarterly reports for months and months, or monthly reports on . . . just the progress reports.

But on the other hand, over this past six months, we've seen a significant improvement in the basic financial management practices of all the boards. And in some of the notes that we have on page 40 reflects that those district health boards have resulted in reducing our costs, and no doubt reducing the cost of public accounting firms as well.

Because at the beginning, I think a lot of the public accounting firms were doing the accounting work for district health boards. And actually the district health boards would have to actually hire them to do the accounting work as well as somehow get the audit done, instead of doing the accounting work themselves. But that's changing and it's strengthening.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I understand the difficulties that the health boards had in establishing their accounting and accountability systems in their books. I mean it was a new system and they had to go through it, and I think that was a very . . . there was a very useful role for you to play in that.

The question that I am asking relates to the non-financial aspect of your work with the boards. You have — in your report of the spring of '96 — you have said you've studied eight districts in the department and you've agreed about . . . with respect to criteria, and you said you used the following criteria to assess the district's health needs assessment process. "We expected districts to" — and then you itemize five processes. And so in order to assess these five processes which you've come up with here, I assume that the health board had to put somebody to work on that.

And that's what I'm after. I'm trying to find out how much time — more or less how much money — was expended by the health boards to establish these needs assessment processes, which is a small portion of the total part, but that's the kind of thing I'm after.

**Mr. Streliaff:** — Okay, sorry, I didn't realize you were thinking of the needs assessment process and the work that's done by district health boards to make sure that they know the health needs of their residents. That's . . . I don't know, that even might be required by law within The Health Districts Act.

But each of the districts are . . . My understanding of the health reform initiative is that health programs and services in the future are to respond to the health needs of the residents rather than, in the past, it's been more on past utilization.

So that's in general, the general trend that's happening out there. And as a result, each of the district health boards are to find out what the health needs of their communities are and then structure their programs and services so that their programs — health programs and services — meet the health needs of their residents. As well, the Department of Health is moving to a needs-based funding formula, which means that the monies going to district health boards are supposed to be based on the health needs of each of the district health boards.

So assessing the district health boards . . . Assessing the health needs of each of the districts and the district residents is a fundamental part of the management and financial management of process structure of each district.

So what we did in . . . for that report in spring of '96, was to examine whether the process used by districts to assess the health needs of their residents was adequate. Since the whole trend or whole reform initiative is predicated on good health needs information, we looked at examining whether they had

the basic management practice in place to make sure that they were gathering reliable, relevant health needs information because that was going to form the basis of the future delivery of health programs and services.

Now the district health boards began gathering health needs information probably 3 or 4 years ago, and my understanding is that they will continue to do that for ever because the health needs of the community will change and their understanding, each of the district's understanding, of the health needs of the residents will also have to be continually updated.

I know one of the factors that we . . . one of the conclusions or findings that we reached was that many of the districts didn't have in place a health needs assessment process that would allow them to continue to build on it. Most of the . . . or the experts say that health needs assessments are not a one-year shot; they go year after year after year after year, trying to make sure that the health programs and services that you're delivering are responding to the health needs of your community. And they will change.

Right now the districts are still trying to develop the basic framework or baseline of health needs information in their districts, and they haven't got there yet. They're still working on it. So this will be a major, a major part of the management responsibility of each of the districts for a long time.

And it's important. And it's not something that we're suggesting. I mean it's not something that says that health reform or health services should be based on health needs. It's the direction that, well, the government is going, and we want to make sure that all the financial decisions and funding decisions are based on reliable, relevant, strong health needs information because that will be a large part of the success of our delivery of health. Very important.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Can you give me any idea of how much time required . . .

**Mr. Strelieff:** — That the districts are spending to . . .

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — No. Not to . . . On the needs as mandated by their employers as to the criteria as mandated by the auditor.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — I mean . . . So the criteria that we put out in our spring report says, here's — I think it's five or six criteria that said — here's what a good health needs process would look like. There's five or six factors.

Now when we established those criteria, we worked with the Department of Health, district health boards, looked at the literature, and also went to an outside expert to say if you . . . what would a good health needs assessment process look like?

Now how much time would district health boards put in to make sure that they carry out a good health needs assessment? I don't know that. I don't know, because it's a pretty complex topic, and they have a . . .

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Chair, what I believe is happening is we

either have a duplication of objectives, that is the health board is setting up a needs . . . does a needs assessment and sets up a criteria for needs assessment, and then the auditor also requests a . . . sets up a criteria on which he comments publicly on the health board.

So we either have a duplication of the same service or we could possibly be having a service required by the health board of its employees, to do a needs assessment and set up a certain criteria which does not correspond directly and parallel with the requests of the auditor in terms of criteria. So we either have a duplication or something that's at cross-purposes, or could be at cross-purposes. I would like you to comment on that.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Well yes, it could have been, but when we developed those criteria, remember we had the Department of Health involved in it, the officials from district health boards, and our office literature, as well as outside experts. What we did was develop draft criteria and sent them out to each of the districts and the department to say, well would this set of criteria as it pertains to a health needs assessment process, do they make sense? And a lot of the districts were very supportive in someone actually helping them establish clear criteria on what they would see in an adequate health needs assessment process.

So we did a lot of consultation to make sure that the criteria that we ended up examining were supported. And at the end of the day they were supported. Now in terms of comparing good practice to what practice was out there, I mean there was a lot of . . . I mean there's a lot of room for improvement on this area. And the reason we looked at this issue, because it was such a starting point, a foundation issue, in the success of the delivery of health services and programs in the province.

If we're going to move to delivering health programs and services based on health needs, well gathering that information has got to be very well done. And so working with the department, district health boards, and others, to make sure that that process got off to a good start. And certainly in the Public Accounts Committee meetings that we've held with the officials from the department talking about our work, they certainly supported our involvement and want us to continue because they also know that the success of delivering good quality health care will be dependent a lot on making sure you know what the health needs of the residents are. A very, very important part.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Chairman, I have a concern about this whole area, about the auditor's work in the non-financial aspects of the evaluation of the district health boards. Because what I see happening here is that either we got . . . in some cases we could have a duplication and maybe it just reinforces the position. Maybe it's something that was quite valuable the first year or the second year, but I don't know how long you'd want to go on that.

Secondly, I'm concerned that it's not . . . it doesn't place the health boards in a position where they have to hire extra staff or put personnel into place, take them away from providing health services, to answer to a second set of criteria in addition to what

the health board themselves may have set. And I think under those conditions, we're placing health boards and health workers in an untenable position because it's hard to answer to . . . dance to the tune of two bands at the same time.

Now I want to ask further if you intend on using this same criteria in this coming year that you used in '96, or are you going to shift your criteria to be consistent with the accreditation system that's being put into place by the Canadian Council on Health Facilities Accreditation, used by that system — by the Canadian Council on Health Facilities Accreditation system?

Will you be shifting to their system? Because their system imposes an outcomes-based criteria as opposed to a process-based criteria, which is what you are using here. And again, what that would do would be to duplicate — not duplicate — it would increase the amount of work. And I think it would be very difficult for health administrators and those people under them to try to figure out, you know, who their real master is and who they should answer to, or in what way they should answer to the public.

**Mr. Streliaff:** — Mr. Kowalsky, for '97-98 we're not planning a new health needs assessment examination. We felt that the work we did in '95-96, I think, was a good starting point for districts. We provide them all sorts of advice and detailed findings. And now for their health needs assessment process, because it's such a long-term kind of issue, we're going to let that issue rest and then come back later and say, well how have you progressed? But we're not planning to go out and do that examination again this year.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — You will not be setting out any criteria for them in that non-financial aspect then.

**Mr. Streliaff:** — Well for the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Fred just pointed out, we plan to do a follow-up on our health needs assessment audit and that will consist of asking district health boards how have they responded to some of the issues and concerns that existed a couple of years ago, or a couple of years ago probably by then. But we're not going to do a full-blown needs assessment audit again on district health boards for the time being, because we did a lot of work in '95-96 and we think the district health boards need some time to digest it and move on.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I'll leave that area, Mr. Chair, and I just want to ask a couple of questions about Crowns.

Could you tell me how long the University of Regina Crown Foundation has been in operation and the University of Saskatchewan Crown Foundation has been in operation?

**Mr. Streliaff:** — I think it's just a new organization. Some of the new organizations that you never . . .

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — They're fairly new, yes.

**Mr. Streliaff:** — Yes. I think there's a list of new organizations created on one of these pages that . . .

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I've got here, page 41.

**Mr. Streliaff:** — Page 41. Fred's just pointing out that they were created the year before '96-97, so they were created in '95-96?

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Yes.

**Mr. Streliaff:** — But we didn't have it in our budget in '95-96 because we didn't know, going into '95-96, that they would be created. So this is the first time they would appear in our budget, and that's why they're listed in '96-97.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Have you audited them once yet or not?

**Mr. Streliaff:** — We are auditing. Fred was just . . . I'm not sure whether the audit for March 31, or April 30 probably, '96 is complete yet. But for the year ended in either March 31, '96 or April 30, '96, whatever their year end is, we are auditing them as well as planning for the next year.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — And do you know how much money is in it?

**Mr. Streliaff:** — How much money is in the foundation? Well I think it's designed to collect or to get donations. So probably initially there might be . . . well there'd be no donations until money comes in. I don't know how successful they have been in collecting money. But I mean it will be in their financial statements for, if it's April 30 '96, then it will be in their financial statements for the next year. But I don't know how successful they've been yet.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — And do you know how much money is in the health Crown?

**Mr. Streliaff:** — The same idea, how much money they have managed to . . .

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — If any.

**Mr. Streliaff:** — I don't know. It's the same idea though. I think it's a new one as well. That one might even be dated '96-97.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — If there's no money in it does it require an audit? If there isn't any money in the health, in the Crown . . .

**Mr. Streliaff:** — If by the end of March 31, '97 they've managed to collect no money, the audit would be pretty simple. We'd just . . .

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — At any rate, unless there are a lot of transactions the audit would not be very complex in those, I would not expect.

**Mr. Streliaff:** — That's right.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Because it's simply, the monies usually coming into a place like that would usually be dedicated.. You'd know exactly where it's coming from, exactly where it's

going, and all you have to do is check the flow through.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Well in general, yes. It depends on the strings a particular donor may attach to the money. The donor may, he or she may say, just for any purpose you consider necessary. Or the donor may say that the money I contribute should be used in the following ways and they can . . . it can be anything, depending on the wishes of particular donors. But in general, the less money coming in means the organization isn't very complicated and the audit would also be very simple as well.

**The Chair** — Thanks, Mr. Kowalsky.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Strelieff, on page 40 on the detailed information on the business plan, there's just two questions that I wanted to ask. And this is just really from the point of view of being more informed than anything. We seem to . . . in a range of government budget requests coming across are computer-related expenditure issues, and I just wanted to know the kind of things that you're doing in item 5 and item 10 here. So that when we're involved in other discussions we're informed about how the various pieces of the computer world fit together.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Item 5 relates to the provincial-wide health . . . it's called SHIN (Saskatchewan Health Information Network). So you know what I'm referring to, it's the provincial-wide health information system that is under development to . . . the general purpose of it is to link all districts and the department in an integrated information system, so that information is shared and can be moved from one place to another place very quickly. A very important project for the government.

We're planning to be involved while the system is under development. And development has a number of stages. It's developing the specifications, the tendering proposals, the structure of the organization that is going to be used to manage it, and also the carrying out of the actual systems development.

As you know — probably have read in many places — that most systems are late, they cost far more than originally anticipated, and that they don't perform as everybody expected. So we're planning to be involved at the upfront of this initiative. And that's — right now our main group that we're working with is within the Department of Health — that's no. 5.

On no. 10, the government-wide computer security assessment. In the government-wide computer security assessment audit, what we've done, I think about a year ago, we looked at whether departments were ensuring that their information systems, and the information within those systems, was secure.

And we did a survey of all the departments to make sure that they were aware of security issues, to make sure they knew of the relevant standards, and to find out where they stood. One of the things we were trying to do is raise their consciousness of information security issues, because most of the departments — Social Services, Health — had some very sensitive information in their systems.

And this year, this past . . . or this year that we're in right now, we're doing that same examination at Crown corporations and agencies. Again, are they making sure that the information that they have in their electronic information systems is secure. The results of that one will be, I think, reported in this spring's report.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Maybe I'll ask you just a little clarification question before you answer the transfer payment part. I guess from the point of view of sorting out who does what in government — I know we have this bit of an information technology group and what not — how does this kind of stuff end up under the purview of the auditor as opposed to under some other . . . somebody else's auspices?

I was actually really surprised. I wasn't expecting you to mention SHIN in no. 5, so I'm kind of wondering how do you . . . through what door are you getting involved in this kind of work?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Remember, the role of the Provincial Auditor is to provide assurance to legislators that the way the management practises of . . . the financial management practices of government departments, agencies, corporations, are adequate. And one of the key parts of managing, particularly these days, is to make sure that you have your electronic information systems very soundly, adequately managed.

So maybe years ago auditors would be looking at mainly manual books of records and manual information systems; well now it's all buried into machines. And the control of the information in those machines and the security of that information and the reliability of that information, is something our people examine constantly. I mean we're into computers, the information in computers, on a day-by-day basis — everybody in the office. So it's just an integral part of what our office does.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well so far you haven't asked us for 10 more positions to do it, so that's good. Anyway the . . . That's a joke relating to an earlier discussion. The review of . . .

**The Chair:** — It wasn't all that funny but . . .

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well it is in a way. I'm just so glad they managed to do it. The review of transfer payments, what's that all about, in no. 10 again? Is that just the linkages of . . . Well they can do it; everybody else should be able to.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — The transfer payment issue is an issue that we've heard many times, with department officials and elected officials, of trying to identify the key transfer payments — from our perspective mainly related to payments made to organizations — and what controls do departments and other agencies have to make sure that the monies that have been provided to other organizations, NGOs (non-governmental organization) type organizations, are used as intended.

One of the things that we've been recommending to some of the departments and agencies is to strengthen the service

agreements that they have when they give money out. And we provided criteria and examples of service agreements that they might think of when they're negotiating with another organization for delivery of services; and so that you know, or the department knows, that what was promised with that money actually happens. So we're working on that.

And I think actually one of the places where this issue came from was from you, actually, in the Public Accounts Committee meetings.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, and I'm interested in it, actually. I'm going to try to get that actual example from you. I'd like to get that.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — The service agreements is one of the keys we find — the service agreements that an organization establishes with another one. And we find that if you can tighten up . . . or the rigour that you put in those agreements directly relates to your ability to ensure that what you hope will be delivered, actually does get delivered.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay. Well I actually got more information than I bargained for there, so thank you very much. That was helpful.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Yes, I have a few brief questions. And I guess I would like to ask you with respect to . . . and this is, I think on page 40. Wait a minute; I've got to find my piece here; I think I'm lost. Item 105 is really what I'm looking for.

Okay, you suggest that at March 31 you had a cash investment of 464,000, and owed suppliers and staff 353,000. I'm wondering if you could give me a breakdown of the amount that you owed at that point and what those liabilities might have been.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — For the \$353,000 there was a whole series of accounts payable of \$108,000; accrued vacation pay of \$148,000; a salary payable of 98,000 and . . . What? That's it? Is that the three hundred and fifty . . . Oh, that is 353.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Okay. I'm wondering if I could have the salary as an example — vacation pay owing. What would those be? I'm not sure what the nature of that would be.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — The vacation payable would be, at the end of the year, how much money do you . . . Say an employee has four weeks of vacation for a year, and at the end of March 31 they took three weeks of vacation and they have one week of vacation left over. Well you owe them, for that year, that one week of vacation. And adding up all the vacation pay that wasn't paid, that's outstanding at the end of the year, totals the vacation pay.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — And outstanding salary, what might that be?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — The outstanding salary payable relates to me.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Okay. And can . . . (inaudible

interjection) . . . I don't know. That's what I'm trying to have determined here. I don't want to be unfair.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — The salary payable is this: the Provincial Auditor is entitled, on the expiry of his agreement to be Provincial Auditor or on termination of his employment by the Legislative Assembly, to an amount equal to two months salary for each year of employment as Provincial Auditor to a maximum of 12 months salary. So at the end of March 31, '96 that would have been, for me, five and a half years of salary payable, and that's what that amount is.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Okay. Is there interest? Is that invested and does that interest accrue with respect to your . . .

**Mr. Strelieff:** — No, there's not interest accruing to that, no. It's just 12 months of . . . not to me, no. It's just 12 months of my . . . or six years times two months.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Okay, that explains that then to me, because I wasn't . . . I was looking at senior management salaries here on 56.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — 56?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Yes, and I guess that would . . .

**Mr. Strelieff:** — That's what that deferred means?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — That would explain that. That would be under deferred?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Yes. So we add those together and it should get close to the salary table.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — All right. Is that common practice? You know in the Crowns that I've dealt with, and I guess this might be a different entity, I'm not sure, but I'm not aware that that process was used in other arms of government that I . . .

**Mr. Strelieff:** — The previous Provincial Auditor had the same arrangement and my pay and terms and conditions just flow from that.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Okay. Is that similar to other jurisdictions? Do you know? Like oh, say the Department of Health or Department of Energy and Mines or, you know, pick an entity.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Well the employment contracts for the deputy ministers and CEOs (chief executive officers) are a decision of the government of the day, and those employment contracts are on the public record through order in councils, I think.

Have I seen a similar amount on the current . . . Well you would know probably more than I would on that. Not on the current ones, as far as . . . My salary and benefits flow from the previous Provincial Auditor and The Provincial Auditor Act.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — So this would be, I guess a bit unique in terms of the remuneration from deputy ministers, as

far as you're aware?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — That's correct.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Okay. Just with respect to your investments of 464,000 and payables of — what was it? — 353, I think your number was; is that sort of a . . . How do you calculate the amount that you keep in that . . . I don't know what to refer it as, a revolving fund or what. Again, I don't know how you'd refer to it, but is . . . You do that on an annual basis. You have that kind of an account at the end of the year?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Well what we are trying to do is maintain one month's revenues in hand so we can . . . It's explained on 104 — 104 and 105 — that we maintain net financial assets equal to approximately one month's expenses so we can respond to pressures to improve the timeliness of our work, to plan for ongoing expenses effectively, to finance short-term revenue shortfalls, by responding to unplanned work such as the extra work we had to do at the Workers' Compensation Board. And also to respond to benefit package increases or general COLA (cost of living allowance) increases that the particular government of the day may plan or may initiate without . . . that we don't know about but that we have to respond in terms of our own staff.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Yes, that helps me to explain it because when I initially looked at this, you know, I just wasn't sure why you would have those outstanding liabilities and the revenue sitting there.

I was particularly interested in the investments and I see you . . . I can't remember what page it's on, but I recall you've got an investment in an Ontario Hydro bond, a British Columbia . . . B.C. Hydro, was it? And I'm wondering if you would consider investing that in the province — perhaps Saskatchewan savings bonds?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Sir, we will consider that.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — It was just sort of glaring to me when I say the 450,000. I thought, goodness sakes, a Saskatchewan entity investing in Saskatchewan would make some sense to me. And I would certainly hope you give some active consideration, keeping in mind of course that you want a reasonable return on your investment, but I hope you would really give some active consideration to that.

I'd like to ask you with respect to training and the program that you have in place for your employees. As I indicate, you budget something in the neighbourhood of 11 training days per year, and I'm wondering how would that relate to say industry standard or other jurisdictions with respect to provincial auditors and how much they would be budgeting for training days for their employees?

**Mr. Strelieff:** — In terms of industry standards in the sense of public accounting firms, they devote a lot of resources on training their staff.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — I'm told industry is somewhere in

the neighbourhood of say . . . and the reason . . . I've got an accountant friend and he and I spent a little time back and forth and I was . . . This question, I think had been posed one other time when we were . . . when you were before the Board of Internal Economy, and I believe industry standard in Saskatchewan is something in the neighbourhood of seven days.

And I was just wondering, why the differential? Given the role of a private sector auditor, I guess might be argued that he's dealing with changing circumstance in terms of unemployment insurance, Canada Pension Plan, income tax changes and exemptions, all of these kinds of things. And I was wondering what would constitute a difference in terms of your requirement for 11 training days to say maybe, you know . . . if the figure is accurate. Maybe it's not; I don't know.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — When you said industry, your colleagues in public accounting firm say seven days on average?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — About an average of seven days a year.

**Mr. Strelieff:** — Well in general, as the Provincial Auditor, I very much support and encourage our people to constantly train and get exposed to broader issues both . . . that exist that are pertinent to Saskatchewan and elsewhere.

The businesses that government is in are dynamic businesses of education, health, insurance, pensions, energy, telecommunications, gambling, transportation, renewable resources, human resources, construction, and all sorts of financial services. I mean it's . . . the pace of change affects our office dramatically.

So in terms of my view as the Provincial Auditor, I strongly support our office — the people in our office — expanding their horizons and knowledge about what's going on in Saskatchewan as well as elsewhere. So it certainly is reflected in my encouragement for training.

Now has that changed from previous years? I was just exploring with Fred whether in . . . does the 10 or 11 days that we have now, how does that compare to say 10 years ago or thereabouts.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — If you could just . . . and you don't have to answer it today, but I'd just like for a reference, if you could get a record of other jurisdictions, other provincial auditors, the time that they devote to training and pass that on to it, I would appreciate it.

I have a couple of very short questions, and I guess the one . . . I want to make comment, and I'd like your response to this with respect to alternate levels of funding and item 106 — no, I guess item 107; well it's both I guess — item 106 goes as follows: if we don't obtain sufficient revenue from the Board of Internal Economy or government, we'll have to reduce our staff and will not be able to carry on our work plan.

I'm just wondering — and this is pretty definitive, you know —

and I'm wondering if, before you draft your documents, you have a look at alternatives perhaps in the event that funding is not, you know, the same one year as the other. Do you look at other alternatives or is it a straight matter of reducing staff?

And if the funding were such that you had to reduce staff, would you consider, on a rotating basis, doing audits of some of the government entities? And if you were to, say, do some entities every second year as opposed to every year, do you not feel that, coupled with the work done by the private auditors and the professional people who work in those government entities, that we could still be comforted that people's assets were being protected and their, you know, and the money, their tax dollars, were being reasonably spent?

I guess what I'm asking on one hand, do you look at any other options other than reducing staff, and then indicate that you won't be able to audit different entities? And secondly, do you feel that perhaps you may want to look at a different schedule in terms of a rotation, working with the private auditors that audit some of these firms, many of these firms, and still feel comforted that people's assets and tax dollars are wisely spent?

**Mr. Strelloff:** — The first point, in terms of if we have reduced funding, well if we have reduced funding our major resource is people. That's 80 per cent of our costs. So naturally when we have less money, we employ fewer people. I mean it's just an automatic relationship there.

Now our approach on audits, as being responsible for the audits that are carried out in all government organizations, we have had a lot of difficulties over the years in making sure that the Assembly is well served when the government chooses to appoint another auditor. We know that the government's choice . . . it's the government's choice. Our understanding of the reason they appoint other auditors is to maintain the necessary expertise in the province and have it within public accounting firms. And also to spread work around the province. And that the cost of that choice is a cost decision of the government.

Over the years, we had a lot of difficulty carrying out our responsibilities to the Assembly. And in some cases we ended up just going right into the organization regardless of the existence of a public accounting firm or not, for example, the Crown Investments Corporation, STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company), more recently the Workers' Compensation Board.

And then a couple years ago, through agreement with the Crown Investments Corporation and other officials, we jointly sponsored a task force on the roles, responsibilities, duties of auditors to sort out a more effective and efficient working relationship. And a couple of years ago the report of that group was issued and supported by the Public Accounts Committee.

And we have been carrying out our work under the protocols recommended by that task force since then. It has made the process, I think, more efficient and effective for the Assembly. Every once in a while it does break down and our office ends up having to do the direct work ourselves, but it seems to be a reasonable process to go through.

Prior to that task force, what I was considering was to go in and more frequently and do the audit of organizations regardless of the presence of a public accounting firm. But the protocols recommended by the task force have made sure that our office is more actively involved in the planning and performance and the reporting part of these audits, and that that task force . . . that system of protocols initiated by the task force, I think has served the community very well compared to what was happening prior to two or three years ago.

I mean it was a very significant step forward that had got the players together and agreed on what should happen to make sure that all the players in the accountability process are well served. I was really thankful for that.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Strelloff, and, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to wrap up with just a couple of comments. I'm quite pleased to hear that the task force has been working and that your working relationship with the private sector auditors has been bonding and building because I think really it is important.

As you've indicated, certainly we as the provincial government want to . . . we're a big part of this provincial economy and the accounting profession is one that we value as people who do business in our province. There are also private sector entities who require the work that they do and their expertise, and we want to assure that there really are a top-notch, top-quality accountants working here in our province, as opposed to a smaller and maybe less experienced branch plant that may be headquartered in an out-of-province jurisdiction. So I think that is really very important for us.

I would ask, and in closing say, that members of the board will be supporting your budget for this year. We as a provincial government are very determined to ensure that the tax dollars and the revenue that's generated on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, is spent appropriately, diligently, and that they have transparency in terms of its expenditures.

We also want to ensure, through government policy, that we deliver a fair and a very positive policy. It's our role certainly as policy makers to ensure that they get value for money for the dollars they're spending.

Which means the public policy that we're responsible for, both government members and members of the opposition, needs to be not only understood but have clear accessibility in terms of people's desire to ensure that they get their value for money.

I would say to you, and you've probably heard this before, but I think one of the areas that I certainly hope you four can focus your talents and the talents and the expertise of your people on is directed in a very positive way. And I would hope if in times where you find your workload and your ability to stretch your dollars — we're all working with limited dollars — becomes a little more difficult to deal with and that you could use more money, that you may look internally in terms of things that you might be able to improve on. And I'm sure you do, but that your focus I'm sure is in the interest of the people of Saskatchewan, as ours is as a government and people who are

elected to serve them through the legislature.

One of the areas that has sort of always intrigued me and I think maybe that I've never had the opportunity to understand, and maybe you and I might be able to sit down at some point in time and you can describe to me in more detail, your value-for-money initiatives.

Because it's always been, sort of, for me the role of legislators to develop policy. And I know you've heard this before, and I think you and I will disagree with respect to the effectiveness or the appropriateness, frankly, of value-for-money auditing.

And I think that I would like to share with you some of my thoughts. I don't think today is the time. We've had a very long day as a board.

And so I would only say if there's a need to re-allocate funds, that might be an area where you might, at some point in time, agree that could be focused in other areas of your organization to deliver that service.

So with that, Mr. Chairman — I don't know if you're entertaining a motion . . .

**The Chair:** — I will recommend one to the board when . . .

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Why don't you recommend one to the board and then we can deal with that.

**The Chair:** — Yes, okay Are there any further questions or discussion? If not, then I would recommend to the board a motion:

That the 1997-98 budget of the Provincial Auditor be approved as submitted in the amount of \$4.22 million.

Is there someone who wishes to move it? Mr. Lautermilch. Seconder, Mr. Kowalsky. Is there further discussion? Those in favour please indicate. Down hands. Opposed. And that's carried unanimously. I want to thank the Provincial Auditor and his assistant, the manager of administration, and her assistant for joining us here.

**Mr. Strelloff:** — Thank you very much, members. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the work of our office with you, Mr. Lautermilch, or anybody else, as it pertains to district health boards or transfer payments or what is referred to as value-for-money auditing.

And the last thing I have to say is all the best for '97. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — I'd like to thank the officials for their attendance today.

**The Chair:** — Well done. Thank you very much, and with thanks to these officials, I'll now ask the Provincial Ombudsman and Children's Advocate and their official to come forward.

While this is happening, I'll ask the secretary of the board to circulate to you . . . You had previously received a draft of the Treasury Board analysis. This one — it had missing page — and this one has the page in it. It's marked. It's tabbed green so you can see what it is. The numbers in your previous document are all correct. And I'll just bring that to your attention while we're getting ready to start.

If we can get you back to your places at the table, we'll continue to item no. 8 . . . item no. 9.

The item before you now is listed as item no. 9. It's really two items. It's the review of the 1997-98 budget for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman and the Office of the Children's Advocate. They come to you together because they are connected by legislation, but what I'm going to do is to recommend that we deal with them by separate motions because they are separate budgets.

I want to introduce the three people who will be dealing with these two budgets. First of all, you will recognize to my immediate right the Provincial Ombudsman, Barbara Tomkins. And to Ms. Tomkins' immediate right is the assistant ombudsman, Murray Knoll. And then to the side, the Children's Advocate, Ms. Deborah Parker-Loewen.

Mr. Knoll is here as assistant ombudsman because, as you may know, the two offices are physically located together and Mr. Knoll has some common mandate and service with both of the offices.

I will be recommending to you — just if you want to note this — two separate motions then. And the request for the Provincial Ombudsman is \$987,000 and the request for the Children's Advocate office is \$534,000. This is the first time that these are being considered by the board and is a direct consequence of the motion that you adopted earlier this morning.

So having said that, I'll now turn the floor over to Ms. Tomkins, who will proceed with the proposal, just briefly, to summarize briefly the proposal related to the budget of the Provincial Ombudsman in the amount of \$987,000.

**Ms. Tomkins:** — Thank you, Mr. Hagel. Good evening — I think it's evening now.

I'd like to start by thanking you for agreeing to review our budget. It's something, you may know, that myself and my predecessors have asked for for at least 20 years now. I suspect, given the lateness of the hour, you might be regretting that decision made earlier today, but we certainly don't regret it and we do appreciate it.

I'm not going to read to you the submission that we provided. I think it's fairly straightforward. I hope so; it was intended to be. I will go through it though and highlight certain parts which I think are important to understanding the budget submission which we have made.

Our office has been in existence, or my office, since 1972. It



starts, in three months, the beginning of its 25th year in operation. During that time, not surprisingly, the office has grown in terms of the service, the number of times service is requested.

We're now averaging something over 1,900 complaints against government per year. I should add, as a corollary to that, we get somewhere between 2,000 and 2,500 complaints which are not against government each year. But we do provide service of some nature and degree to each of those people. In many of those cases, granted, it's simply a phone number and a name of the office they should be calling. In many cases it's interviews, assistance with appeals, and so on.

So I think it's important not to eliminate consideration of the out-of-jurisdiction complaints that we receive. In total, we receive something in the nature of 5,000 complaints per year.

Our mandate changed slightly by amendment in 1994 where we were specifically given power to try to resolve problems and complaints through the use of negotiation, conciliation, mediation, and other non-adversarial means. This is, in one sense, something the office had always done, but not to the extent that I perceive the amendment, by formalizing it, anticipating.

Similarly, the amendment specifically allowed us to engage in public education for the purpose of informing the public about the powers of the Ombudsman. Again it's something the office had always done and saw as part of its powers. Enshrining it in legislation clearly gave a legislative endorsement to our activities in that respect.

Our concern right now is to ensure that we obtain and maintain a reasonable response time to complaints; that we're able to provide in that reasonable response time a thorough investigation and a fair and impartial response as a result of investigations. But we would like to place more emphasis on using alternative forms of dispute resolution in appropriate cases. And we're very anxious, and have been for many years, to take some structured steps toward increasing the visibility of the office among the population of the province.

At the present time there are 14 full-time staff in the office. We have sufficient funding for .4 positions as casual relief. This is generally used to cover complaints analysts, which is intake staff, and secretarial and other support staff during their holiday or extended illness absences.

There is, on the fourth page of the report, a brief table showing the numbers of complaints received over the last six years. You can see that they're rising somewhat but fairly stable.

At the top of page 5 we've provided you with the last five years of budgets. We did that simply because we were aware that this committee hasn't reviewed our budget before and thought it might give you some sense of, historically, where we've come from to get to where we are. We've also provided on page 5 in some detail, an explanation of our finances during the last fiscal year. I think it's important to understand that, to understand the nature of the request that we're making this year.

My part of the Ombudsman/Children's Advocate budget is comprised 86 per cent of salaries and rent. There is approximately \$130,000 in total for things other than salaries and rent. Of that money, of course some of it is for things which might as well be salaries and rent: phone, some travel, some vehicle expenses, things of that nature. So that the actual dollars available to the office from which to seek economies without resorting to staff lay-off are relatively small; well under \$100,000.

In the last fiscal year we absorbed \$32,000. To you, given the kinds of numbers you've been looking at today and other days, I'm sure that's not a large number. To us it was enormous. And we've given you a brief explanation on the fifth page of how we did that without laying off staff.

But what that leads us to, as a position today, where we simply believe we cannot absorb any more. We've given up everything we have to give up because we have no expenses aside from salaries and rent that we have in effect any control over, if you understand what I mean. We don't buy quantities of goods that we could buy less of. We have no control over the program that we provide. We can't decide to do less of what we do.

And what we do is expend time and thought and expertise; and so to cut back on doing that again is a cut-back in staff, not a cut-back in anything else. And that leads me to the point of why at this stage we're requesting the board give consideration to increasing our budget this year. I think when you break down the increase that we're seeking, you'll agree that the increase we're requesting is really more minimal than it appears.

The first item we've requested is \$27,000 for increases in staff salaries. These come in very minor measure through . . . or relatively minor measure through in-scope increases authorized and required last July, but more importantly, five of my staff who are classified an investigator 3 positions applied for reclassification and were successful. That has an impact. The total extent of that is \$27,000.

I think it's fair to say that unless an increase in our budget in that amount is awarded, we will have no choice but to lay off staff, which would be particularly reprehensible to be laying off staff in order to raise the income of other staff. I see that as absolutely fundamental; the rest, to maintain the service we now provide.

Commencing on page 8 we've provided . . . or we have requested funds for four other purposes. These are all funds which are required to enhance the services we now provide. They are not in addition to or in replacement to any other — with one exemption — to any other funds that we now have allocations for.

The first, and I referred to this earlier, in 22 years or 23 years the office has operated there has never been any funds allocated for purposes of public education. There has never been any funds spent, as far as I'm aware, certainly not in my time, to try and coordinate a communications plan. The staff, in order to absorb what has become, for example — I may have these numbers wrong but I'm close . . . I think it was in 1988 we had

more staff and about, I think it was two-thirds, as many complaints to deal with.

How the increase in complaints and the slight reduction in staff has been dealt with is of course by everybody assuming greater workload. But therefore our flexibility to write a pamphlet in your spare time — assuming you had the expertise — to go out and give public addresses, to prepare newsletters or news items, is becoming more and more affected as time goes on.

In addition, none of us profess to have the expertise to know where best to expand our energies in that regard. Where is your best approach to reach the people we need to reach? We know who we want to reach. We can sit around, as any group of people, and make suggestions as to how we might best reach them, but we don't know if we're right or we're wrong or if we're wasting what resources we have.

What we would like therefore, is the ability to hire. And what we've requested is a half-time person or equivalent funds to be used to hire contract people — person or persons — to develop for us, a comprehensive communications plan; to assist us in designing, if necessary, in writing pamphlets and brochures and so on for that purpose, depending on the nature of the plan; to give us advice as to who we should talk to rather than our present practice of talking to everybody — which frankly I'd like to maintain but . . . where we should focus our efforts at public speaking; who should do the public speaking, that kind of information.

We'd like this person to be able to help with annual report preparation, which is right now effectively between Dr. Parker-Loewen and myself and a couple of other people who assist us in great measure, but it's certainly again all done in-house and it's done at the expense of other work. We'd like help with that.

We're assuming, if we were to have a half-time person, there would be an increase in the number of publications and brochures, and there would be some travel for that person, which we estimated travel at about \$2,500; \$4,000 for printing and publication; and \$22,000 as a half-year's salary — a total of \$28,500. That would be a clear increase in our budget not relevant to other allocations. We think it's a modest request, given the 24 years without any assistance of that kind, and especially in light of the recent amendment acknowledging our obligation in that regard.

The national Ombudsman conference is a request for \$10,000, but which in fact will hopefully be a wash for government. The national Ombudsman convention is held every . . . it's held every year, except not every fourth year — I don't know how you say that. Every fourth year there's an international and the three years in between there's a national.

**The Chair:** — The Ombudsman Olympics, out of countries?

**Ms. Tomkins:** — It's sort of like that, except we, being responsible, don't go to the internationals. But it's, well our turn to host the national; it's been 15 years. It's rotated between eight Ombudsmen and we've now missed our turn for about

seven years, so I succumbed last year and said that we would do this.

I think it's particularly appropriate because it will be our 25th anniversary. And what we're hoping is that, if you would agree to an allocation of \$10,000 to enable us to host the convention which we're planning for September-October of this year, that we will charge a registration fee and the registration fees paid will go straight into general revenue. Depending on the number in attendance, we could break even, but it certainly won't be \$10,000.

We're not aware of any other way to do this because if we fund it . . . We can't, in our office, receive the administration fees, so if we fund it out of our existing budget we couldn't get it back. This way, as far as we see, works out as effectively revenue neutral, or close to it, for government. It's also of course, a one-time expense.

The third item we're asking for, which is a reinstatement. I was a practising lawyer at the time of my appointment and for the first while that I held this position, last year's budgetary measure, we chose not to pay my Law Society fees. This was not recommended by treasury branch; it is not recommended this year by treasury branch. I understand it's contrary to government policy, and if you're so inclined, we would pay my Law Society fees again.

And the last thing we have asked is for a increase in our in-province travel budget. We had . . . This is the one where I said there is one which is an enhancement of something we have. We had reduced our travel budget by . . . \$7,000? Last year we had . . . at the start of the budget year we had five . . . I'm sorry, we had four CVA (Central Vehicle Agency) vehicles for the two Ombudsman offices. We gave two of them back, which left us with other expenses because renting a CVA vehicle on a per-occasion basis is more expensive per kilometre.

It had the impact that, it's so much less convenient that we're travelling somewhat less, and that's not necessarily good. It saves money but it's not necessarily good service.

The total, counting the value of the vehicles we returned, value to our budget was 7,000. I'm asking if you would give consideration to returning some of that, and the amount we've requested is 4,000 to enable us to travel more extensively.

In summary then, we're asking for an increase to our budget of \$73,000. I view 10,000 of that as effectively not an increase. I view 27,000 as essential. The rest is clearly discretionary and I'm prepared, obviously, to consider your recommendations in regard to those. I would ask you, in considering it, to consider that it's been reviewed, as you're aware, by a Treasury Board analyst who has recommended, I believe, all of the increases we have requested.

And I think the sums, although perhaps percentage-wise different, are modest in the grand scheme of things. And I think that on an office like ours, which is very small and has little disposable income, that the reductions that have been being

absorbed for so many years have much greater impact than on a larger department, because we don't have the flexibility of vacant positions and things like that to absorb it.

So that would be my submission.

**The Chair:** — Okay, members of the board, you've heard the submission by the Provincial Ombudsman. I'll entertain questions or comments related to that and then what I will do is ask the Children's Advocate to present and deal with that, and then entertain the two motions back to back. We'll do it that way because there is some common administration to the two offices and there may be questions in the second one that relate to the first.

But first of all, if we can just concentrate then on the Provincial Ombudsman's budget proposal for 1997-98.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and, Ombudsman. We've discussed this particular budget, and I think due to the long history of the Ombudsman's office and the explanation that you provided and also the support of Treasury Board for your proposals, that the government members are certainly in concurrence with Treasury Board — that it would be a good idea to proceed.

So I don't have any particular questions other than to comment that we concur with that.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Thanks, Ms. Crofford.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Just briefly, how do you intend to fund the conference? What are you anticipating the cost of the conference and how do you plan to pick up the shortfall? I'm not offering more money but I'm curious to know.

**Ms. Tomkins:** — No, I'm not asking for more money. I'm very pleased with where Ms. Crofford has got me.

The conference is generally quite small. We would have 30 to 50 people attend. The big kick is whether we have French translation. The last time we did it, I think we're still the only province that doesn't have simultaneous French translation, but they're prepared to forgive us for that.

And as long as we don't, we think we can provide an equivalent conference to what the other provinces provide for that sum and with the ability to charge a registration fee, which has been done so we won't be out of line in doing that.

And that's why I say you may come out in revenue neutral. It depends if we get 30 or 50 people whether we're going to break even or whether we'll be short a bit.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — How much . . . what is the cost? I know the translation services are incredibly expensive.

**Ms. Tomkins:** — It's exorbitant.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — I would assume more than what the cost for this conference would be, as you've envisioned it.

**Ms. Tomkins:** — We haven't priced it out this time because the last time we did this, which was in 1981 — I wasn't around — it was so expensive that it was beyond the means of the office then and the means of the office were better at that time. And I'm told that we consulted, especially with Ombudsman and staff from Quebec, and they agreed they would not expect it or be offended. And we'll do the same this time.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thanks.

**Ms. Tomkins:** — Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thanks, Mr. Lautermilch. Any other questions or comments? If not, then thanks to the Provincial Ombudsman. And I'll ask the Children's Advocate to slide forward to the chair by the microphone.

And I'll ask the Children's Advocate to similarly describe to you the function of the office. The recommendation here to you is the approval for the allocation of \$534,000, is the amount. This is a budget for an office which can truly be described as still very much being developed. And I think the Children's Advocate will want to speak to that specifically in her presentation. So I'll turn it over to Dr. Parker-Loewen.

**Dr. Parker-Loewen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to you, members, as well for the opportunity to present our budget to you today. We really appreciate that. As you know, the Children's Advocate office was established in November of 1994 and the initial budget, as I understood it, was meant to be reviewed as the office got up and running.

The budget submission that I've presented to you, which you have in your package, consolidates the thinking in our office with regards to the direction that our relatively new office wants to take. We're wanting to stabilize the office funding and establish a base budget that we can use to ensure that the legislated mandate of our office is being appropriately met. During the first two years of my operations, I've gone forward with the initial developments in the office, and so this budget request is really intended as a beginning of a status quo budget for the office.

As you are I'm sure aware, we have a legislated mandate to become involved in public education respecting the interests and well-being of children. And Saskatchewan has an obligation to promote this through the commitment that Saskatchewan has made to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. And I think as a leader in the promotion of a children's agenda, our province has made a commitment to promoting a children's first point of view.

And clearly the Children's Advocate office is in law required to promote the interests of children. However, in our original budget, which was developed when the task force on child and youth advocacy made recommendations to government, we weren't allocated any funds for a public education program in our budget.

As you can see, this budget request, we're also one advocate position short due to the original funds for the office being

insufficient to pay the salaries for the staff that were originally thought necessary for the office. What happened was, the positions were classified by the Public Service Commission at a level higher than originally anticipated and therefore we had not sufficient funds to fill all of the positions that were originally thought necessary to start up the office. What we believe has happened is, that the children in northern Saskatchewan, in particular, and vulnerable children in other areas of the province are really not getting the kind of service that we like to see from our advocate's office.

I have hired an advocate who grew up in northern Saskatchewan and he's really keen to get out of the office and start doing some more travel into the North and work with the community advocates up there to promote the interests of children.

However, because we are really two advocates in the office, we're also required in our legislation to just respond to the calls and the concerns that come in on a day-to-day basis; so we're juggling these competing priorities in the best way we know how. We feel we haven't been in a position at this point to proactively promote the concerns of these more vulnerable children as we'd like.

I'll just quickly review for you the requests that we're making, noticing the time. The budget that we're currently working under was originally established in response to a recommendation to government by a task force report. At that time, the task force recommended a budget of \$1.5 million. And in order to create the office, I think there was a desire to create an office that could be as fiscally responsible as possible. And so while there was a recognition for the need for the office, the budget allocated was really redirected funds from the Department of Social Services.

And so we had originally \$250,000 allocated for staffing dollars, \$100,000 for non-staffing costs, and we currently have \$70,000 for non-staffing costs in our budget. And the rest of our dollars are staff dollars, so we're a pretty tight budget. As I mentioned, one of the three child advocate positions originally allocated to us by Treasury Board remains vacant due to the lack of sufficient funds in our budget.

We have in our legislation a mandate to do a number of things, and I've outlined these in the submission that I've given to you. And I won't detail them now, but clearly the legislation directs us to become involved in public education respecting the interests and well-being of children. We're required, in my view, by law, to do this.

And I think we've made a serious effort to become involved in public education. During our first year I made 77 presentations throughout the province. There was just me and one casual secretary and one temporary intake person at that time, and we were also trying to set up our office location, get established, and just figure out who we were. Because the day I was appointed the phones started to ring and I had no staff, no pens, no paper, and the Ombudsman kindly assisted with that whole process. But I was trying to juggle just getting going with the intense interest by the public in the work that we're doing.

I guess I'm emphasizing this public education piece because I think it's really important not to use how many concerns of individual children come into our office as the basis for establishing our funding. The proactive, outreach part of the work that a Children's Advocate can do in this province is critical, in my view, to the impact that we can have on promoting the interests of children. And while the number of concerns by citizens, and in fact by children themselves, certainly put pressure on us and on a day-to-day basis are tragic for us, I think the real advocacy work that we can do is in this public education part. And that of course, has been eroded by just the day-to-day demands on just responding to the kind of calls that we have.

So the public education piece is in our legislation and we feel that we're not really adequately responding to that. The other part of our legislation directs us to receive, review, resolve, as in the Ombudsman Act, through non-adversarial means, concerns raised with us, and to do investigations.

Recently this pressure has also . . . it seems to be stabilizing somewhat in the last few months and I'm sort of heartened by that. However, I've just recently been in discussions with the provincial coroner about the possibility of establishing a child death review process for the province.

And you know my office is being asked to consider to chair that kind of a process, which would involve us again in another, whole important piece of work, but time consuming. So that part of our mandate is clearly there and clearly a pressure for us.

We also have a direction in legislation to make recommendations to government regarding concerns impacting on children. And I regularly correspond with and communicate with deputy ministers and ministers who are involved, in particular, in the child action plan, but with regards to issues impacting on children; and raising, as an advocate, concerns that citizens or children have raised with our office and bringing them forward, either on an individual basis or on a systemic level.

We're also . . . in our legislation, it's a "may" clause in the legislation. We may conduct or contract for research. I think this is a whole untapped area of our work that we haven't even begun to explore. And I'm personally somewhat disappointed that we haven't been in a position to at least evaluate our own effectiveness, and we would like to proceed with some form of evaluation of our own office in the next year or two. Again, we have no budget allocated for that kind of work and the day-to-day demands take up a certain part of our energies.

So in summary, we have, on page 18, just given you a comparison of the budgets that have gone forward. The first three budgets had no input from a Children's Advocate because those were . . . first two happened prior to an advocate being appointed. The third budget, I was appointed in November and the budget process was already well under way during the time of my appointment. So the Ombudsman very eloquently put forward a budget for us, all of it consistent with the allocated funds that were redirected from Social Services.

So on page 19, just in closing here, we have summarized the costs required to maintain or retain the service that we're currently providing to the public; and in that we have requested the in-scope and out-of-scope salary increases which are regularized, and because our non-salary funds are only \$70,000, we don't have a lot of place to absorb these.

In addition, we're requesting funds for the vacant child advocate position which were not accounted for in the original budget, and some increased travel. Our hope would be that we would begin to travel more regularly and frequently into northern Saskatchewan. We've had some limited opportunity to do that and clearly there's a great need for more.

We've also identified areas that I feel are a part of our office's growth and development, and are important to us fulfilling our legislated mandate. And these . . . one is to request funds to hire a full-time child advocate assistant who would basically function as an intake person; field the calls, respond as promptly as possible to the citizens that contact us and attempt to resolve issues at that front-door level.

In addition, the Saskatchewan Council on Children has made a recommendation to the ministers involved in the Saskatchewan action plan that the Children's Advocate establish a resource centre for children's materials. And we're not requesting funds to do that right now, but we are beginning to develop some resource materials. And we would see this person in the position of being available to begin to establish an information or resource depot in some manner.

We've also . . . we have one executive secretary in our office and she is . . . well she functions as our receptionist and our front person; she does all the typing and all of the day-to-day work. She then is not available to do some of the other more administrative functions in the office, so we are requesting funds to hire a clerk typist 2, who would work at the front and primarily operate as a receptionist and do basic other clerical services for us.

We are requesting funds for public education. This year I have asked for funds for equivalent to a half-time research information officer. I anticipate that we may want to expand that in the future. We're just not sure how we can best utilize that person, so in an attempt to be responsible, we would like to start with a half-time person and see where we go with that. And we've also asked for some additional office expenses for the office accommodations — some computer costs, telephone, printing — which would be associated with increasing the size of our staff.

The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation has indicated that we may be able to expand our office into . . . lease some of the space that we are currently in. That's not a guarantee though, and we're a bit concerned about that because we have no interest in a move.

I understand the Treasury Board has also given you some comments and they have recommended all of our request with the exception of the child advocate assistant intake person. The concern I had in reading their submission was that in the event

that we're required to move, we would really have to stop and take another look at how we would do that.

An extension into the present lease arrangement that we have would be fairly straightforward, but the building is occupied by a federal department and they are downsizing and possibly looking at freeing up some space for us. But all of that is somewhat iffy. So I'd be more than pleased to entertain questions at this point or any other comments that you might have.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much. You've heard the presentation and the recommendation of the Children's Advocate and the floor is now open for questions or discussion.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you. There's a few comments I'd like to make.

One is that I think our colleagues in caucus and cabinet have recognized that, sort of at this stage in our mandate, we've had a number of mechanisms and what not that have been put into motion. And we're at the point now where we think we have to take a hard look at all of those mechanisms, and that includes things like the child action plan, the Provincial Health Council, the Council on Children — you know, the Human Rights has tabled some recommendations, the Children's Advocate has tabled recommendations — with the notion being, how do we assemble all of these various pieces for the best impact for the children and families that are affected by the various good advice that government receives, and also the various ways that you might implement that advice into communities.

And we will actually be going through a fairly rigorous process this year, both at the ministerial level and at the inter-departmental level, to really examine whether the kind of steps we've taken are the best steps and how they all fit together, because that's an important piece of it too.

And I think based on that, we would agree with the recommendation this year of Treasury Board again on this particular budget, because it's very rare to sit down with any department or agency and not be looking at a budget request.

But one of the things we will commit to as a committee — we've got some other matters that came out of other budgets we discussed to discuss with SPMC — and that would be to raise again the profile of your space issue with them and see if we can get some certainty on that one, so you won't have to dip into your other part of your budget for that — and I think with that, the increased costs to maintain service, the education, the front-line pressures, the accommodation, but at this point not the new assistant. We would want to review that again next year after we're done this other, larger process.

**Dr. Parker-Loewen:** — Thank you. The comment I would have — and I've worked very hard in my office to try to work in a collaborative way with all of these different players, because there are so many interested community advocates for children, and it's obviously a core issue for all of us — is that the respect of the Children's Advocate office in Saskatchewan is related to us being appointed as an independent officer of the

Legislative Assembly and having the ability to independently become involved in some of these matters.

Whereas the other groups that you've mentioned — the children's council, the action plan for children — these are government initiatives, all linked to the executive arm of government. I just want to comment that across Canada and within Saskatchewan, people are very impressed and very respectful of the fact that Saskatchewan legislators had the foresight to create an office with that form of independence. And so while you're looking at all of these pieces, I just emphasize that that piece of the office has a fair amount of importance.

So if you look at something like a child death review process, having an independent officer of the legislature who's not tied to the government of the day, is a different kind of an independent review than having it be internal to government. I'm not being critical. I'm just making a statement.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Public perception.

**Dr. Parker-Loewen:** — The public perception is very significant and we've heard that repeatedly as I go around the province.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I would agree with your assessment that people like the Provincial Auditor, like the Human Rights Commission, like to feel that there's an independent process to take their matters to. So I appreciate you reminding us that that's part of the function.

**Dr. Parker-Loewen:** — And I think we're particularly appreciative of being here and having all parties involved in this process of our budget as well, because it reaffirms that independence for us.

**The Chair:** — If I can just interrupt for just a moment, Ms. Crofford, trying to interpret what you were saying to translate into a recommended motion, did I hear you suggest that . . . or express your support for the request less — is it 52,400?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — No. Part of that is the clerical position, which is recommended for approval, so it would be the 34,000.

**Dr. Parker-Loewen:** — It's less the 34,000.

**The Chair:** — It would be less 34. So 534 less 34.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, and everything else approved.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Is there further questions or discussion? If not, then I want to thank the Children's Advocate for her presentation, and to then refer us to two motions which we will require to approve the request of the Provincial Ombudsman as presented. It would be in order to have a motion:

That the board approve an allocation of \$987,000 for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman for the fiscal year 1997-98.

Does someone wish to move that? Ms. Crofford. Is there a seconder? Mr. Whitmore. Discussion? In favour? Opposed? That's carried unanimously.

And secondly then, I just want to make sure that this is correct, that it's 534,000 minus 34. Yes? That's your understanding?

**A Member:** — That's my understanding.

**The Chair:** — Yes, okay. It would be in order then to have a motion:

That the board approve an allocation of \$500,000 for the Office of the Children's Advocate for the fiscal year 1997-98.

Is there a mover? Ms. Crofford. Is there a seconder? Mr. Kowalsky. Discussion? Those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried as well.

I want to thank the Children's Advocate and the Provincial Ombudsman and the assistant ombudsman for your preparation and your deliberations today, and also on behalf of the board to wish you a meaningful Christmas season and a successful new year, whether you're holding a conference or not. Thank you very much.

**Dr. Parker-Loewen:** — Best wishes to all of you, and thank you for your interest.

**The Chair:** — Thank you for your service to the people as officers of the legislature.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, I think you've topped Mr. Speaker's speaking tour. You've done 50.

**The Chair:** — Yes, but I'm not done yet. I noted that though. My ears perked up there. It can be more. Can be more.

Now, ladies and gentlemen of the board, we have one final item, and I don't think this needs to be a lengthy one. This is item no. 10, which is an information item. Other business, items as raised by members of the Legislative Assembly. If I can just report to you verbally, and I've made reference to this earlier.

There have been a whole host of concerns brought to my attention since the passing of the McDowell recommendations that went into place July 1. And I want to just identify 11 of them for you — not in detail but just to name them. I have had these brought to me. These are in the category of things that I would consider not jeopardizing transparency or accountability but referring to inconveniences or stresses or strains related to members carrying out their responsibilities from our directives.

I want to identify them for you first of all. One is, I'm getting increasingly a request for the board to consider combining the allowances available — not increasing the amounts but combining them so that members can make a more effective use of their allowances. And that's something that I will be wanting to recommend to you, quite frankly.

Other categories are, claiming for apartment rental under the travel allowance. The maximum allowable allowance under directive 3, which is the hotel, as some of the members on occasions are finding, it's not appropriate; newspaper subscriptions to locations other than the constituency office; purchase of telephone equipment; approval for expenditure under the communications allowance for national pins and flags, which are currently not permitted under directive; the requirement for MLAs to have to sign every single claim regardless of amount, and the implications when even small things come in unsigned and have to be returned, holding up a payment and so on.

Related to committee function, there are three items of concern that have been brought to me. Regina members, when committees are being held in Regina, unable to claim for lunch expenses. Also the question of per diems payable to members only for actual meeting dates, which means that when members are attending conferences, not meetings, they're not allowable. They're not able to claim per diems for those days under the directives as they are currently written. And the directive as it's currently listed, does not contemplate travelling by air, bus, or Executive Air; only contemplates travelling by land vehicle. That's a bit of a problem.

Also it's been brought to my attention, ministers have brought to my attention, the concern that when they assume expenses related to functions as members of their caucus but not as members of Executive Council, that there is no means available to have those covered. Also under directive 24, that it doesn't . . . directive 24 does not permit the covering of expenses related to computer installation, set-up, training, and technical support and software support.

And finally no. 11, that members' allowances for home computers, other than laptop . . . And so that's just a quick list, without any detail, of things that have come to the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Allowance for . . . Yes, directive 24: use of computer equipment which could be used at home. Okay?

So those are some . . . those are item . . . All I'm simply reporting at this point in time, those are items that have been brought to me. I've been advised earlier in the meeting that there are some other concerns being put together by members of the board.

What I want to recommend to you is not that we deal with them today — although if you'd like to we can plunge forward — but what I do want to recommend to you is that, at a point after which we have been able to experience all of the implications of the McDowell recommendations, and one of which that we've not even touched on yet is the per diems during the session, but that at some point in 1997 what I would like to do is come back to the board, having dealt with these things, any other things that any of the caucuses would like to bring to my attention, and then to give you a series of recommendations for changes to directives.

I don't recommend dealing with these nickel and diming, one at a time, but to deal with them in a comprehensive way, and

would be prepared to assume responsibility for putting together a proposal on that and that we'll deal with that sometime later in 1997.

So that is on item no. 10. Okay. I am advised by the Clerk there is one annoyance here that could be dealt with if, just by indication of your direction, without having to have any amendment at all, and that is the one on newspaper subscriptions. It currently says in this directive . . .

**Mr. Boyd:** — Subscriptions in general or just newspaper subscriptions?

**The Chair:** — Where are we here? It's books and . . .

**Mr. Boyd:** — It's nuts that you can't have it in this office up here.

**The Chair:** — Yes. It's books and subscriptions. It doesn't say newspaper. It's newspaper that's the annoyance. But what the directive says, this: "Communication expenses may also include books and subscriptions for the constituency office." The interpretation that's been given to that is the literal one, to arrive at the constituency office. If you think that that's improperly restrictive, all you need to do is just indicate that to me and I will be able to expand.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Yes, it's improperly restrictive.

**The Chair:** — So the members of the board are communicating that the interpretation is improperly restrictive and I'll attend to that, then. I appreciate that. And the other 10 are still there and there may be others. So my recommendation to you is that I'll bring a comprehensive list of recommendations related to directives at a time in 1997.

Ms. Crofford, did you . . .

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I'll pass.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman. A couple of those I'm not quite sure if we can wait on. And I'm not saying to deal with them today, but one deals with the question of apartments. Particularly as one approaches more towards the session, before the session begins, it may have to be dealt with.

The other one dealt with — oh, you gave a list there — question of hotel accommodations, but I know that's in regards to Public Service Commission; because it's been brought to the attention and the question of covering costs. And there's limited accommodations that meet those costs in this city. And I think that's just due to a higher activity of business in the city of Regina. I know province-wide it meets the goals, but within the city of Regina members have difficulty.

So I'm not saying deal with it today, but there's a couple of them that we may have to deal with sooner than later, particularly as some members look for accommodations before session to save . . . actually which would save money.

**The Chair:** — I think the majority of inconvenience is being

felt by members related to apartment will be prior to the session, and it'll be less so during the session. I hear what you're saying. They would require . . . a vote would require a directive amendment in order to respond. And I'm not recommending that at this moment. Okay.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Okay.

**The Chair:** — Is there any further discussion? Is it acceptable to the board then that the Speaker will bring some recommendations sometime later in 1997? And in the meantime, if I can ask then that you would, in whatever way you consider appropriate, but if you would bring to my office's attention the concerns of your caucus members. And also please, if you have advice as to how those annoyances can be responded to without reducing accountability or transparency, I'd very much appreciate that. I think we're all in this together and you're advice would be welcome.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — This would be my last intervention of the day.

**The Chair:** — This would be.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — I would like to thank you and your staff for their diligence and their support during this rather lengthy meeting. Also, Gwenn, to you and your staff for their work during the year to all members of the legislature. We just couldn't be this great without you . . . (inaudible) . . . Anyway, wish all of your staff, please, on behalf of all of us, a Merry Christmas.

**Ms. Ronyk:** — Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. And to the members of the board, if I can, on behalf of the Speaker's office and all the people associated with the Legislative Assembly, extend best wishes for a Christmas season in which your hearts be filled with peace and goodwill, and 1997 be one of personal happiness and good health for all of you.

Thank you very much.

The meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.