



STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES

Mr. Tim McMillan, Chair
Lloydminster

Mr. Buckley Belanger, Deputy Chair
Athabasca

Mr. Denis Allchurch
Rosthern-Shellbrook

Mr. Fred Bradshaw
Carrot River Valley

Mr. Dan D'Autremont
Cannington

Mr. Warren McCall
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Mr. Randy Weekes
Biggar

[The committee met at 15:02.]

The Chair: — Good afternoon. I'd like to welcome everyone to this meeting of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee. Today we will be discussing vote 80, the Office of the Provincial Secretary. Before we start the questions and discussions on that, I'd like to introduce committee members. We have Mr. Allchurch, Mr. Bradshaw, Mr. Weekes, Mr. D'Autremont, and Mr. McCall.

With those introductions I think we'll get . . . I will table one document before we get into discussions. The Minister Responsible for SaskPower has tabled a document that was requested by the committee in those discussions. That document, 352/26, SaskPower Corporation capital expenditures major initiatives document is now tabled, and will be distributed to committee members.

**General Revenue Fund
Office of the Provincial Secretary
Vote 80**

Subvote (OP01)

The Chair: — With that, I would ask the minister to introduce her officials. And if she has an opening statement, please go ahead and then we will get into discussion.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon to the committee members. I'm joined today by Rick Mantey. He's the deputy provincial secretary. Wanda Lamberti is executive director of central management services; René Boudreau who is the executive director of francophone affairs branch; and Marc Boucher, the chief of protocol.

I am very pleased today to have this opportunity to provide the committee with a brief overview of the exciting and dynamic Office of the Provincial Secretary and the related details in the 2010-11 budget. This year's budget is just over \$3.4 million. It supports a number of new initiatives and allows for the enhancement of existing programs provided by the ministry's branches, the protocol office, and the francophone affairs branch.

The protocol office plays a significant role within the ministry. They oversee provincial programs, including the honours and awards program that promotes Saskatchewan's identity and honour the great achievements of our people. The protocol office also plays an integral role in developing and nurturing relationships with national and international leaders and valuable trading partners.

Our government has made it a priority to seek opportunities to tell Saskatchewan's story and to promote unique relationships with countries right around the world. Today more than ever, our province has continued our tradition of looking beyond our borders, exploring opportunities to ensure that Saskatchewan is one of the best places to live and to work and to raise a family. We work to create opportunities for the involvement of our provincial partners to be fully integrated and coordinated in our international activities.

The protocol office has experienced a decrease of almost \$500,000 in this year's budget. This is primarily due to the removal of one-time funding for completed projects, including the Council of the Federation summer meeting and the 25th investiture of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

The francophone affairs branch also plays an important role, fostering partnerships and collaboration between the francophone community and Saskatchewan ministries. They will receive \$225,000 in incremental funding for infrastructure and community initiatives. This funding will allow the ministry to explore new partnerships with the federal government in support of francophone infrastructure projects, contributing to the growth of the francophone community in the province as a whole.

Our ministry anticipates raising, at the very minimum, one federal dollar for every provincial dollar invested in this new envelope. One of these projects is a French-language services centre. The centre is a new initiative that was officially launched in January of this year. It provides francophones with a single entry point to access government services and programs in French, ensuring our citizens receive quality service in the language they're most comfortable using.

The response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive and the centre's beginning to gain attention from outside our province as well. The province's investment in this service reaffirms our commitment to Canada's official languages and the growth of Saskatchewan's francophone community.

Another recent initiative of the francophone affairs branch is a participation in a Terroir or agri-tourism development in Saskatchewan. Earlier this month, they were part of a delegation from Saskatchewan that travelled to the Charlevoix region of Quebec on an exploratory mission. The Saskatchewan delegation was comprised of entrepreneurs, producers, ranchers, tourism entrepreneurs, chefs, as well as community leaders from right across the province.

It was organized by the Fransaskois community organization, L'Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise or the ACF, who have been working with the local, provincial, and federal authorities in the Batoche area to implement this new initiative. The project also includes participation from the local Métis groups.

The mission resulted in collaboration and information sharing, including the sharing of expertise in artisan development and value-added products between Saskatchewan and the Charlevoix apple producers. Experts also shared information about bison products. I believe this mission brought us valuable information, allowing us to better understand the Terroir development model from the successful region of Quebec, and to discuss, through engagement with the Saskatchewan delegation, if and how it could be successful in our province.

The francophone affairs branch has also seen a decrease in one-time funding, including \$282,000 for hosting the national coordination function for the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie and \$45,000 to develop the

French-language service centre. Lastly the ministry has transferred the total budget for Government House, approximately \$1.02 million, to the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission.

The remainder reflects changes to the ministry's overall operating costs and salaries. The budget will allow the Office of the Provincial Secretary to meet the goals outlined in the ministry plan, providing programs and services with the most effective and efficient delivery possible. Well I'll be very pleased to answer any questions you have now on the Office of the Provincial Secretary budget.

The Chair: — I would also ask that any official that will be speaking, if you could state your name before you go first, that would help Hansard. Questions. Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Bonjour tout le monde. Bienvenue à la Legislative Assembly, madame ministre et les officiels.

[Translation: Hello, everyone. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly, Madam Minister and officials.]

I guess the first question I would have is sort of a first principles question. When the current government took office there was a great deal made of mandate letters being provided for each of the ministers. I'm not aware of new mandate letters being issued but if the minister or officials could perhaps explain to me how the role of Provincial Secretary intersects with the mandate letter that was put forward for then Minister Elhard when the government first took power as it relates to Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much to the member. I believe that the important rule is . . . Three important issues here. We're talking about the francophone community, protocol and honours, and the Lieutenant Governor's office as well. We have spent considerable time and effort and commitment with our francophone community. They're very important to the province as a whole. I have had, since I became minister, and I know that my predecessor Mr. Elhard spent a lot of time with the community to make sure that they were involved and that the province as a whole could benefit from their expertise and the culture of the francophone community.

The protocol and honours office has also been very, extremely busy. All the functions that they carry out are done with a lot of class, a lot of professionalism. As government we rely on the work that they do, and we're positive that when they put on an event that everything is done with the expertise that the people would expect of the government. And our Lieutenant Governor is also a very busy man, and we keep . . . He keeps busy. And we have a great relationship with the work that he's doing as well.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Chairman, we don't have much time, and I'll try not to be rude with interjections, but I'd asked about the mandate letter. I have in front of me the mandate letter issued November 21st, 2007, to then Minister Elhard, minister responsible for Provincial Secretary. And Provincial Secretary is not touched upon at all in the mandate letter.

And certainly the work that the minister has outlined in her opening comments and again as a response to this question, certainly something like the francophone affairs bureau performs a very important function for the government in terms of in government and then liaising with the broader francophone Fransaskois community, let alone all the important work that's done by the folks at protocol and making sure that Saskatchewan puts that best foot forward.

So again, I don't see it in the mandate letter that was issued for Minister Elhard. Is there a new mandate letter coming forward for the minister to provide sort of a masthead statement of principle as to how the role of Provincial Secretary, which has been expanded upon, in fact, since the issuance of mandate letters, how does . . . Again, is there going to be a new mandate letter coming forward that deals with Provincial Secretary at all, let alone the substance of the mandate?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you to the member opposite. And I would imagine that with a copy of the mandate letter, the member opposite would realize that document was signed by the Premier, so that the document that we have is the last one that I have. And if the Premier has further intentions for this office, I do not have anything in my hands at this time.

Mr. McCall: — So you're just out there doing your thing.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Actually what we are doing is working with the people of the province and coordinating the efforts of all the ministries, not only in the francophone area, but within the protocol issue of . . . issues in every ministry.

What the member refers to as doing our thing would mean that we have a large number of people within this ministry who are working very hard to ensure that Saskatchewan is known, not just within the province, but outside of our boundaries, as a great place to work and to live and opportunities.

We had the opportunity to meet with the consul generals and high commissioners. We've been outside of the province to ensure that the Saskatchewan story is told in a way that brings forward our opportunities. I'm very proud to say that we've had visits, not only to our province but outside of our province too, and talking about the importance that we have and what Saskatchewan is doing and the opportunity we've had. I don't believe that's been done in the way that we're doing it right now, and I'm very proud of the work that has been done with our ministry.

Mr. McCall: — Well again, Mr. Chair, to the minister and the officials: again there was a great deal of fanfare made about the mandate letters. And as an administrative mechanism, as a statement of policy importance, for myself I thought it was a not bad initiative on the part of the new government, the then new government.

When I became the official opposition critic for Provincial Secretary, the first place I went to look of course was the mandate letter. And I was quite surprised to see that, not only is it not just sort of touched upon, it's not mentioned at all in the mandate letter. And I know in other consideration of estimates that I've had with the minister, I think she shares in the belief and the importance of a mandate letter.

[15:15]

So by asking my question about the mandate letter, I'm not taking away from the important work in putting that best foot forward for the province of Saskatchewan, the important work as it relates to both the visitors to and the going out across the country, across the world. And in fact it would seem that this government is very much interested in doing a lot more of the travel and trade mission circuit.

So again that intersects very importantly with the mandate of the ministry. And there was no mandate issued for the ministry when it was first, when mandate letters were first being handed out. Is the minister requesting a mandate letter from the Premier to clarify how the . . . If this is in fact an important exercise. You know, it could be that mandate letters don't matter at all and that it was some kind of public policy feel-goodery exercise. But if it is important, certainly the minister, I'm sure, would be interested in getting the mandate letter clarified or to at least mention Provincial Secretary from the Premier. So will the minister be doing that?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you to the member. I'm sure, I'm very pleased to hear that he understands the importance of this area, as does our Premier and our government.

I'm sure that also, because the member opposite has done his homework, he's had the opportunity to look at the plan for 2010-2011, Office of the Provincial Secretary. And I imagine he also would understand that none of these plans and the directions, the mission statement, the discussion that we've had would be going forward without the approval and input from not only our Premier, but from executive government. It's an important part; it's very well laid out. I'm sure that you've had a chance to look at it and talk about all the actions not only that have taken place, but the plans for going forward.

If there's any discussion on the statement from myself or from responses to government direction or the mission statements, I'd be pleased to answer it. And I will endeavour to make sure that our words are an important part of what is written when it comes to the go-forward direction of our government.

Mr. McCall: — I'm trying not to belabour the point, Mr. Chair, but I'm asking if the minister will seek a clarification in terms of the mandate letter for the ministry. Provincial Secretary was not mentioned in the initial mandate letter. If this is to be a meaningful exercise and not some kind of public relations piece of feel-goodery, surely this, the important job that the minister's talked about in the outset here would bear at least mention in a mandate letter, not to mention a broader sort of explanation.

Annual reports and plans, certainly we've discussed those in other forum or other fora. And certainly annual reports and plans have been around since, well you know, many other governments, including the previous administration that I was part of. So I don't, I don't quibble with having annual reports and plans.

But given the production that was made out of the importance of mandate letters, will the minister be seeking clarification for her mandate letter with the Premier — yes or no?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Yes I will. And at the same time I will ask if the Premier is happy with the information that we've put forward, and I will confirm that the Premier's happy with the information we've put forward when it talks about things like our mission statement, sharing our cultural, our linguists, and our government's values with the people of Saskatchewan.

I'll also ask him if he's happy with our goal of economic growth when it comes to strengthening and building regional, national, and international relationships. I'll also ask him if he's happy when it comes to developing French language services for supporting French-speaking interprovincial and international immigration. I'll also ask him if he's happy about promoting economic and community development initiatives in French-speaking communities. I'll ask him if he's happy with fostering pride and a sense of identity in Saskatchewan by celebrating our past, present, and future. And I'll go on with the other ones that are in this. And I'll bring back the answer.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Chairman, it's interesting. You ask a simple question and you get a fairly interesting answer from the minister. But thank you for the clarity at the start and the rest of it. It's par for the course I guess, Mr. Chairman.

The question I would like to ask at this point is the minister asserted at the start around the accessing of federal dollars and \$1 federal expenditure for \$1 provincial expenditure. And this does get into a broader question that we have great interest in on the part of the opposition, is the continued rollout of Bonjour Saskatchewan and the roll of the French language coordination and again the transition from the Office of French-language Co-ordination into the new entity, the francophone affairs bureau. So perhaps the minister cares to comment briefly, but I'd be particularly interested to know the thoughts of Monsieur Boudreau on this score.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you to the member. And I will be pleased to ask Mr. Boudreau to answer, but I want to make sure the member opposite is aware that we have \$200,000 this year that's set aside. Probably for the first time capital money has been put aside in the budget to make sure that we would be able to look at projects that the federal government may be interested in. Our goal is to ensure that we can capture federal dollars for the francophone community, and I'm pleased that our government has decided that this is an important area to be looking at. And I'm going to ask René if he will give further information.

Mr. Boudreau: — Mr. Chair, just the precision we're talking about, the transition from the Office of French-language Co-ordination to francophone affairs branch and the implications, the new role that's been given to the branch in the last couple of years is one of service delivery. In the past we were responsible for encouraging the development of services in executive government. What we'd provided as a recommendation earlier on is that to have an outlet for those services. There was a lot of information out there produced in French, and we wanted to have a storefront window so that information could be provided in a single point of service to limit cross-government ministry costs.

And effectively that's the biggest change in mandate that kind of follows the change in name, is that service delivery

responsibility from within the branch which is the service centre that was alluded to earlier. Those services are cost shared by the federal government. Every single expenditure in government currently — to the exception of Education; they have their own agreement — is approximately 40 cents on the dollar, federal dollars we receive. And any new initiative going forward would be under the same model where we'd see federal participation.

Mr. McCall: — I guess a question for the minister: recently there was a lawsuit levelled against the provincial government in terms of an announcement that had been made for a French-language high school in the city of Regina that is now not going forward. Does the minister have involvement in that or in those decisions, given that she's the minister responsible for the francophone affairs bureau?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Actually, to the member opposite, no we don't. This office does not.

Mr. McCall: — Okay. A question I would have: the year to come is a very important year for the L'Assemblée communautaire francosaskoise. Are there any plans under way in the francophone affairs bureau to work with the broader francosaskoise and francophone community to celebrate that year?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I know it is the 100th anniversary year of the ACF. That is one of the important items that will be looked at this year. René, do you have anything else to add?

Mr. Boudreau: — Currently the ministry's involvement's been in, Mr. Chair, in providing the ACF with government programs or information about government programs that could help, one of them being the Building Pride program that's currently managed by the Ministry of Tourism, Sports, Culture, and that's certainly an option that they intend to pursue. And all other discussion channels are open, but there's no solid plans as to what the collaboration will be in the next year which will be their 100th anniversary.

Mr. McCall: — And through the Chair, is there a way to provide members of the Assembly with sort of a continual update in terms of the plans of the provincial government as it relates to celebrating this very special anniversary?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Yes, I will make that commitment to the members opposite to ensure that you have the information.

Mr. McCall: — Merci bien, madame la ministre.

[Translation: Thank you very much, Madam Minister.]

I'd just like to cede the floor to my colleague, the member from Nutana.

The Chair: — Ms. Atkinson.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, you indicate that there's some international travel that's been undertaken by the Office of the Provincial Secretary, which includes the protocol office. Can you apprise the House what trips have been taken?

Mr. Boucher: — The out-of-province travel that has been

taken up to now has been to Calgary, Montreal, and also to Beijing, Shanghai, and Tokyo in advance of missions.

Ms. Atkinson: — Have there been any trips taken to New York City?

Mr. Boucher: — Excuse me, my error. You are correct. There was a trip in December to New York City.

Ms. Atkinson: — And can you apprise the House what was the nature of the trip to New York City?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you to the member. I will ask the deputy minister to answer.

Mr. Mantey: — Thank you. Mr. Chair, through you to the member, the purpose of the trip to New York City was to visit the High Commissioner of the Solomon Islands. We had received information from the High Commissioner, following his visit to the province, that the prime minister of the Solomon Islands was wanting to pay a visit, an official, private visit, to the province on very short notice.

In order to facilitate that — because the Solomon Islands does not have a High Commission office in Ottawa but only has a High Commission office at the UN [United Nations] which is assigned to Ottawa as well — Mr. Boucher, as chief of protocol and I over the Thanksgiving long weekend, travelled to New York to look at the arrangements, both the security arrangements and the protocol arrangements. That was also, then after New York, we travelled on to Ottawa to meet with Foreign Affairs DFAIT [Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada] officials with regards to the support that the Government of Canada would be providing. And as a result we then . . . From those meetings we subsequently returned to Regina.

Ms. Atkinson: — And did the person from the Solomon Islands make his official . . . I guess unofficial, private visit?

Mr. Mantey: — Mr. Chair, I can advise that because of an election campaign, the prime minister has postponed the trip, regrettably, but we are still in communications with Foreign Affairs and the High Commission that he still has an interest in coming, hopefully some time later in 2010.

Ms. Atkinson: — Can you advise the House or can the minister advise the House what exactly would be the nature of the visit from the PM [prime minister] from the Solomon Islands? And was that prime minister re-elected or defeated or . . .

Mr. Mantey: — Mr. Chair, I can advise that the election is scheduled for June of this year. The visit was based upon the recommendation of the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner's visit to the province included the city of Regina, included the city of Saskatoon, visiting the synchrotron, visiting the University of Saskatchewan, dealing with the some business groups in the province.

The High Commissioner recommended to his prime minister that it would be in the Solomon Islands' interest by way of further work with SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] and with further work with the

University of Saskatchewan for the distance education program, that we should be looking, that he should pay a visit here either two- to three-day visit. And that was nature for the request that we received.

[15:30]

Ms. Atkinson: — And so is there a discussion about exchanges between SIAST, the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] university exchanges, SIAST exchanges, international students? And what is the economy of the Solomon Islands, and how would that relate to the province of Saskatchewan? Just for the edification of people who are watching this.

Mr. Mantey: — If I could, Mr. Chair, when the SIAST, the itinerary and the schedule for a potential visit would be coordinated through the protocol office with the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour. And we would work with the High Commissioner and the prime minister's office on that. As the committee may be aware, SIAST has a number of agreements with other countries and doing work with other countries by way of distance education. And so we have a very strong track record in that field. And as a result, we are world renowned. And so as a result, that is why the prime minister was looking at Saskatchewan to help them with their distance education program on his island.

Ms. Atkinson: — I guess this may be not a question that you could answer, but my recollection is that there are reductions in distance education for post-secondary institutions in the last budget. So that may be problematic. Okay. That is helpful, and no doubt we'll know in public accounts what this trip to the Solomon Islands cost.

So the whole advance work area's no longer covered by Intergovernmental Affairs, I understand. Has that been given over to protocol? Is that the new area, protocol in the Provincial Secretary? I'm talking about advance work — Peking, Beijing, Tokyo — in terms of missions. That sort of work used to be done by Intergovernmental. Is it now done by protocol and the Provincial Secretary?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you to the member. First of all, just for clarification, that trip was to New York. It wasn't to the Solomon Islands.

Ms. Atkinson: — I understand that. But there's been trips to Beijing, Shanghai, and Tokyo. And I'm just wondering, is that work no longer, advance work for missions, no longer done by Intergovernmental Affairs?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Correct. The protocol office is looking at that work.

Ms. Atkinson: — So have there been people transferred from Intergovernmental Affairs to do this work?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you. No, there has not been staff transferred to Intergovernmental Affairs. We work closely with them but the work is done here.

Ms. Atkinson: — So who are the people now over at the Provincial Secretary's office that have experience doing

advance work, interacting with diplomats, consul generals, so on and so forth, given that the skilled staff that used to do this over at Intergovernmental aren't doing it and people are doing this over in the Provincial Secretary's office?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you to the member opposite. The people that are working in the advance . . . going ahead and looking at some of these visits are the people that I have working with me today. We have Mr. Mantey, Mr. Boudreau, and Mr. Boucher as well are working on this, working on the trips before our Premier goes to those countries. They are the advance team that are going forward.

Ms. Atkinson: — So your deputy minister and the chief of protocol have been to Beijing, Shanghai, and Tokyo to do the advance work? Is that their job now?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — The chief of protocol has been there. The deputy minister has not been there.

Ms. Atkinson: — Minister, I know that there have been a number of changes at the Provincial Secretary's office. I'm wondering if you can describe how we now hire public servants. Are they hired through the Public Service Commission process? How does that work now over at the Provincial Secretary's office? Because it's been raised with me that it seems to be a bit of a difference in terms of how that works over there.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you to the member. I just wanted to confirm that really it is the normal process that's going, that we're using. There has been a competition as when Marc was hired. There was order in council process as well. And there hasn't been a lot of changes in that area.

Ms. Atkinson: — So you're not using the method, if you want to recruit people say to work as ministerial assistants or ministerial staff or Executive Council — in-this-building staff — you're not using part of the recruitment process as to ensure that their spouse has a job in protocol or the Provincial Secretary's office? Because that's one of the things that I've heard, that there are spouses of ministerial assistants or people who work in Executive Council who are now working at the protocol or Provincial Secretary's office and that this is quite different. So I'm just wondering, is that a recruitment tool to attract people to this building, that their partners or spouses get to work over in protocol or the Provincial Secretary's office?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Member opposite, I assure you that the people that are working in the Provincial Secretary's office are well qualified. They're people that are there because they are experts in their area, that they have a lot to add to the office and that there's . . . the jobs that they have they're well qualified for and are doing an excellent job in.

Ms. Atkinson: — Could you describe for the public, in terms of say people who've been hired in protocol in the last two years, how that process worked.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I'm going to ask for clarification. Do you mean if there's a vacancy? We've had some changes in the way the office is operating. In some areas we have some less staff. And I guess I need clarification on what you really mean when

it comes to hiring these positions.

Ms. Atkinson: — So there was a Premiers' conference, I think last summer. Maybe you hired additional people to support the work around the Premiers' Conference or maybe you filled some vacancies. Can you describe for the Assembly and for the public how protocol and the Provincial Secretary hire staff, whether it's on a short-term basis or a permanent basis?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — There's a combination of the hirings. And there is a determination made now on whether it has to be a full-time equivalent or full-time employee within the office or whether it'll be people hired for specific events, such as the Council of the Federation and even some of the honours and awards banquets that we hold, that we have. And then we are ensuring, we're trying to ensure that the people that are working in our office have the ability to coordinate the overall events. And if we need individuals hired to actually do the work during the events, that they can be hired on a short-term basis or offer a specific contract.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. Now you indicated earlier that hires are done through the Public Service Commission. So can you describe or have one of your officials describe in terms of hires that have gone on at protocol, exactly how . . . what was the process for hiring these people? Did you receive applications — I thinking about protocol in particular — applications from Public Service Commission? Was the Public Service Commission there as part of the hiring process? I'm just curious to know exactly how people in protocol are hired.

Mr. Mantey: — Mr. Chairman, to the member through you, there are a number of individuals who had been, when I became deputy minister, who were there already, so they've been many, many long-time employees.

For example in the replacement of the chief of protocol, a national competition was held. Interviews were carried out following the normal process. For the Council of the Federation, we looked at the reallocation of resources from within the ministry, and they were brought, some individuals were brought into the protocol office for a period of time to assist with the Council of the Federation. There are turnovers. We had one protocol officer who went to another ministry, and as a result, we kept that position vacant.

What we do is we look at the credibility, I mean, and the qualifications of all of the individuals — did they meet the criteria? The job descriptions are prepared by the Public Service Commission. As the member will know, Mr. Chairman, that the majority of this ministry, as in keeping in past practice, is done by order in council appointment. So as a result, they are all order in council appointments.

In this current budget, we had to look at some positions, the elimination of some positions as a result of the exercise. And as a result, some of those positions were eliminated. But we follow through with the support of central management services that we get the normal course of action by way of hiring individuals in OPS [Office of the Provincial Secretary].

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Chair, in the past, I have thought of people in protocol as being professional public servants and not

other than that, and the minister's official has indicated that this is done by order in council. But there are people who have order in councils but they still go through the Public Service Commission process in order that we can be assured as a public that people that are dealing in protocol, particularly with our honours program, that the people are highly professional and not political or partisan.

And I guess what I'm wanting to understand is when this Provincial Secretary in particular hires people for the protocol office, does it go through what I would call the Public Service Commission process where jobs are advertised, people get to apply for those jobs. I'm talking about highly skilled people get to apply for those jobs and that there is a process that I would consider to be a professional process where we bring professional public servants to these positions. And that's what I'm interested in knowing.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — To the member, I'm sure the member isn't saying that she doesn't believe that the people that are working in the protocol office now are not professional people. They are specialized people, and we rely on them to make sure that the events and the work that is done within the Provincial Secretary are done in a way that honours and distinguishes Saskatchewan.

That is our goal, is to make sure that the job done is in a professional manner. And I'm sure that the work that we have done and the comments that have been heard in the last number of months will indicate that their work has always been to a standard that cannot be disputed and that we're working hard to make sure that Saskatchewan is standing out from the rest.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Chair, I think, having been a member of this Assembly for several years, that the people that have been in our protocol and dealt with our honours program have — our provincial honours and awards program — the official protocol office have been professional and good public servants. But I also understand that these people have gone through a process, and they were never seen to be partisans or political people.

I guess I want assurances from the minister that the Public Service Commission is involved in hiring in order that we can be assured as the public that our protocol office that handles our provincial honours and awards program and is the official protocol office for our province, that the people who are coming on board are not only seen to be above politics but are above politics.

And that's why I'm interested in knowing, is the Public Service Commission involved? Are these jobs advertised in order that all members of the legislature and the public can be assured that this is an office that is seen and is beyond reproach?

[15:45]

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you to the member opposite. And I know that there's a central management services that we work through, that there is job descriptions that are very important, that everyone who is working in this area meets these qualifications, and that at the end of the day the work that has been asked of the people that are working in this very important office is done correctly and that we continue to be above

reproach when it comes to the work at the end of the day.

And I know that the member opposite is well aware that we are — and I said so in my opening comments — that there has been decreases in the amount of money that's been available in all ministries. And this one, the Office of the Provincial Secretary is no different than the other ones. So we are continuing to ensure that our staff is doing the best job. We still have 24.4 people that are working within the Provincial Secretary. Every one of them is doing the job that we are proud of.

Ms. Atkinson: — Short, quick question to the minister who also happens to be the Minister of the Public Service Commission: is the Public Service Commission involved in the hiring at the protocol office and the Provincial Secretary?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — We follow all the rules of the Public Service Commission.

Ms. Atkinson: — No, you might say you follow the rules. Is the Public Service Commission involved?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — No, they are not involved.

Ms. Atkinson: — They're not.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — No.

Ms. Atkinson: — Now I just want to ask a question . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, just a quick question. Does the Provincial Secretary fall under the Public Service Commission or not?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Yes, to the member opposite. We are subject to the Act.

Ms. Atkinson: — Pardon me . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . So if you're subject to the Act, can you explain why the Public Service Commission is not involved in hiring?

Mr. Mantey: — Mr. Chairman, we work co-operatively with the Public Service Commission. We follow their guidelines. We follow their rules. The job descriptions have been approved by the Public Service Commission. If the member looks at the orders in council, they will see all the provisions of *The Public Service Act* are provided under there. So we work with them to ensure that our job descriptions . . . Again because this is a very specialized area in protocol and honours. We always work with the Public Service Commission to ensure that we are following the guidelines and the job description as approved by them.

Ms. Atkinson: — Do you follow all the provisions of the Act?

Mr. Mantey: — Mr. Chairman, to the best of my knowledge, yes, we follow the provisions of the Act.

Ms. Atkinson: — Because if you follow the provisions of the Act . . . The Public Service Commission, because you fall under the Act, has to be involved. And so I just want to make this point to you, Minister. There are people that work in Office of the Provincial Secretary that have been there for a very long time — and I'm talking about protocol and honours and other parts of the Provincial Secretary — that have been there for a

very long time and are professional public servants. I think you do a disservice to the people who are being hired when you don't involve the Public Service Commission in order that the public can be assured that these are professional public servants.

Because there is some question, Minister, there is some question that there are some hirings that are being done that are political, and that these are not people who go through the Public Service Commission route and are seen to be public servants and are public servants. And you've just admitted to this House that you do not follow, you do not have the Public Service Commission involved in your hirings, which puts a pall over the people who are being hired, even though they may meet all of the credentials.

And may I just suggest for the future in order that you not only be, but be seen to be above politics at the protocol office and the Provincial Secretary — and I'm not talking about the cabinet secretary, but the Provincial Secretary — that you follow the rules of the Public Service Commission and you have the Public Service Commission involved in hiring. Because this has been brought to not only my attention, and I'm from Saskatoon, but it's been brought to my attention that it's just not all above board at the moment, and that people are being hired not through the normal process.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — To the member opposite, we follow all the standards of the Public Service Commission. We have a group of people that are working in our office that are not only highly professional and experts in their area, but are providing a great service to the people in the province. I would think that the member opposite would be also inclined to agree that there has to be a, that at the end of the day we have to make sure that the job that is done is done in a way that everyone is proud of. And we are working with the Public Service Commission to make sure they get all, they meet the criteria.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Madam Minister, you can have, you know, the best intentions in the world but if you don't follow the rules and you don't follow the legislation and you don't have the Public Service Commission involved, what you do is you place the people who you believe are highly professional and wonderful that have been hired under your administration into a great deal of difficulty. Because they are not seen to be professional public servants and they're not seen to be that because they are not going through the Public Service Commission process.

And may I just make a friendly suggestion, that if you want to have a protocol office and a Provincial Secretary's office that is not only seen to be, but is, a professional public service, then may I suggest with great respect that you go through the public service process when you're hiring people so that you don't put employees in this position.

And with that, Mr. Chair, I'll turn it over to any other colleagues that may want to speak on the Provincial Secretary and the protocol office estimates.

The Chair: — Seeing no other questions or discussion, we'll move on to the vote. It's vote no. 80, Office of the Provincial Secretary. Central management and services, subvote (OP01) in

the amount of \$663,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Provincial Secretary, subvote (OP02) in the amount of 2,754,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Office of the Provincial Secretary, vote 80: 3,417,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2011, the following sums for the Office of the Provincial Secretary in the amount of 3,417,000.

Mr. Allchurch moves that. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Vote 80 agreed to.]

The Chair: — That concludes our discussions with the minister in charge of the Provincial Secretary and vote 80. I'd like to thank the minister and her officials for joining us today and answering our questions. We do have some other work in front of the committee, so I think we will excuse the minister and the officials and move on to that when they have completed . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. McCall has a comment as well.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. On behalf of the opposition, thanks to the minister and officials for being here today for estimates. Merci bien.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I would like to also thank the members of the committee for their time and their questions. And I'd also like to thank the people that are working in this ministry for their great work.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. I think we will continue on as the officials and the minister leave us. We have limited time here in the Chamber, so we will get right into it.

**General Revenue Fund
Government Services
Vote 13**

The Chair: — The next is vote 13, Government Services. The committee considered the main estimates, vote 13, Government Services, on April 20th, 2010, but did not vote on the amounts. We have the agreement of the committee. I will now call the vote on the amount for Government Services, vote 13. Is it agreed from the committee?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Vote 13, Government Services, central management and services, subvote (GS01) in the amount of 45,000. There is no vote as this amount is statutory.

Accommodation services, subvote (GS02) in the amount of 10,146,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Transportation services (GS05) in the amount of zero dollars for . . . This amount is informational purposes only. There is no vote needed.

Government support services (GS06) in the amount of 406,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Project management (GS03) in the amount of zero dollars. This is for informational purposes only. There is no vote needed.

Purchasing (GS04) in the amount of 1,875,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Major capital asset acquisitions (GS07) in the amount of 12,548,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Amortization of capital assets in the amount of zero dollars. This is for informational purposes only. There is no vote needed.

Government Services, vote 13: 24,975,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2011, the following sum for the Government Services in the amount of 24,975,000.

Mr. Weekes moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Vote 13 agreed to.]

**General Revenue Fund
Finance — Debt Servicing
Vote 12**

The Chair: — The committee also considered the vote of the Ministry of Finance estimates, vote 18 on April 30th, 2010; however, vote 12, Finance – Debt Servicing, a statutory vote amount, was not called before the committee. I would like to do this now. Does the committee agree?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Vote 12, Finance – Debt Servicing, Debt servicing (FD01) in the amount of 413,000,000. There is no vote as this is statutory.

Crown corporation debt servicing (FD02) in the amount of

22,000,000. There is no vote as this amount is statutory.

Finance — Debt Servicing, vote 12: 435,000,000. There is no vote as this is statutory.

[Vote 12 — Statutory.]

The Chair: — Other statutory amounts. There is a number of statutory estimates and supplementary estimates that were referred to our committee. In the Estimates book these are under lending and investing activities, debt redemption, and sinking fund payments – government share.

These are all statutory votes for information of the committee. I will be calling each vote. However, these are statutory amounts. Therefore, the committee does not need to vote on the resolution.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan
Vote 151**

The Chair: — Vote 151, Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan, statutory. Loans, subvote (MF01) in the amount of 20,000,000. There is no vote as this is statutory.

[Vote 151 — Statutory.]

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation
Vote 139**

The Chair: — Vote 139, government gaming corporation, statutory. Loans, subvote (GC01) in the amount of 7,000,000. There is no vote as this is statutory.

[Vote 139 — Statutory.]

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation
Vote 154**

The Chair: — Vote 154, Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation, statutory. Loans, subvote (SO01) in the amount of 15,000,000. There is no vote as this is statutory.

[Vote 154 — Statutory.]

[16:00]

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Vote 140**

The Chair: — Vote 140, Saskatchewan Water Corporation, statutory. Loans, subvote (SW01) in the amount of 17,000,000. There is no vote as this is statutory.

[Vote 140 — Statutory.]

**General Revenue Fund
Debt Redemption, Sinking Fund and Interest Payments
Debt Redemption
Vote 175**

The Chair: — Vote 175, Debt redemption, statutory. Debt redemption, vote 175, in the amount of 687,320,000. There is no vote as this is statutory.

[Vote 175 — Statutory.]

**General Revenue Fund
Debt Redemption, Sinking Fund and Interest Payments
Sinking Fund Payments — Government Share
Vote 176**

The Chair: — Vote 176, sinking fund payments — government share, statutory. Sinking fund payments — government share, vote 176, in the amount of 54,619,000. There is no vote as this is statutory.

[Vote 176 — Statutory.]

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — November
Lending and Investing Activities
Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan
Vote 151**

The Chair: — Vote 151, Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan, statutory. Loans, subvote (MF01) in the amount of 30,908,000. There is no vote as this is statutory.

These are for the supplementary estimates and that was vote 151.

[Vote 151 — Statutory.]

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — November
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation
Vote 139**

The Chair: — I will now move to vote 139, Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation, statutory. Loans, subvote (GC01) in the amount of 6,000,000. There is no vote as this is statutory.

[Vote 139 — Statutory.]

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — November
Sinking Fund Payments — Government Share
Vote 176**

The Chair: — Vote 176, sinking fund payments — government share, statutory. Sinking fund payments — government share, vote 176 in the amount of 112,000. There is no vote as this is a statutory amount.

[Vote 176 — Statutory.]

The Chair: — The Clerk is handing out the 10th report of the

Standing Committee on the Crown and Central Agencies. Committee, you have before you a draft of the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. We require a member to move the following motion:

That the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

Mr. Bradshaw has moved. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. The committee has now concluded all of the work before us this afternoon. I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment.

Mr. Bradshaw: — That would be me.

The Chair: — Mr. Bradshaw moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. This meeting of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee now stands adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 16:03.]