



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES  
2005**

Mr. Graham Addley, Chair  
Saskatoon Sutherland

Mr. Dan D'Autremont, Deputy Chair  
Cannington

Ms. Doreen Eagles  
Estevan

Mr. Andy Iwanchuk  
Saskatoon Fairview

Mr. Allan Kerpan  
Carrot River Valley

Mr. Warren McCall  
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Hon. Mark Wartman  
Regina Qu'Appelle Valley

[The committee met at 17:45.]

**The Chair:** — Order. We'll call to order the Committee of Crown and Central Agencies. The agenda has been distributed. Just before we begin we have Mr. Heppner filling in for Mr. Kerpan.

#### **Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan**

**The Chair:** — The first item before the committee is the consideration of Information Services Corporation 2003 and 2004 annual reports and related documents and we'll be discussing those concurrently. Before we invite the minister to introduce his officials and make a brief statement, we have the Provincial Auditor's office that would like to introduce his officials and make a brief statement.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Andrew Martens. With me today is Mike Heffernan, deputy provincial auditor, who will be providing our comments on our audit of investment services corporation; as well, Mr. John Aiken, partner with Deloitte and Touche, who did the audit directly and he'll be providing a summary of the audit findings. So, Mike, if I could ask you to provide comments first please.

**Mr. Heffernan:** — Just a very brief comment. We worked with Deloitte and Touche, the corporation's appointed auditor to form the opinions on the financial statements in the annual reports for 2003 and 2004. In our opinion the financial statements are reliable and we received excellent co-operation from Deloitte and Touche. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much. And I would invite the minister to introduce his officials and make any brief statements that he wishes.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. Before I offer some brief comments about Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan and its recently tabled 2004 annual report and touch on highlights of its 2003 report, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the officials with us today from ISC [Information Services Corporation].

To my immediate right is Mr. Mark MacLeod, the president and chief executive officer of the corporation. He is an individual with whom members will be familiar. He's been with the corporation since June 2002, guiding the company with considerable leadership in business expertise.

To his right is Beverley Bradshaw, the corporation's chief governance officer and acting chief financial officer. Ms. Bradshaw has been with ISC since its inception in January 2000 and she has held positions of increasing responsibility in the Saskatchewan public sector since 1977.

Also joining us from ISC, to my left is Mr. Jeff Welke, director of public affairs. And behind him are Ms. Karen Banks, the director of registry services and Mr. Greg Hutch, director of technology services.

Mr. Chair, and members of the committee, ISC's 2004 annual

report was tabled on April 13 of this year. It shows substantial strides, including the achievement of profitability; in fact an \$8.3 million profit compared to a \$5.8 million loss the year before. In addition to that profit ISC repaid \$11.9 million in debt, compared to debt repayment of \$3 million the year before; generated revenues of \$44.1 million up from \$36.7 million the year before, and cut down expenses to 35.8 million compared to 39.5 million the year before.

To recap, the corporation made a profit whereas the year before it had made a loss, increased its revenue, cut down its expenses, and paid off debt.

Beyond financial success the report for 2004 outlined a lot of progress in terms of connecting to customers and providing good service. It is clear that the employees of the corporation have worked hard to make Information Services Corporation a company that delivers trusted registry and land services.

In 2004 ISC conducted a survey of its customers. The survey found that 88 per cent of customers were satisfied or highly satisfied with ISC's service. ISC recognizes that while the overall number is good, the company has room to improve in areas and is committed to making improvements.

In 2004 additional operational highlights included achievement of level 1 certification from the National Quality Institute in its Canadian criteria for public service excellence program. The institute's quality standards are among the highest in the world. Turnaround times continued to be maintained or improved. For standard land registry transactions, the turnaround time was 3.5 business days, surface plan processing was 8.2 days, and there was a 24-hour turnaround on personal property registrations.

ISC maintained and further developed working relationships with key customers including the Law Society of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors Association, the Saskatchewan Homebuilders Association, First Nations organizations, and various departments of government. Working groups are being established with the Canadian Association of Petroleum Land Administrators and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Landmen.

ISC continues to pursue improvements to its processes and systems including the on-line submission project, which this year will introduce easier ways for customers to do business with the corporation. Beyond 2005, another major undertaking is the technology upgrade of the personal property registry, again aimed at ease of use for customers.

It is fair to say that 2003, as that year's annual report reflects, was in many ways the foundation for the achievements of 2004. In 2003 ISC created a customer advocate position to ensure that the company is able to clearly hear the issues and concerns of customers, built the foundation and established key customer working groups that I've referred to, launched a new, more comprehensive corporate website to better inform customers, and also launched e-learning on-line tutorials for customers through our new website. These tutorials assist customers with better understanding of the e-business processes.

Through these new feedback mechanisms, our customers told

the company they wanted title transaction times reduced. As a result, in 2003 ISC reduced turnaround times on standard registry transactions from up to three weeks to less than three days, reduced mineral certification from waits of up to six months to approximately 60 days, and removal of ties from land to about three days, down from about three weeks.

In 2003 ISC focused on providing effective and accountable financial management. Highlights included the total cost of the land titles automated network delivery system was \$58.9 million, just 1.7 per cent over the \$58 million budgeted for the project.

In 2003 ISC cut operating costs so that the actual costs were \$7 million lower than the original budget for the year, and operating losses were down to 2.9 million from 8.8 million in 2002.

ISC focused on core services, and as a result tendered and signed an agreement to outsource our infrastructure support to ISM [Information Systems Management Corporation]. The move reduced costs and streamlined operations to enhance our customer service.

Capital expenditures were reduced to \$6.2 million from \$13.7 million in 2002. And ISC repaid \$3 million in debt in the second half of 2003 and generated revenues of 36.7 million, up from 27.2 million in 2002.

In closing, I want to commend all past and present ISC employees and ISC customers and stakeholders for the work done in 2003 and 2004 that has resulted in such a successful turnaround in performance and financial results. I encourage them to continue this impressive, collaborative work into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Now we'd be pleased to answer any questions that the committee members may have.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, members. We also have . . . Mr. D'Autremont is being filled in by Ms. Brenda Bakken Lackey. And I will open the floor to questions. I recognize Ms. Eagles.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Mr. Minister, and welcome to you and your officials.

Mr. Minister, I'm going to begin by making some comparisons between the 2003 and the 2004 report. And on page 16 of the 2003 report and on page 25 of the '04 report, there's a measure of economic, or pardon me, employment diversity. And ISC's long-term targets were increased from four and a half per cent to 6 per cent for Aboriginals but decreased for people with disabilities and visible minorities. And I was just wondering why the decrease in those two?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — I'm going to ask one of the officials to comment in a moment. But I do want to say that one of the things that has happened in ISC — and the officials can actually give us the exact numbers — is that a great number of employees have ceased to be employed by ISC, so that you'll see some changes such as the one that the member has referred to, Mr. Chair. The reason for that is because there were hundreds of employees that were employed by the corporation

to convert the paper land titles system to the electronic system, but it was always the intent that once that job was done that their work had come to an end and they knew that. So there was a big change in terms of the number of people employed, and unfortunately I'm surmising that some of those disabled and visible minority people were probably employed in an area that has been discontinued in effect in the corporation.

But I'd like to ask Mr. MacLeod or Ms. Bradshaw or their designate to comment further on those particular numbers. And perhaps also they could shed some specific light on the number of employees that have left the employ of the corporation.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Well thank you for the question. I'm going to seek a bit of clarification regarding your question, specifically if you're . . . you're referring to the targets that are identified in the reports . . . so the change in targets of the reports?

**Ms. Eagles:** — Yes.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — I'm going to defer a little bit on this one just to try and search as to why the targets ended up being the way they were. In 2002 our employment in terms of our actuals were around I think about 507 people. A lot of that was due to the conversion project that was underway. At the end of 2004 our employment was somewhere around 270, 250 people, somewhere in there. And so some of the results would have definitely changed because of that. I'm not exactly sure why the 2003 targets were . . . Bev, I might just get your thoughts on how that happened. I'll get those.

**Ms. Bradshaw:** — On visible minorities is the one you were focusing on . . .

**Ms. Eagles:** — Yes.

**Ms. Bradshaw:** — . . . that the target, the long-term target has been reduced. We're certainly . . . This is an area that's important to us, but in terms of taking a look at the numbers of employees that we currently have and the kind of turnover that we have we did adjust the long-term targets to be something that we're still making progress in the area but that we felt was achievable, as compared to I guess our considering that the previously set target in that time frame was not as realistic.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Do you have a strategy in place that you can maintain the percentage of people with disabilities or visible minorities or increase them? Do you have any kind of a strategy in place — I'm sure you do — for Aboriginals? Because it's four and a half to six per cent, and I'm wondering if the same applies to people with disabilities and visible minorities. And if you do have a strategy, what is it?

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Yes. So are we talking about currently then? You're talking currently then, the strategy today?

**Ms. Eagles:** — Yes.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — One of the challenges with the company in its earlier, its earlier years was you know a lot of the . . . the project involved a lot of term employees and a lot of, you know, movement of people around. And so 2003 was spent doing a

fair amount on just getting us a predictability of workforce going to the future.

2004 was spent doing a lot of permanent staffing and getting our staffing numbers solidified and at that time establishing and setting targets and some strategies around our representative workforce.

We are now in the process of integrating with our succession strategy and our recruitment strategy, these targets within sort of the new rounds of hiring that we're going through. The challenge with ISC, the company at the moment is just in terms of, you know, there is not an awful lot of turnover and the company did quite a bit of down . . . rightsizing you know as well. So we didn't bring a lot of folks on. So a lot of the numbers that you see are numbers as a result of kind of folks that were there and then by the time we kind of got through shaking through all the resources, this is kind of what's left.

So our current strategy now integrates our succession planning with our representative workforce, with our recruitment and youth development strategies. So they're all kind of linked together. And we have some confidence that . . . You know this is a bit of a challenge. We have some confidence that we'll be able to achieve our longer-term targets.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, in your 2004 report on page 21 you speak about turnaround times and in your opening remarks in fact you mentioned that the turnaround time for mineral certification was I believe you said 60 days. Your targeted time was 10 business days for mineral certification. The 2004 result was 58.6 average and on the ISC website today it was 111 business days. Now why is the average five times the target?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Chair, we would be at the 10 days or below but what has happened — which is very, very good news for the province and especially the Southeast where the member is from and the Southwest and the west central — is that in 2004 the volumes increased tenfold. In other words there was 10 times as much mineral certification activity which indicates a great deal of strength that we've seen in the oil and gas sector as well as the mining sector in Saskatchewan. And so it is purely a reflection of the volume.

It's true that they haven't met the target. But the target was based upon . . . wasn't based upon 10 times as much work being done. And we still will try to reduce it. And I think the ISC people are doing a very good job but they're coping with the situation where we have 10 times as much activity asking for mineral certification as we had the year before. So that's why. It's the economy is really working quite well. But that places big demands on ISC which demands we're very happy to meet because it's good news for all of us.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Well I hope, Mr. Minister, that the busier the oil sector gets that the farther behind your department doesn't get. Are your target results realistic then? Is 10 days a realistic goal?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well I think it is. I think that the corporation, you know having gone from a number of months to like 60 days — even though they're doing 10 times as much work — shows that they're very efficiently dealing with the

situation. And there's some improvement that can be made and if the oil patch remains healthy, as I think it will in the long term, then I believe the corporation is going to have to adapt either by new personnel or new systems to adapt to the greater reality of more volume and a bigger oil patch in Saskatchewan. I believe that's what they're doing.

I'll ask Mr. MacLeod to comment on what specific plans they may have for personnel or systems to deal with this very good problem to have as we move forward.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Yes. Like one of the challenges in the mineral certification, they were sort of multiple fold in terms of the increase in activity which is a good thing. One of the challenges in the company is that we . . . I would say that our systems of predicting when this is going to happen need to mature. So you know this kind of, you know, you kind of get hit with this and you're not sort of expecting it.

And the other thing was we introduced a voluntary certification process which we thought would drop the demand substantially. And as it turned out it did not drop the demand substantially. Right now we're in discussions with the petroleum land administrators and the landmen, I believe they're called. And as a matter of fact I'm up there in a couple of weeks. And we've also started to introduce discussions with some of the other departments of government that are actually involved in the process to talk about how we break down, sort of collapse that window of time.

So we're pretty confident that it's achievable, you know. We can get there.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Okay. On page 31 you're talking about expenses . . . and yes, expenses, wages and salaries. And I'm in the 2004 report. In 2003 your wages and salaries were 18.6 million; in 2004, 12 million . . . 12.8 million, pardon me. Why the decrease? Was it terminations, retirements? Can you enlighten us on that?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Yes, Mr. Chair, I'll ask Mr. MacLeod or his designate to comment further.

But essentially as I indicated in a previous answer and as Mr. MacLeod alluded to as well, a number of people were working in the system before to convert the paper system to the electronic system. And they were hired on basically a term basis. And when that considerable amount of work was brought to a successful conclusion, their work was done and therefore the salary costs went down. And I'll ask Mr. MacLeod or his designate whether they have anything further to add.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — I think it was primarily due to the number of staff, the staff reductions which were substantial year over year. There's also a transfer of about 15 people from our IT [information technology] shop into our IT partner so those costs now would show up in our information technology expenditures as opposed to just our . . . just employee costs.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Well, Mr. Chair, thank you, Mr. Minister. How will ISC be affected by retirements over the next 10 to 15 years?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — I'll ask Mr. MacLeod to address that.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — I think that we have a certain percentage, a relatively small percentage of our organization eligible for retirement. Right now the information we receive from the Public Service Commission and other places is that that's . . . not a lot of folks retire just when they're eligible to retire. We have our succession plan laid out over the next, I think it's about eight years. And I think we're, I'm thinking the number is around 70 or so I think is the number over the next . . . Is it a five-year period? Is it seven years?

**Ms. Bradshaw:** — I think it's more like seven years.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Yes. So it's five to seven years. So it's about 70 folks over the next five to seven years.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, if I may I would just like to go back to the turnaround times that we were discussing just a minute ago. And in the budget on page 40, it had that there were 1,743 new oil wells drilled in 2004 compared to 1,875 in '03. Oil drilling is expected to decrease to 1,700 new wells in '05 and 1,600 new wells in '06.

And you had just explained to me that the turnaround time was, the average was up on that because of the increased activity in new well drilling when in fact there has been less wells drilled. And on your website today it said the turnaround time was 111 business days. I wonder if you could explain that?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Chair, first of all I should explain that the mineral certification will not deal with drilling alone. It will deal with oil and gas and also mining. I should also point out that although the budget indicated that, the Minister of Finance estimated — no doubt on the advice of the Department of Industry and Resources — that they felt that the number of wells drilled might go down. The indication so far this year is that the number of wells drilled, I was told the other day they expect to go up by 10 per cent. So we're hopeful about that. But I'm going to ask one of the officials to comment on the increase in mineral certification and what that represents besides just the drilling numbers.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Yes, well I think there's more than just oil and gas in the mineral certification area as the minister said. And there's also some extenuating circumstances I think in terms of oil companies, because of the electronic system now, doing some reconciliation with their own records and has sort of caused an increase in demand for certification as well.

So I can let Karen Banks speak in more detail, if you would like more detail about that. Would you like more detail about that? Sorry.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Yes. Sorry, yes.

**Ms. Banks:** — What I can contribute to the discussion is that in addition to the oil drilling activity, one of the capabilities of the new system is that it has enabled companies such as oil companies to search their land registry records by name. That was not a function that existed in the past. In the past searches could only be completed by legal land description.

This has led, through the work of our customer relationship managers in particular working with the oil and gas companies particularly in Alberta, searching the registry to reconcile their own records that in turn as part of their reconciliation they're looking to confirmation of their ownership. And to them they see a great value in the certification process. And in turn that has led to increased demands for certification.

Consequently the activity that we've seen has been, for example transactions will come in from a particular oil and gas company where they will request . . . it could be as much as several hundred transactions or certifications in a very short window of time.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you. Mr. Minister, regarding the land titles searches, who is requesting that? Who is requesting the land titles searches? We met with a company and they told us of the delays and the confusion and the hardship that this was causing them. They were not the ones requesting it, and on top of the delays and the hardships it's the added expense.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — I'll ask Ms. Banks to comment on that as well.

**Ms. Banks:** — In the particular examples that I'm speaking about it is individual oil companies wanting searches of their own records and we have been assisting them with those searches.

**Ms. Eagles:** — What about an oil company that is trying to lease land and these searches, they certainly aren't requesting.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Okay, is there a question that you wish to address, or Mr. Chair, that the member has . . .

**Ms. Eagles:** — When we met with an oil company they were interested in leasing land and it was just a lot of confusion because of these searches. All the different titles had to be searched and they couldn't understand why.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Proof of ownership perhaps. I mean I am assuming that when they're going to be doing their searches it's to find out the ownership of the property. I'm assuming that, but I'm guessing, I don't really know. I mean, I don't believe we force, we don't force them to do that. I mean this is . . . we don't force them to do searches. They're . . .

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Chair, it's difficult to answer the question or to understand the question in the sense that the reason that somebody would do a search in the land titles system, which would be run by the Information Services Corporation, would be to certify who the owner of the land was, who the owner of mineral rights might be, and whether there were some prior interests or encumbrances, you know, registered against a particular piece of land.

And as Mr. MacLeod just said the Information Services Corporation doesn't require anyone to do any searches. They would decide themselves whether they wish to conduct a search through the Information Services Corporation system in order to satisfy themselves, for example, that if they're paying for mineral rights that they're actually paying someone who is entitled to sell them to them and so on, or to make sure there is

no prior encumbrance against a piece of land that they may be acquiring an interest in.

So I mean the answer to the question, why would they have to do some searches, well anyone acting in a professional and business-like manner always would be doing searches if they're dealing with an interest in real property, whether land or mineral rights, so that they know what they're dealing with. That's the whole purpose of the system.

So I don't quite understand the question, if somebody is saying, why do we have to do these searches. I can't believe that an oil company wouldn't know why they were doing searches in the land registry.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And it was a deal where there was multiple owners of land but I will get all the details and if I could forward them to you, and could I expect a written answer then.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Chair, absolutely yes. We handle many, many inquiries, although less I'm glad to say than we did a year ago or two years ago when we had more problems with the system.

But through my office and directly at ISC we get many inquiries about why people have to do things in a particular way and we certainly follow up in as timely a fashion as we can. And the corporation attempts to be very helpful to everyone because it's very important to our economy that this system works.

And of course one of the things we've been trying to do over the last few years is listen very carefully to users of the system who have pointed out in some cases that we were not doing things as well and efficiently and helpfully as we could. And what the corporation has been focused on for the last few years is improving the service to the customer. So certainly if there are areas where more improvement is needed — and I already acknowledged in my opening remarks that there are — our objective is to do that because we want to provide excellent customer service. That's the vision of the company and that's what we're trying to do.

We've made a lot of progress but there are some areas where we could improve. And I do want to invite the member to bring any problems to our attention and we'd be very happy to provide assistance or further information.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'm going to move on to another situation I have and it is regarding a constituent of mine.

And this person was involved in a divorce settlement and he had to transfer the title of his land because of that settlement. And he had moved out of the home sometime prior, and he was very upset when he received the notice to former owner of a transfer of title to land. And that was sent to his previous home. And this letter ended up being taken to his place of employment and it was opened and as I said before, he was very upset. And he did write a letter to land registry. And if I may I could . . . I'll just read you what he had here. And it's got:

Dear Sir:

I received a letter from your office which had been delivered to my place of employment in an open envelope. Upon examining this letter, I found it to be addressed to a certain address. I have several questions to you in regard to this matter.

Firstly as indicated, it is a notice to former owner of transfer of title to land. If one transfers their land, is it not reasonable to believe that they have vacated that property and no longer use it as their mailing address?

Question two. Does ISC not have an access to a database where, when searching my name, you would find that I own other property that would show a more current address? And was there attempt to use other agencies to locate my current address or contact number through SaskTel [he said]? As . . . [there was a lawyer representing his ex-spouse] . . . did anyone consider asking for an address to forward that letter to me?

I would appreciate a response back from you regarding this matter. I'm extremely disappointed in ISC by addressing this matter in such a carefree manner. I have in less than six months received correspondence from ISC regarding my property. This leads me to believe that somewhere there must be a record of this transaction.

And he did receive a reply, but he certainly was not satisfied with that reply. And I was just wondering if you would like to address some of his concerns.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Yes, Mr. Chair, I'll try to address some of them. Well first of all, it sounds like some things happened here that weren't the totally the responsibility of ISC. I mean first of all, if someone delivered his letter to his place of employment as opposed to his current address, that was not done by ISC. Another party, it sounds like, took his letter to his place of employment. I don't believe ISC is responsible for that.

If someone at his place of employment opened personal correspondence addressed to him, I also don't think that is the fault of ISC. And I would go on to say that, you know, if you move from a piece of property that you own, you can file a change of address with ISC to let them know what your new address is. In this case, that didn't occur.

Now the gentleman is upset because ISC didn't go to the trouble of searching him down and finding out his new address or perhaps going through a database as he refers to see if he is listed at some other address. Well the difficulty with that is, there are frequently people with the same name, and it's very difficult for anybody to know whether another individual of the same name, you know, is the same person owning another piece of property. I mean I don't consider my name to be terribly common, but there is in fact another Eric Cline in the Saskatoon area who does own land.

And so ISC can't know everything. And here it seems to me, Mr. Chair, with the greatest of respect, a situation is being described where the individual did not file a change of his address with ISC, which he had the option of doing. Someone

apparently took a letter that was addressed to his address of record at ISC to his place of employment, which ISC is not responsible for. Someone opened his letter at his place of employment, as I understand it, which ISC is also not responsible for.

Now I would then say this, that it's very, very important that Information Services Corporation notify people when a piece of property they have owned changes ownership because one of the problems we have across Canada, and perhaps outside Canada today, is identity theft and the fraudulent transfer of properties from their rightful owner to another individual who then either sells it or mortgages it and thereby fraudulently obtains money. One of the things that ISC does on a routine basis, which other systems don't do, is to notify people that were owners of property that this property has been transferred and to let them know at the address of record that they have left so that in the event of fraud, there's more of a possibility that that individual will be informed that their property has been transferred to another person. And not only is it important that they do that, but we're looking at ways that we could perhaps strengthen the system to make sure that people are notified.

So you know, I would look at it another way, Mr. Chair. If ISC was not doing what it is doing to notify people that something has happened with property that was in their name, we would not be meeting our responsibility to attempt as best we can to protect people from the very real possibility of fraud. We've had one case of fraud, I believe, come to light in Saskatchewan recently. There have been many cases in some other jurisdictions. And so it is a very real concern.

But in answer to the question, can the corporations sort of keep track of where everybody's at when . . . I mean I'm not trying to be critical of the individual, but when the fact is that the individual can file a change of address with the corporation, I think the answer is no. The corporation cannot necessarily keep track of where everybody is at as they move from place to place.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. At the beginning of your very lengthy answer, you said that they can't be responsible for the opening of the letter, and I understand that. But . . . or if it was sent to his current address and that was the problem. It was not sent to his current address. He says in his letter to me that he has received other correspondence from ISC regarding this property. So I don't know if it was a mix-up and all the letters went to his current address and this one strayed to the former address because of the change of title, but this is what this gentleman told me. And he's a very reputable gentleman so I would believe him.

Regarding ISC, you had said that there is now a customer advocate. At what price is this customer advocate?

**Mr. MacLeod:** — The customer advocate position is an existing position with the company as a supervisor in one of our offices who provides the customer advocate position, so I don't have her exact . . . pardon me. Yes, there's no fee to a customer on this. The customer advocate is a contact point for customers to go to in the event of, you know, exceptions in the system. So that person is an . . . like that is just an assignment of a person in the company to that function.

**Ms. Eagles:** — So it's an existing position then?

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Yes it is, yes.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Okay. I also . . . Gosh, it must have been probably earlier in April, I got up and I spoke on The Land Surveys Amendment Act, and I know we're not dealing that specifically right now. But I had related some problems that people in my constituency had with ISC. And when I received a letter from Mr. MacLeod, and I felt like I was almost being chastised for having brought this up in the legislature. And it asked me to provide specific examples for a follow-up.

And I just had a little bit of problem with that because as you know that because of The Privacy Act we are not at liberty to . . . for me to openly discuss this with you without a waiver from a constituent so . . . Yes could you respond to that?

**Mr. MacLeod:** — I've made a point of whenever anybody's made a complaint about the company to anyone, I've asked them to tell me who it is so I can contact them and sort it out. If they elect not to do so, then that's fine. But I don't . . . that's never meant to be a demeaning thing at all. It's meant to be an effort in . . . as I think you probably found with a number of folks, whether they be in your constituency or elsewhere, is that if there's an issue with this company that somebody brings up, I want to find out what it is, so I can look after it. And so it wasn't meant to be a demeaning comment in any way shape or form whatsoever. I got it from a *Hansard* frankly; that's where I got it from.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and to your officials for answering those questions, and I'll turn it over to the member from Martensville.

**The Chair:** — I recognize Mr. Heppner.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you. There was a time a long time ago when I was the critic for this body, and I'll have to say before I have some questions and maybe some concerns, but it's come a long way. I remember one time unrolling a whole long sheet here with about 20-some pieces of paper for one piece of property that had been sold. And I don't think it's working that way any more. And that's good. And also a number of people I've had contact me from law societies doing work has obviously gone down, and they've got some concerns, but like you mentioned earlier on, about 86 per cent satisfaction that you have is there.

But I've got a couple, a number of questions from all over the place. When I look on a grid map and you get to northern Saskatchewan, the nice little squares for sections of land just fizzle out. How far north do you cover or do you cover the whole province?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Okay we're . . . Mr. Chair, we're going to have another official join us, and he is expert in that area. And he will answer the question and his name is . . . Jim Boyd will answer the question.

**Mr. Boyd:** — The survey fabric goes up approximately to township 64 on the western portion of the province. It's slightly lower on the eastern portion of the province. The northern



portion of the province is not surveyed into the section grid at this time, and it probably will never be surveyed into the section grid because of costs and the different survey methods at this time.

**Mr. Heppner:** — I understand that because the section plan was basically set up for agriculture more than anything else. So if I'm north of that particular line which is a wiggly line — I guess my map must be fairly correct in that — and I want to do some work and I need some title to whatever, what's the procedure that you have in place because you can no longer identify this as the northwest quarter of whatever else?

**Mr. Boyd:** — Basically they're still . . . A person, if they're doing a survey in the North, they would do it by a plan of survey. And that plan of survey in today's specifications we would have that tied in with GPS [Global Positioning System], so we would have an actual coordinate for that as well. So if you want to search your land, your parcel in the North, you would still search it by parcel A or whatever on plan such-and-such. And that's how you would search that land.

**Mr. Heppner:** — So that would apply to whether you're into recreation and you're having a piece of property as lake frontage or whether you're into mining or whatever else.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Basically right now, we don't have all the northern leases and that in the base at this time. If there's not a registered plan for that, then we would not have it in the base at this time.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Are those northern leases going to be part of your program? And if they, are what kind of a timeline is there?

**Mr. MacLeod:** — It's not in the fabric right now. There's no immediate plans to do it. Right now a lot of the Crown land which is why you speak of, is held by different agencies in the government. So you know, SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management], Environment has a number of them I believe, SIR [Saskatchewan Industry and Resources] has some of them as well.

So we have the titled but not the Crown lands. So there's no real immediate plan for ISC anyway.

**Mr. Heppner:** — With the fact that I think there's a lot of mineral exploration in the North going on, I'm kind of surprised that you don't have a timeline for that saying, with this happening you're just going to need that at some time.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — There is actually some mechanisms, and there is some discussions going on right now around it. Part of the sort of the timeline of events was, you know, just kind of getting a sense of stability and kind of what we've got on the titling system and the associated mapping that we've got with that. So you know last year, we introduced the ability for customers to actually look at the parcel when they have a title and stuff.

So now within the last — I'm going to say — year or something, we have been in some discussions now regarding those other areas which would include, you know, obviously the trees, like forestry and SIR for oil and gas. There's parks.

There's Native land, this kind of thing.

So I would say that we'll have . . . I'm not convinced it needs to be in one spot. I would subscribe to your perspective; it needs to be a little bit easier for customers to navigate between departments or whatever. Not all are issued, but you know so . . . I'm not convinced it all needs to be in one spot however. And we're just looking at that right now as to does that make sense or not.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Part of your question leads me right into my next area. More or less in the southern part where you do have the traditional land set-ups with, you know, sections and all that sort of thing, what is your interaction with land that has been set aside under Native ownership? Do you have all . . . Like, what is the relationship there?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Chair, I should clarify to the member, Mr. Heppner, is it . . . I'm assuming he means reserve status land, yes, as opposed to just a building owned in the city or something. Yes. Okay.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — The particulars . . . I could probably get some help from Catherine on the specifics on this, who has been really instrumental interface with the treaty land process. We've been working very closely with them over the last, you know, two years or so on this, on the treaty land process. So I think if you're looking for specific details, Catherine Benning is the registrar of titles and can give some further detail if you'd like.

**Ms. Benning:** — Over the last number of years ISC — and when it was still the land titles offices — worked closely with Intergovernmental Relations and Aboriginal Affairs when developing the treaty land entitlement process. And so any new reserves that are created through the treaty land entitlement process are surveyed if it's in unsurveyed areas in the North. And then if it's areas in the South which are acquired by the federal Crown for treaty purposes, the transfers are registered in our land titles system and are recorded as federal lands. And the way that you know it is a reserve land is we have a parcel class code that indicates that it is a reserve land.

**Mr. Heppner:** — At this point reserve land is not allowed to be used as security in any kind of financial situation. Now I believe ordinarily you can register liens through land titles. That's what it's all about. If all of a sudden they would decide that they're going to operate differently and be able to use their land as financial security, are you set up to do that or would that require something substantially different?

**Ms. Benning:** — Our system isn't able to have interests registered against each and every parcel. The particular parcel class code associated with reserves today has some restrictions on it based on the federal legislation in which it's held. If that federal legislation were to be changed, we would adapt our system to accommodate those interests.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Would you be able to just sort of identify the restrictions that are there right now that you just referred to or don't you . . .

**Ms. Benning:** — The restrictions that exist now are in relation

to when and how a transfer can occur, and those are mandated through the federal legislation which governs reserve lands.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Okay. I'm going to move back to a topic you were on a little earlier on, and I had to be out of the Chamber for a little bit. There was a bit of a discussion about the fact that the oil boom has basically created a lot of activity, and that has put a bit of a backlog in there. And that's understandable.

And I missed this part of it. Do you have a solution in place? And I guess the unique thing that the solution would require is if there's a boom situation now and you create a particular solution, then what happens when the boom is off? And that's sort of what happens. How do you adapt to those possible situations?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Chair, the best answer is that we want the boom to continue for a long time, so that's what we're going to try to do. I think the level of activity probably will stay up, but I think what we need to do is to adapt ourselves to meet the level of activity that there is. And if that means that later on there's less activity and we have to reduce a certain area, that's what we'll do. But our mandate has to be to try to meet the need that is there, and so we're going to do that.

And also we're very optimistic that the level of activity in oil and gas and mining is going to continue because there's so much exploration going on right now that that certainly would seem to be indicated for the long term.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Obviously I think everyone shares your hope for that boom time to be there, and then when you adapt to that, you won't have to worry about a lag time coming through there.

Going back to the part I mentioned earlier on about having been critic for this department and the little thing with the paper and all the titles on there, where are we at with that at the present? I imagine you have changed that somewhat so that there isn't the number, the amount of paperwork that there used to be.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Yes the paperwork, our paperwork is, the number of pages has reduced by I think between 25 and 35 per cent. But one of the nice things about the, as the minister referred to earlier, is our system would be classified I think as one of the top, if not the top in the country in terms of fraud prevention, which is the purpose that that paper serves.

So by sending those pages out, where we got into some issues was on things whereby farmers or folks would hold, you know, multiple titles. And then they'd be getting an envelope with a page and an envelope with a page and an envelope with a page. Whereas what we've now done is consolidated our output such that when a transaction takes place on multiple titles for a single owner, then we'll put all those on one page and send them.

But we're still not nearly as excited about . . . And it's a bit of an extra cost for us, not just in terms of paper going out, but our call centre lots of times, our contact centre will receive calls from people who have received these papers. SaskPower takes an easement off or something, and our contact centre gets a call, and says what's this page all about? And you know, so it costs us money to deal with it.

But at the end of the day, the advice we get from our Law Society working committee and our registrar is that this is just a far better way of fraud prevention than to not be doing it. And the option also . . . I think the other thing is the option exists for the legal community to accept electronic output — as in send me an email. And they've been slow to adopt. You know, we thought that they would have adopted quite a bit quicker. But they have not adopted as fast as we thought.

**Mr. Heppner:** — If the minister would want to comment on the reason for the fact that that hasn't happened as quickly as ISC would have hoped . . . I know this is kind of getting into your own personal view, but it's still an interesting question that I think most people in the legal world that I know are fairly computer literate, contrary to myself. So why does there seem to be a lag?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well they are, Mr. Chair, to the member, very computer literate and usually their secretaries even more so. But in my experience having been a member of the bar now for 25 years, as we began to computerize . . . And when I started practising law, we did not have a computer. We had ordinary typewriters and carbon paper and a photocopier that didn't work very well. Then we got the memory typewriter. Then we got the big photocopiers and the computers.

But the point I'm trying to make is that as we got the capacity to reduce the amount of paper, the fact that you had systems that could more easily create paper meant that people had more paper and more copies of the paper. And the tendency, this is more a comment on human nature than anything else I suppose, but the tendency actually is that even though things can be done electronically, most people still want to receive the paper and have it on their file. And perhaps they feel more secure that way or they simply understand it better in the same way as we like reading a book, better than reading a book on the computer screen. And so I think that just as human beings — and lawyers are human beings I point out, including myself — we tend to want to have that piece of paper in our hands, and I think that would be the explanation.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Yes personally I can appreciate that because I know a lot of people just like the idea of having that piece of paper either in a safety deposit box at the local credit union or in a safe in the home or a sock or wherever they choose it, but they want that so they can pull it out and say, here's my proof that I own this, and it doesn't have to come off of a screen someplace that I can't control.

Being noted as a bit of a Luddite — and I take a certain amount of pride in that — I do know that these machines have to be replaced too, too often for my way of thinking. But, you know, there's changes in the technology. They tend to wear out.

Where are we at with costs for ISC when we're talking about redoing that system because obviously you put a system into place that right now is doing a job. I'm sure and in the not too far distant you're going to have people on staff who are going to say, hey there's new stuff out there that does this a whole lot better, quicker, different, or that the old ones are a little bit . . . starting to hiccup a little bit. What sorts of ongoing costs do you have to account for to maintain ISC working as well as it does?

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Well typically, and when you're doing planning around the IT space, you would typically . . . 15 to 20 per cent of your development cost is your annual maintenance cost. For us, for ISC, one of the reasons we got into the agreements with our technology partners that we did was so that we had a five-year plan of what it was going to cost us to run the system as well as actually a sliding scale of reduction of the cost to us of running the system over a five-year period. So we actually have that sort of nailed and that keeps us to a level of currency of what we call N minus one. So it's not the bleeding edge, it's sort of the set before, if you will.

The advancements, the work that we've done on our technology since sort of rolling out the LAND [Land Titles Automated Network Development] system has all been driven by customers. So we have customer groups now that are driving all of the change in the technology space. Some of that, you know the interesting one is like when we talked about mineral certification. Some of the technology changes that the oil and gas industry have talked to us about, we don't think, we don't have a real strong business case to do strictly within ISC but could be, over the value chain of the oil and gas industry.

So right now, the technology spend is a lot more predictable thanks to our work with our partners on that one than it was a couple of years ago. And, you know, some of those metrics are pretty standard. If you're in the financial services industry, here's kind of what your spend usually is and that kind of stuff.

So I'm less concerned with that. I do think there might be, you know, there is some . . . you can kind of see some things maybe down the road where one customer would like you to do one thing and another customer would like you to do something different, but fortunately our relationships we haven't got there yet.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Good, thank you for that answer. It was at a level that I could follow fairly well. Do you handle the car registrations, like liens, and all that sorts of things that come through?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Yes, Mr. Chair. That is the personal property security registration system. And that's a very good question in the sense that the system run by Information Services Corporation is more than what the old land titles offices were because of course they just dealt with the title to real property in the form of land.

Whereas ISC also does the personal property security registry so that if the bank puts a lien against your car because you've purchased a car and financed it through the bank or if a bank has a general security interest against the assets of a corporation for its line of credit, those would be registered through ISC which is an add-on to the LAND system which used to be housed in the Department of Justice. And ISC also does the geomatic system for example. So it's actually an agency that does several things that used to be done in different places, and that's one of them.

**Mr. Heppner:** — What relationship is there between the Saskatchewan car registry and other provinces? Because obviously car theft is a key one and someone stealing a car in another province could bring it in here and through some

unique ways get the thing registered.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Chair, it's important to note that the system at ISC would not actually register vehicles, it would only register interests in vehicles. The vehicles are still registered by SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], as the member knows. But what we would do is to register the interest of a bank or a credit union in a vehicle if there was a lien on that vehicle.

And I believe that — and the officials will correct me if I'm incorrect — I believe it's a public registry that if somebody wants to search it they could search the system. And they could do so electronically so that, you know, in that sense there would be plenty of access for people to see if there was a lien against a particular vehicle or to search in other ways in the same way that the land registry can be searched by a member of the public or the police authority either in Saskatchewan or someone from elsewhere.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Okay. I've got a couple of questions that I'm asking on other people's behalf. Has any consideration been given for reducing fees for survivorship applications? I take it this . . . It looks like this is a question you've had before.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Go ahead.

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Yes. Every year we're reviewing the fees and that's one of them that is on our list to look at.

**Mr. Heppner:** — So it's just done on a yearly basis, just looked at. Or is there actually a change made?

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Yes. Like what we've done . . . The thing about the fees which is quite interesting is — and this is again partially because we've been able to establish some pretty good relationships with customers — is that we're trying to look at fees as not an obstacle to getting things done but maybe even perhaps sort of adjusting our fees in the interest of trying to get . . . induce certain behaviour if you will.

So for example we've had some preliminary discussions on, you know, maybe if you're buying a house under \$100,000 should we have a lower fee. You know this kind of stuff. But the advice that we've given them is that we have to remain whole. So if we're going to be doing that, you know, then we have to sort of pick it up somewhere else.

So we haven't really . . . The reason it's taken a little longer is because we're really quite transparent with our customers now about this kind of stuff. And so you know and the developers when they do . . . You know if we wanted to do fee increases and it affects the developers you know they say, gee I booked my contract six months ago and you changed the titling fee on me, you know, I need some notice. So you know those kinds of things. So it's kind of an annual process.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Chair, that takes care of the questions, most of the questions I had. I know the member from Kindersley has been waiting anxiously to get in here with a few questions of his own so I would like to give him some time.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Iwanchuk):** — Mr. Dearborn. I

recognize the member from Kindersley.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Minister. I have a number of questions. First and foremost I would like a bit of an explanation around the system for mapping the mineral rights and how those are actually identified to the owners of those rights. Are they titled purely by a number? How does the geographical area determined? Are there subdivisions relative to levels? And what happens when there is multiple minerals, etc.?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Chair, we'll ask the registrar of land titles to provide information on that question to the member.

**Ms. Benning:** — The ability to define space in the mineral layer is done in a couple of ways. It's done by parcel and it can be the same geographical space as what appears on the surface or it can be another geographical space. And that's defined by plan of survey in the same way that the surface is done.

In terms of different commodities that may exist in the subsurface, there are a number of commodities which are eligible to be titled separately. The most common ones are all minerals, all minerals in a particular geographical area, oil and gas, coal. We even have a couple of titles for uranium although we're not creating any new titles for those.

The other element of your question was around, do we deal with strata beneath the surface. We do not generally deal with strata. When you obtain the mineral rights for coal, you retain the rights for coal for the geographical space all the way down to the centre of the earth, as opposed to by strata.

There's one particular Act that allowed for strata titles to be created and that was the mineral . . . the oil and gas stabilization Act, and that no new titles are being created on that unless those existing titles are transferred to new owners. But we don't create any new ones on that. That was a for a very limited purpose.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you for that answer. Just expanding just in those cases, if there is to be a title change, will those be reverted and the stratas removed so that, as well, people would own from 2 feet under the earth all the way down to the centre as well if there are changes? Or would those changes, if there is a transfer of ownership of those strata titles, would they be unique and ongoing?

**Ms. Benning:** — If there is a current strata title that goes to a certain depth beneath the earth, that level or depth remains for new owners as they purchase that particular mineral right. That doesn't change and we don't have the ability to change the depth, for example. Those are static in time and we are not creating any new descriptions based on depth below mean sea level.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you for that answer. Is there any provisions with regards . . . under the ground if there's water, large aquifers available that . . . I don't think you outlined that minerals were part of that. Who has jurisdiction over that aspect? I know that we do have in our area through our oil and gas industry there's certain legislation that requires the water to go back into the earth and many people employed in that. Could

you just clarify how that works for me please?

**Ms. Benning:** — That is a little bit beyond my area of expertise, but I can give you a little, a little bit of information on that. Generally the province's waters are administered through Saskatchewan Water Corporation authority or through SaskWater. Those may be better . . . specific answers associated with that may be answered by my minister.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well I think that the rules with respect to water probably are better put to the ministers in charge of either the Watershed Authority or the . . . with SaskWater.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Fair enough. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that answer. I do have a question now — I'm sure I'm going to come back to this — but on the surface rights and parceling of land. I'm given to understand through concerns that had raised by constituents that — I'm going to use an example of a quarter section of farm land — that the number of actual parcels on it can far exceed one if you have a railway crossing, if you have an oil well with an access road. So that in essence for a farmer to transfer title rather than paying one fee they could be paying three fees. Has that all been corrected?

**Mr. MacLeod:** — Yes. It was a legitimate concern on the part of folks in primarily in rural communities more than in urban. And we changed our fee structure to a value-based fee. So no matter how many pieces they may have, they pay just on the value of the transaction.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you. And thank you for that change. I know that it was a concern in our area and one that I'm glad that has been addressed.

Switching back to the minerals, I had opportunity in Banff the other weekend to speak to an IT developer that was working with the Saskatchewan, or pardon me, the Alberta government and the petroleum industry on their title system for minerals. And in the Kindersley area we have a great deal of investment and a large portion of it coming primarily from Alberta.

Does the system that ISC now has cross with what Alberta has so that the oil companies in essence are dealing with one set of, you know, basically one standard? Just as we might use kilometres in Saskatchewan they'll use kilometres in Alberta. So are the land titles compatible in . . . rather the land titles, the mineral titles and parcels compatible for what they're using in the Alberta situation?

**Ms. Benning:** — In terms of the parcels that are created in our mineral layer, they are based on established survey principles that are standard throughout the country. So in terms of that relationship between Alberta and Saskatchewan they are compatible.

Alberta and Saskatchewan have very similar land titles Acts and very similar rules in relation to minerals. There are some uniqueness between the two provinces and that's driven by our history in development in the mineral sector.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Just in the development for ISC on that, was there consultation at large with the petroleum industry on how the standards that they wanted, as I know that there is ongoing

in Alberta?

**Mr. MacLeod:** — I can let Catherine speak in terms of the development of the system per se. But certainly in terms of dialogue now, we're in very close discussion with them and my understanding from a lot of them is they've been really pleased with our discussions, you know, with them around this phase. But in terms of the development, you know, how much consultation was or wasn't done . . .

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you for the answers. And, Mr. Chair, that will conclude questions I had for today. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Chair [Mr. Iwanchuk]:** — I recognize Ms. Eagles, the member from Estevan.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, Mr. Chair, I would again like to thank the minister and his officials for coming in this evening and I would at this time like to adjourn debate for today on the consideration of estimates. And we could move on to Bills.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, members. I would need a motion to conclude consideration of ISC for 2003 annual report. Thank you, members. Motion put by the member for Estevan that we adjourn consideration of Information Services Corporation 2003 annual report and related documents. Is that agreed? Is that agreed? That's carried. I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Just for clarification, you mentioned that, I think you described it as the member adjourning debate for 2003 but we were really considering the 2003 and 2004 reports. And I wondered if the committee intended to have a similar motion for the 2004 report.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, members. Could the . . . Just to clarify the motion that the member for Estevan moved. Is the conclude the . . . Sorry. It's to adjourn the estimates for '03 and '04.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Debate, for today.

**The Chair:** — Okay. So — sorry, forgive me — so the motion before the committee was adjourn consideration of ISC 2003-2004 annual reports and related documents. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Okay. That's carried. So thank you, Minister. That was correct for we have adjourned consideration.

The next item before the committee is consideration of Bill 91, The Land Surveys Amendment Act, 2005. Recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Yes, Mr. Chair. Before we go into that I'd like to thank the members of the opposition for their questions with respect to these reports on the Information Services Corporation.

And also I especially want to thank the officials from the

Information Services Corporation who are here. And I'd like to point out that they have been sitting here for several hours waiting for the legislature to conduct its business, which certainly is the prerogative of legislature. But I do want to thank these officials who were scheduled to be here starting at 3 o'clock for waiting three hours until 6 o'clock.

I don't mean to criticize anyone. I just want to say I do appreciate the officials adjusting their calendars and the auditors as well, because I'm sure their evenings have been delayed. So I appreciate their co-operation in that regard. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much, Minister. The next item is consideration of Bill No. 91.

#### **Bill No. 91 — The Land Surveys Amendment Act, 2005**

**The Chair:** — Order. The next item before the committee is Bill No. 91, An Act to amend The Land Surveys Act, and I would recognize the minister to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. With me, sitting to my left is Mr. Jim Boyd who is the director . . . I'm sorry, the deputy controller of surveys. And to my right is Catherine Benning who is the registrar of titles.

#### **Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much, Minister. Clause 1, short title. I recognize Ms. Eagles.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, regarding this Bill there's just a couple of questions I have to ask you on it, and it's regarding the cadastral land mapping. And I was just wondering if you could explain that please.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well with these able officials here, far be it for me to try to compete with them, so I'm going to ask one of them to explain all the details of the cadastral parcel mapping system and exactly what that phrase means, so I'm assuming Mr. Boyd would answer that question.

**Mr. Boyd:** — The cadastral mapping is basically the parcel mapping for the province. We started off with the fabric of the co-ordinate system for the province using the township system, and from that we built upon that using the control survey information that was available. And then during conversion, we took the title information. We put all the registered plans into the base map. And then during conversion, we related the title information to the registered plans. And that's basically where we have the link between the titles and the cadastral.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I understand that this system has been in use since, I believe, it's 2002. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Yes.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Yes. Okay. So why did it take so long bring it into legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Yes, Mr. Chair, the responsibility for the

establishment and maintenance of the cadastral parcel mapping system has always been an implied responsibility of the controller of surveys in The Land Surveys Act, 2000. And in recognition of the important role that geomatics plays in the province, the Geomatics Executive Council was set up in 2003. And it was that council that recommended that the responsibility for the cadastral parcel mapping system should be more formally assigned to the controller in legislation, and this provision implements that recommendation.

So I think the system has always been operating that way, but it just wasn't stated in legislation. And so it was recommended that it should simply be pointed out in legislation that we do have a cadastral parcel mapping system because it was never defined in the legislation before and that we should define it so that the specific clause that's being added to the legislation simply says:

“... ‘cadastral parcel mapping system’ means a mapping system that depicts the land survey system and parcel boundaries in Saskatchewan”.

So I don't think I'd say that the world would come to an end either if that change wasn't made. But it was just felt that since that's the system we use, it should be referred to in the legislation. And so they had recommended that, and we thought, well we should do that.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, could you tell me what the cost is or has been to have this cadastral mapping system?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Chair, I'm advised by the officials that the cost would be really quite small, relative to the costs of the system overall which is \$58.7 million. But I could undertake to provide as much of a specific answer as we can come up with in writing to the member. But I am advised it would really be quite small.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I would appreciate it if you would do that. And with those questions, Mr. Chair, I don't have any further questions on this Bill, and I would be prepared to let it go.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much, members. Clause 1, short title. Is clause 1 agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Agreed. That's carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 91, An Act to amend The Land Surveys Act.

And I would invite the member to move that the committee report the Bill without amendment. Mr. Wartman has moved that the committee report the Bill without amendment. Is that

agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That is carried. This concludes Bill No. 91. And I would just like to thank the minister for being here this evening and his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — I'd like to thank you and the members of the committee and the members of the opposition for moving this Bill along. And I also would like to thank the officials for assisting us here today. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — The next item before the committee is consideration of Bill No. 99, The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act. We'll take a brief pause while the minister comes to the table.

### Bill No. 99 — The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act

**The Chair:** — Thank you members. The next item is Bill No. 99, and I would invite the minister to introduce his officials and if he has a brief statement to make it now.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm joined tonight by three officials . . . the deputy minister, Don Wincherauk. Seated next to him is Jill McKeen who is a senior advisor. And on my left, your right, is Richard Murray, the executive director of policy and planning.

The legislation in front of us tonight is what we would call professional legislation. It provides for recognition of title although it does not provide for exclusivity of practice within the profession. The legislation has been worked on for some time with the Information Processing Society and provides them with an opportunity to take a more rigorous approach to dealing with their professional issues as many other professions have.

#### Clause 1

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much. Clause 1, short title. I recognize Mr. Elhard.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening to the minister and his officials. It's been a long wait. I appreciate the fact that you've hung around to address some of the questions that arise from this particular piece of legislation.

When the minister introduced this Bill into the House, he spoke about the need to have this type of legislation as a means of advancing the professional standards of information professionals in the province of Saskatchewan.

This Bill or a similar type of legislation exists in several other jurisdictions, and it's proved reasonably successful there. And as a result of my own desire to understand a little more about these professionals and what it is they were seeking, I spoke to a number of individuals and asked them about the legislation. And I have their assurance that they are by and large satisfied that this legislation will meet their requirements.

So the questions I have tonight are not so much related to the professional standards as established by the organization or those kinds of technical questions that might otherwise be relevant. But I am interested in a couple of more general issues.

And the first one I would like to address is the fact that, having looked through this Bill, we have 18 pages of delineation of all types with all sorts of prescriptions and regulations and rules and so forth. And what I found novel about that is that, when I compared this legislation to the legislation that exists in the other provinces, their standards for establishment of the IPS designation only required somewhere between five and seven pages. So why is it that we require 18 pages of rules and regulations to achieve this professional designation on behalf of this organization in Saskatchewan, whereas other jurisdictions were able to get by with considerably less?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Several years ago, the province embarked on a change to the way we dealt with professional legislation. And the Department of Justice was a lead in dealing with this. The objective was to try and standardize as much as possible the provisions of each of the professions to make sure that clauses that were in one Bill were in the other to provide the same kind of general regulatory powers, the same kind of disciplinary powers, the same kind of structures.

And that is in many ways as we see all of these Bills come forward, and the member will have, over the years that he's been in the Assembly, seen a few of these. That's largely what we end up with . . . is it fits in with the blueprint of what the Department of Justice likes to have for these kind of organizations.

Could we do it with fewer clauses? Quite likely. But this saves us for the most part from needing to come back and amend this legislation in future years as these organizations become more familiar with their powers.

**Mr. Elhard:** — So basically we've established a template of a certain standard and certain requirements for all similar organizations, which may not be a bad way of doing it necessarily. It's just that I see that the, you know, the extreme length of the provisions in this particular Bill is inordinate compared to other jurisdictions and the legislation they require.

One of the provisions in this piece of legislation that did jump out at me though is the role of the public appointee. And I have some specific questions related to that. In section 8(1), it gives the Lieutenant Governor in Council not just the ability, the requirement to “. . . appoint one person who resides in Saskatchewan as a member of the executive.” And it outlines in the following subsections, you know, sort of the criteria of who that person is and how long they might serve and so forth. But of the number (6), it says that “The member of the executive appointed pursuant to this section shall be a member of the discipline committee.” Can the minister explain the need for that specific provision?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — In all these pieces of legislation, whether it's the Saskatchewan registered nurses association Act or the . . . I'm trying to think of what other ones we would have. But other types of legislation like this, we have inserted a provision for there to be a public representative on this, and this

is generally an informed citizen of the public, member of the public who serves on these boards. They specifically serve on the disciplinary committee to make sure there's a connection back to mainstream society to make sure that there is a connection outside of the internal politics of the organization. And it is there both as a safeguard for members who may be facing discipline, but also as a safeguard to ensure that organizations have a broad perspective.

This is a provision which is in place in I believe just about every other piece of professional legislation that we have. The other one I was thinking of that is similar to this is the SASTT [Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians] Act where they're the . . .

**Ms. McKeen:** — The Saskatchewan association of advanced technologists.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The Saskatchewan association of advanced technologists. It's a similar piece of legislation that way. That's the rationale behind it, and that's largely the purpose it serves. I should note that it's seldom that the disciplinary committees meet. And so as such, it's there primarily as a precautionary item.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Minister, I understand that a similar provision exists in the legislation covering music teachers in the province of Saskatchewan, who I just find it hard to believe that discipline would ever be required on their behalf . . . often on their students but not so very often on the teachers.

I guess the question that would arise from this particular provision is when the governor, Lieutenant Governor in Council makes this appointment, is the selection of this individual done in consultation with the organization at any level and to any degree?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Yes. The consultation usually occurs between my office, in this particular case, and the executive. Although the power is a discretionary one left to the cabinet, it of course is a cabinet appointee and as such while we would, at least in the practice I use, welcome nominees from the organizations, we do look to other individuals who may be interested in serving in this.

**Mr. Elhard:** — So recommendations that might be forthcoming from the organization as such will not necessarily be acted upon.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — That's correct. And this is again to ensure that there is an outside representative in these organizations. This is standard across all the organizations that have professional legislation that's gone through this Assembly.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Is there an opportunity for people who already are serving within government to fill this appointment, or is it generally speaking restricted to people who are actually members of the public?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I'm not in a position to speak as to how it has worked with other Acts. I can tell the member that it has been my practice as the minister to appoint members of the general public as opposed to members of the government. So it

would not be my intention, and I don't think it's been the practice of government generally to appoint a departmental official to serve in this.

What we generally will look for — and in this specific case will look for — is someone within the general public with a knowledge and interest in this field with some connection to the industry who will be, I hope, a valuable asset to the organization as it moves forward. But it has not been our practice to appoint members of the department or members of the public service to fill that capacity.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Moving on in that same section, section 8, and moving to subclause (8), it indicates here that:

The minister shall remunerate and reimburse for expenses the member of the executive appointed pursuant to this section at the rate determined by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Can you give us an indication of what type of expense might be charged to this particular section?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — There is a schedule although I don't know that I have it with us tonight. There is a general schedule for these types of associations depending on the size and amount of work associated with them. And it is a standard one that goes with all these representatives.

**Mr. Elhard:** — So I could assume that there is a per diem plus an expense account provision of some sort.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Usually it's reimbursement of incurred expenses plus per diem. I don't think the per diem is much more than . . . I think it's about \$135 a day or something of that nature.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Yes, the amount of time that this individual will contribute to attendance and sitting on this board is directly at the discretion, however, of the association. The government appointee does not influence how many times they will meet or have any authority in that regard.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — They serve as full members of the executive and of the association in that regard but have no special powers assigned to them.

**Mr. Elhard:** — In my conversations, as I indicated at the outset, with individuals associated with the organization that has sought this particular piece of legislation, you know, they were really quite enthusiastic about having Saskatchewan recognize the designation, the professional designation well in time for an upcoming conference that they are hosting here in the city toward the end the month. And I was taken, you know, really by the sincerity and the enthusiasm for that by the representatives I met with. And so I really don't see any reason why the legislation as presented, given that that organization is satisfied and you've answered my questions here tonight, I don't see any reason why we should delay this legislation any further.

**The Chair:** — Members, this Bill is quite lengthy. Is leave

granted to deal with it in sections?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Agreed? Okay.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 48 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 99, an Act respecting The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan. And I would invite a member to move that the committee report the Bill without amendment.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I move that we report the Bill without amendment.

**The Chair:** — Moved by Mr. Wartman that the committee report the Bill without amendment. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That is carried. This concludes consideration of this Bill. And I would like to thank the minister and the patient officials for being here so late into the evening. I recognize Mr. Heppner.

**Mr. Heppner:** — I'd also like to thank the official and his people. It's late and you've probably been sitting around for a long time as the minister indicated earlier on. So thank you for coming and getting us through this Bill and answering our questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. And I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

**Mr. Heppner:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Moved by Mr. Heppner that this committee do now adjourn. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That is carried. This committee stands adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 19:32.]