



Standing Committee on Estimates

Hansard Verbatim Report

No. 5 – May 30, 2002



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Twenty-fourth Legislature

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES
2002**

Graham Addley, Chair
Saskatoon Sutherland

Donna Harpauer, Vice-Chair
Watrous

Ron Harper
Regina Northeast

Carolyn Jones
Saskatoon Meewasin

Ken Krawetz
Canora-Pelly

Peter Prebble
Saskatoon Greystone

Milton Wakefield
Lloydminster

Daryl Wiberg
Saskatchewan Rivers

Kevin Yates
Regina Dewdney

The committee met at 08:37.

The Chair: — Order. I call the Standing Committee on Estimates to order. The committee's orders of reference was agreed to by the Legislative Assembly on May 25, 2002 as follows:

That the estimates for the Legislative Assembly, vote 21; the Provincial Auditor, vote 28; the Chief Electoral Officer, vote 34; the Information and Privacy Commissioner, vote 55; the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate, vote 56; the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, vote 57; as well as the supplementary estimates for the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate, vote 56 be withdrawn from the committee.

The agenda has been distributed prior to the meeting with one slight change, that the Provincial Auditor will go before the Ombudsman.

**General Revenue Fund
Conflict of Interest Commissioner
Vote 57**

Subvote (CC01)

The Chair: — To that end, I will welcome Mr. Speaker, Myron Kowalsky, to the committee. And I would invite Mr. Speaker to introduce his officials.

The Speaker: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. It's nice to have a prompt start to the meeting; I appreciate that.

And we will be having all of the independent officers before the committee today and I'm pleased that we were starting with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Gerald Gerrand, who is seated beside me.

And without carrying on here, I'll just turn the mike over to Mr. Gerrand and ask him if he has any comments to make first and then I'm sure he'll be open to questions following that. So, Mr. Gerrand.

Mr. Gerrand: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I don't think I have any comments. I thank you for arranging to have me go first. This is truly a case of age before beauty, as you look about this room. I think the only thing I can say is that you'll notice that I'm here with my cap in my hand.

I'd be pleased to answer any questions with regard to the role of . . .

The Chair: — After that pithy report, I open the floor to questions on vote 57, Conflict of Interest Commissioner, (CC01). Is the committee ready for the question? Were there any discussions?

Mr. Wakefield: — Just a quick question, Mr. Commissioner. Do you find that you're curtailed in any way by the budgetary process or the demands placed on you?

Mr. Gerrand: — Not presently. The budget does afford me with the resources to do the things that I have been called upon to do, the things that I am obliged to do statutorily under the Act.

From time to time I'm called upon to conduct an inquiry and provide a report to the Speaker and sometimes to the Premier as set out in the Act. Necessarily, those endeavours are time-consuming, but I've been able to do them within the time frames that I think are reasonable. I suppose it could develop that if there were a larger number of requests for opinions and advice that I might not have the resources that I think that I should have. Presently I think I do have the resources.

Mr. Wakefield: — Just a follow up, Mr. Chair. Mr. Commissioner, is the . . . considered a full-time job on your part? Are you expending most of your time at this?

Mr. Gerrand: — Well it technically cannot be a full-time job because I also perform the role of Privacy Commissioner — Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Similarly, that role cannot technically be viewed as a full-time job because of my responsibilities of Conflict of Interest Commissioner. I do feel though that I make myself available in both roles through normal office hours to do whatever has to be done in both areas.

The Chair: — Further questions on this vote? Okay, Conflict of Interest Commissioner, (CC01) for the sum of \$122,000. Is that agreed?

Subvote (CC01) agreed to.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Gerrand, in your role as Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

**General Revenue Fund
Information and Privacy Commissioner
Vote 55**

The Chair: — I think we can dispense with the introduction of officials, but if there are any opening remarks, now would be a good time to make them.

Mr. Gerrand: — I have no opening remarks. The budget is there. The items are the same as in previous years and the amounts, I think, are identical. And the amounts that have been actually expended during the two and a half years that I've performed this role, I think, are virtually identical.

The Chair: — Okay, Information and Privacy Commissioner, (IP01). Is the committee ready for the question?

Okay, Information and Privacy Commissioner, (IP01), for the sum of \$105,000. Is that agreed? That is carried.

Subvote (IP01) agreed to.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Gerrand, for being here today.

Mr. Gerrand: — Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

**General Revenue Fund
Ombudsman and Children's Advocate
Vote 56**

Subvote (OC01)

The Chair: — Well we had changed the agenda so that the Provincial Auditor could go before the Ombudsman, but the Provincial Auditor is not here at the moment. So I guess we'll go back to the very original agenda, which would be the Ombudsman and that is Vote 56 found on page 117 of the Estimates book.

And I would ask Mr. Speaker to introduce his officials and if there is any opening remarks.

The Speaker: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my immediate left is Barb Tomkins, who is the Provincial Ombudsman. And beside her is Lynne Fraser, a human resource and financial administrator. And I would invite the Provincial Ombudsman to make an opening remark if she wishes.

Ms. Tomkins: — I'll just say briefly, as Mr. Gerrand said, the budget document I believe is before you and I don't intend to go through it.

We had requested an increase of \$72,000. We were allotted the same amount that we had received for '01-02 — I really have trouble with these '01 things — and we have made adjustments to our budget, and our projections are to accommodate what is in impact for us, a decrease, because the 72,000 was expenses that we had to incur and could not reduce. And if that's a matter of interest, I'd be pleased to speak further to how we accommodated that sum.

Other than that, I will be pleased to answer your questions.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you and good morning.

Ms. Tomkins: — Good morning.

Ms. Harpauer: — How has your case study increased from last year to this year, the number of cases you had to deal with?

Ms. Tomkins: — The cases increased from 2000 to 2001 for complaints that are within the jurisdiction of the office — that is complaints against provincial government agencies. In 2001 it was 2,432, just slightly more — I think it's four-point-some per cent more — than 2000, when it was 2,327. I'm not going to give you precise numbers unless you want them, but in terms of complaints not against government, about 2,000 in each of 2000 and 2001, which is about normal.

The increase this year, last year, I think for the last three or four years, has not been significant from year to year. It's been around four to four and a half per cent per year — fairly steady. But I was looking back and, frankly myself, was a little surprised to find that over the last five years, it's been a 25 per cent increase, over the last 10 per cent, a 50 per cent increase.

But we are managing it and I wasn't requesting additional funds

for that purpose.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. Does your office have the authority to look into government appointed boards?

Ms. Tomkins: — Generally, yes. But these questions of jurisdiction in that kind of area can get technical. I have jurisdiction over what the legislation refers to as an agency of government, which is defined. And in regard to boards, it speaks of our having jurisdiction over boards, all of the members of which are appointed by government or by cabinet, as opposed to a board where some of the members are.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you.

Ms. Tomkins: — So it depends on the makeup of the board and the appointments to the board, where those come from.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you and good morning.

Ms. Tomkins: — Good morning.

Mr. Wakefield: — You had mentioned that you had requested additional funds and then you've re-arranged so that you've been able to accommodate the budget as shown. Are you of a lesser capacity in your office because of this? What have you . . . Have you been able to continue with the same kind of work and workload?

Ms. Tomkins: — It depends how you view our workload. Many people look at the Ombudsman's office as an office that investigates complaints against government, which is certainly true and which is the primary thing that we do. We do that via the investigation of individual complaints that are brought to us by members of the public. And also, I have the ability on my own motion to commence investigations.

But there is other work that the office does and that the legislation requests that we do, being alternative dispute resolution and public education. In order to accommodate the, what to me was the \$72,000 shortfall although it was a zero per cent increase budget, our office is comprise . . . our office budget is comprised primarily, like most budgets, of salaries and rent.

Probably — and I certainly don't know this, I haven't done a comparison — but probably a higher percentage of our total budget is salaries and rent than from any departments. Plus we're small and because we're small we're less likely to have vacancies which, when you have vacancies in a position, it gives you flexibility in managing your budget.

It happens that we had a vacant position at the time that the hiring freeze was announced. We did intend and do intend . . . in fact, the position's been advertised now. But there was a delay of a couple of months before that was advertised. That's a frontline position and is within the guidelines that it be filled. And we expect the position will be filled within the next month or so. But we were able to effect some savings by virtue of the fact that the position has been empty since the end of February, so a couple of months of this fiscal year.

The most major impact for us was we abolished our communications coordinator's position, which is a permanent abolition, in order to recover some funds to apply . . . to enable us to meet our obligations to staff and rent and to enable us to continue to do our work. So in that sense our capacity to do public education is affected.

We will continue to do work in that area but it will now be apportioned among members of the staff who clearly have other duties, but we'll manage to do some of that. I'm learning a little bit myself right now as we're working on having a couple of reports published, and a few of us are having to learn how that's done and little bits about editing and all sorts of good things. But we have currently abolished the communications coordinator's position.

We have a position allocated for major investigations. The current appointment expires tomorrow and it will not be filled at least until fall and possibly not then. And if filled then, probably for short-term projects only.

There have been other impacts, but that is the . . . those are the main things we have done to manage the shortfall.

Mr. Wakefield: — Just to follow up, and maybe I should know this, what is the FTE (full-time equivalents) for the Ombudsman?

Ms. Tomkins: — I know how many people, but I don't know how many FTEs . . . (inaudible) . . . I'm sorry, we don't have that handy. I thought we did. There are, as of today, 8 . . . 17 . . . I believe I'm correct in saying 17 people employed by the office, including myself, in the two offices. But with one position vacant and to be filled shortly.

Mr. Wakefield: — And if I could, Mr. Chair, just one other follow-up. You talked about some of the workload that may be required or requested of you. What happens if there is an exceptional work . . . an item directed to you? How can you cope with that?

Ms. Tomkins: — It would depend on the nature of what's directed and what kind of time frame. We don't like, obviously, to take a great length of time to do stuff. But one way to manage things — not my preferred way — is to put investigations sort of in the queue and when you get to it you get to it.

If something were referred to us which was major and which couldn't wait, or we couldn't get to it even with waiting in a reasonable time, I'm speculating here but I expect I might be back at this committee or another committee or in some other form asking for additional funds to enable us to do something extraordinary.

Within our usual and anticipated work, with the adjustments we've made, we're able to manage. But if something extraordinary came or was referred, we might have some difficulties.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you. My question's fairly simple. Often issues that are referred to the Ombudsman are often also referred to individual MLAs (Member of the Legislative

Assembly) to work on. And it really has to do with sort of the coordination of information. I know in some cases they will go to the Ombudsman and often come to us and we may be able to resolve the issue. And then I hear some time later that maybe the Ombudsman's office hasn't been informed that it's resolved.

Is there any formal way that would make things easier for you in sort of communicating those types of issues I guess? And how many investigations might you be continuing on that are you know perhaps satisfactory to the individual? Because often the individual just wants their issue dealt with. If it's dealt with it's . . . you know they don't inform anybody type of thing.

Are there ways to make that easier because there's often several entry points that a person goes to, right?

Ms. Tomkins: — Yes there are, and we've certainly encountered situations where an individual is dealing through our office, through an MLA's office at the same time, corresponding with or dealing with the minister's office, and other forms of recourse.

My preference is that that doesn't happen all at the same time, and we will never discourage any individual from using any form of recourse that's available to them. But in certain cases we will discourage them or say finish what you're doing with the MLA or the minister or whoever, and then come and talk to us. And I certainly will say that in certain cases.

I'm not aware . . . I'm not saying it doesn't happen because your question is that I'm not aware. But I'm not aware of cases where something has been resolved through an MLA's office or through the minister's office, and my office wasn't aware of that.

I am aware of cases where we've undertaken the investigation of a complaint, it becomes resolved through some other recourse and we continue on. But we continue on — that's a conscious decision by us. In some cases we will say the matter is resolved, it's over, and we'll discontinue investigating and close our file.

But in other cases our investigation looks at different questions, has different information and often more information in more depth than the specific question that the individual brought to us. And if we believe there are issues through that that should be investigated, and if the individual does not object, and they rarely do, we will continue the investigation.

But it . . . usually we know if an individual is dealing with other agencies, and usually they'll tell us when it's been rectified or resolved through other channels.

We've seen the reverse where people are telling their MLA or the minister that our office hasn't been able to help them or hasn't . . . or neglects to mention that we're involved. And the information they're relaying to the MLA is completely incorrect. And we've had actual cases where we've resolved things and the individual is telling the MLA that it's still outstanding. I don't comprehend why this happens, but it does.

Part of the problem is that we work in confidence. And as you

may know from your own experience, if a constituent of yours comes to our office or is referred to our office, we will generally — and I . . . there are exceptions — but generally not talk to the MLA or the agent or whomever about what we're doing, what we've done, what we've concluded or why, because our statute generally prohibits that. Although your constituent can certainly tell you what we're doing and show you our correspondence. But we will not generally give that information to you.

Mr. Krawetz: — You said your draft budget contained an increase of \$72,000.

Ms. Tomkins: — Yes.

Mr. Krawetz: — And then you've indicated to us how you've managed to stay within the expenditure of 5 . . . 1.5 million by making, prominently, staff changes. What was the 72,000 — I'm interested in knowing — what . . . Why were you expecting that your expenses were going to rise by \$72,000.

Ms. Tomkins: — We had 57,000, I believe of it, was salary increases which are instructed by PSC (Public Service Commission).

We had one staff member who had been in scope, who has moved out of scope, and as part of that process was reclassified and would receive a salary increase as a consequence of that.

We had in scope salary increases as a result of union/management collective bargaining. We had a relatively small, but still having impact, increase in our rent projected by SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation). And I think there was 8,000 of the 72 that we could . . . Oh, I'm sorry. There was an increase to my salary directed by the Board of Internal Economy, which was also part of that.

There was a small piece of it which is part of how we've managed it, which was we had asked for \$5,000 increase for . . . to be allocated for the purchase of computer hardware and related accessories. With an office of 19, we have \$3,000 allocated for that purpose. And it simply wasn't adequate and we were asking it be increased to eight. So one of the things we've done is simply left it at three.

There was one other piece that was discretionary. Oh, we had projected an increase . . . CVA (Central Vehicle Agency) is projecting an increase in the cost that they will charge for the operation of government vehicles, of which we have four counting the one that's designated to myself. And I think it was 3,000 in that regard we were asking.

But it was the 57, 58,000 for salary and rent increases that was the predominant part of the request.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Any further questions on this subvote. Okay. Ombudsman (OC01) the amount of \$1,533,000. Is that agreed? That's carried.

Subvote (OC01) agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Ombudsman and Children's Advocate
Vote 56**

Subvote (OC01)

The Chair: — Ombudsman (OC01) for the amount of \$11,000. Were there any questions on that aspect of it or is the committee ready for the question? Question. Okay. Ombudsman (OC01) for the amount of \$11,000. Is that agreed? That is carried.

Subvote (OC01) agreed to.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Ms. Tomkins, for your presentation today.

Committee members, what I would suggest is, that given the Ombudsman and the Children's Advocate are part of the same vote, that we proceed with the Children's Advocate and then proceed to the Provincial Auditor. Is that agreed? All right.

**General Revenue Fund
Ombudsman and Children's Advocate
Vote 56**

Subvote (OC02)

The Chair: — And we'll take a brief moment while the officials get assembled. And I would invite Mr. Speaker to introduce his officials.

The Speaker: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Seated beside me is Deborah Parker-Loewen who is our Children's Advocate. And with her today is Bernie Rodier, human resources and financial administrator to the Children's Advocate. And I turn the mike over to Deborah Parker-Loewen.

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Good morning. Thank you for having me here. It's an honour and a pleasure to review our estimates with you today.

As the Ombudsman said, as you can see in the 2002-2003 estimates, the Board of Internal Economy recommended an expenditure of 1.118 million for the Children's Advocate office for this year. This was a zero increase from our 2001-02 budget and while that wasn't what we requested from the Board, we've also prepared our budget based on that estimate to 821,000 allocated for salaries and 297,000 allocated for other payments. And I can give you further details on that if you wish.

I would like to just make a couple of remarks. Firstly, I would really like to thank the staff in my office for their continued commitment to the children of Saskatchewan and to the advocacy work that we do. We continue to work in a fairly high-pressured office environment with resources that we work within.

As you may have noted in my 2001 annual report, which I tabled with you on May 14, my staff made over 100 presentations in communities throughout Saskatchewan last year. We responded to nearly 1,200 new files, new issues raised in our office by Saskatchewan citizens. This was a 16 per cent

increase in our individual advocacy work from the previous year. And that translates into, of course, 1,200 new files opened in our office last year.

I would note for you that we had in 1997, five years ago, we had 52 new requests per month come into our office. And in 2001, we had 99 new requests per month come into our office. So we've almost doubled each month the number of new files we open in our office in the past five years.

In addition, you may have noted in our annual report, we're becoming increasingly involved in a number of systemic advocacy issues and we've carried those forward from year to year.

Last year we did organize our individual advocacy work into four geographic areas. We wanted to primarily focus on more community-based approach to our advocacy work. And we also worked very hard last year to increase the services that we provide to children in northern Saskatchewan.

We continue to work on the child death reviews, but that is an area of increased concern for me. We are completing investigations this year, 2002, of 1999 deaths, and we are working on preparing a second report of those deaths which we will be releasing sometime this fiscal year.

This is obviously too long a delay in terms of completing those deaths and providing information to the public and at some level of accountability on those child deaths, and that troubles me. We are meeting with government officials to discuss this and explore options for how we can move that process forward more efficiently, but it really does take time and resources to complete those child deaths reviews.

Last year we reallocated some of our existing budget, and we did hire a second investigator who works with the child death review team, but we continue to be delayed. We're also continuing to work with the provincial Child Death Advisory Committee, which I chair with the coroner. And we've established a multidisciplinary review team of a variety of folks that work with us to review those deaths and give us a medical/legal/police perspective on the files.

The concerns of Aboriginal children, particularly the increased numbers of Aboriginal children in child welfare and the youth justice system continue to be a challenge, and those numbers are continuing to rise. And I think we need . . . of course, there's jurisdictional questions, resource needs, and increased travel requirements in order to meet the pressures on us in the Aboriginal communities.

Just a couple of other matters. We're very pleased to continue to support the work of the provincial youth delegation. We have about 15 young people, aged 16 to 21, who come from all over the province and who represent a wide variety of interests and backgrounds, provide advice and guidance to our office. They meet in our office four times a year and in-between times they do committee work and other activities. And we sincerely appreciate their insightful and often candid and thoughtful guidance to us.

So we have included in our annual report our strategic plan with

our goals and objectives. And if you have any questions about that or our estimates, I'd be pleased to answer them. Thank you.

The Chair: — Children's Advocate (OC02). Is the committee ready for the question?

I recognize the member for . . . I've been advised that this is a friendly and informal place, so I keep saying the member for, but it's Mr. Krawetz and then Mr. Prebble.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you. And you may have this in your report and I'm just wondering when you indicated that there's a significant increase of over 16 per cent in cases, do you track where the cases . . . the increase in cases as far as whether they're coming from a particular community — city, urban versus rural, Aboriginal population versus non-Aboriginal. Do you track where you have seen a more significant increase than is normal?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — Yes and we did report this in our report, that last year we had an increase in health-related calls to our office.

The calls . . . traditionally and typically and appropriately, most of the calls into our office are with regards to the Department of Social Services, and I assume next year Corrections and Public Safety, because that's where children primarily would receive the kind of government service that we would review.

But last year we had quite a significant increase in the number of health-related calls come into our office.

Mr. Krawetz: — Okay and then specific to those health-related concerns, do you track where they are coming from as far as geographical location in the province? Is there an area of the province that seems to give more claims and more concerns to you?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — We do track that but we don't think it's very reliable data. Obviously where there's higher population, there's a higher number of calls.

We have . . . I have to say, we have a very poor tracking system. I had brought forward, I think two or three years ago, a request to update and improve our tracking system and we didn't get the funds for that request. And we have not had the funds and have not made the tracking system a priority in the last two years. We've made the other services we provide a priority.

For us to undertake an update of our tracking system would be a fairly major expense which we may put forth in our budget request next year. The tracking system we're using, just for your information, was adapted from the Ombudsman's tracking system seven years ago when the Children's Advocate office was established and we never established our own tracking system. And we're realizing now that, of course, there are many shortcomings to having used the Ombudsman's tracking system which doesn't, of course, ask some questions that we would be interested in.

But the one about where the files come from, that is in our tracking system. I don't . . . I would say we haven't done a

really clear analysis of that though.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. First of all, I just want to say to the Children's Advocate and her staff that we . . . you'll notice that on the government side all the members of the special committee to stop the sexual exploitation of children happen just by chance to be on this Estimates Committee.

But I know on behalf of both ourselves and the members of the opposition who served on the committee, co-chaired by myself and Arlene Julé, we really appreciated your input into the work that we did. The office gave very valuable advice to the special committee. So thank you for that.

My question is with respect to the timely review of child deaths that you're examining now. And I take it you're about . . . well you're at least two years behind in terms of the analysis of those. To what degree is the analysis of those deaths resulting in recommendations around prevention, preventive policy to prevent the same kind of thing happening again? Could you comment on that?

Ms. Parker-Loewen: — I can't give you an exact percentage. Some of the files that we examine, there is . . . what we find is that the children have received excellent care, excellent service. And we don't have findings at all in relation to recommendations around prevention or around service delivery, which are our two major objectives in conducting those deaths.

We're looking at, is there something here that could have been preventable or is there something here around service delivery that could be improved? Those are our . . . plus the whole piece of public accountability, which of course, even if we didn't have findings, it's a form of an audit.

We do though have, from time to time, issues related to things that we think could improve the lives of children and possibly prevent their deaths. We've had a couple of files where we believe the death was clearly preventable.

And then there are these other files where we think that had some things been different, the death may have been prevented. For example some suicides, the occasional homicide, some of the what are variously classified as either SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) deaths or other natural cause deaths, but which appear to us to be deaths as a result of an intoxicated adult sleeping, co-sleeping with an infant child, possibly rolling over. The evidence is not conclusive on those, but it's compelling.

And so we have made, for example, a recommendation to the Interdepartmental Child Action Plan Steering Committee and the Saskatchewan Health to do an increase in public education to parents around the risks of co-sleeping with your infant, particularly if you're intoxicated, and they've agreed to do that.

And I think now the Saskatchewan Institute on Prevention of Handicaps has undertaken that in a contractual way with Saskatchewan Health. So from time to time there are clearly preventable issues come through deaths.

The problem is we're only looking at a very small number of deaths. We look at about 30 deaths a year and in Saskatchewan

there are slightly over 200 child deaths a year. So we can't generalize from the small sample that we have. It's not a random sample. It's not a representative sample. It's a sample of deaths of children who, for some reason or other, have had some contact with the Department of Social Services. And so those deaths aren't very good in terms of population health or in terms of prevention kinds of indicators.

What would be ideal is if all the deaths in the province had some kind of an educated eye looking at them. And that's actually the conversation we're having right now with Saskatchewan Health, Justice, and Social Services is to look at how, how can we in an efficient manner have an educated eye on all the deaths and then from that select the ones that require a more extensive investigation. And perhaps out of that process we can get a more timely review.

So we're struggling with that and as are other jurisdictions across Canada. This last year, for example, I went to a federal-provincial-territorial meeting looking at best practices in child mortality review, and we're producing a Canadian document looking at what would be some ideal best practices when child deaths are being reviewed across jurisdictions. There are many issues relating to definitions and age and classification of death, that kind of thing. I won't take a lot of your time this morning, but this is a challenge for us and for others in Canada.

Mr. Prebble: — Yes. Well, Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank the Children's Advocate for that answer. I mean this is an area of concern to me. And I think it is important that it's timely because if we're going to have preventive practices put into effect, they're best put into effect in systems within 18 months of the event happening. And I think there's a certain amount of momentum lost after that.

So anyway, thank you for raising that issue with us. That's something that we could perhaps pursue on another occasion when we have a little more, a little more time. I'm conscious of time this morning, our time constraints.

The Chair: — Children's Advocate, (OC02), is the committee ready . . . Okay, for the amount of \$1,118,000. Is that agreed? That is carried.

Subvote (OC02) agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Ombudsman and Children's Advocate
Vote 56**

Subvote (OC02)

The Chair: — Is the committee ready for the question? Children's Advocate, (OC02) for the amount of \$44,000. Is that agreed? That is carried.

Subvote (OC02) agreed to.

The Chair: — Thank you very much Ms. Parker-Loewen, and we'll revert back to our agenda.

**General Revenue Fund
Provincial Auditor
Vote 28**

Subvote (PA01)

The Chair: — I would invite Mr. Speaker to introduce his officials.

The Speaker: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Well, it's my pleasure to welcome Mr. Fred Wendel who is here today for the first time in his official capacity as Provincial Auditor, although he's no stranger to this committee. And with him is Brian Atkinson, the assistant to the Provincial Auditor.

And seated against the outside wall is Angèle Borys, who is the principal for the support services; Sandra Walker, who is the manager of administration; and Heather Tomlin between them, and Heather is the assistant manager for administration.

So it's my pleasure at this time to welcome Fred Wendel and ask him to start with his opening remarks.

Mr. Wendel: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair. I have a brief presentation. I had a longer one but I shortened it up last night in the interest of time, so . . . I expected your time was of the essence. Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee and talk about our business plan. We've provided a copy of the plan to the Clerk for your information. We presented this plan to the Public Accounts Committee on December 6. That committee recommended the appropriation that we requested and that's the appropriation you are considering this morning.

The business and financial plan sets out our operating plan which is the results we plan to achieve; our goals and objectives and our strategies to achieve those results. The plan also sets out our financial plan to achieve the results.

Our business and financial plan has four parts. The first part explains what we do and why, as well as our financial proposal for this year, next year, and the previous three years. We discuss the forces and trends that affect our work, and the risk to achieving our objectives and how we manage those risks. In this part we also talk about our employees — the knowledge and skills and abilities where employees determine how well we can serve the Assembly.

We have about 60 people organized into five groups. At any time we have about 30 to 35 of our employees that are professional accountants and about 15 to 20 of our employees that are training to become professional accountants. Each year about five professional accountants leave the office. Many will go to government organizations. Each year we hire five new graduates from the two Saskatchewan universities.

Our employees on average are about 35 years old, believe it or not, and we have just slightly more female than male employees now, and I think that's a product of the business . . . the product of business colleges. There's more female people in the business colleges.

The second part of our plan is in appendix 1. In this part we

provide detailed financial information and detailed work plans for several years. In this part we also include a report from the auditor that audits our office, and the auditor's report provides you with assurance that our request for resources is reasonable to carry out the operating plan that's set out in the business plan.

The third part of our plan is in appendix 2. In this part we provide answers to questions previously posed by members of this committee and the Board of Internal Economy, and as we gather information from the Public Accounts Committee, we'll put those in too and provide that information upfront.

These are good questions and we encourage you to ask them of every organization to help you assess what they're doing, and we're certainly pleased to make that information available to you.

The fourth part of our plan is in appendix 3. In this part we provide the recommended estimates for our office. Under The Provincial Auditor Act, we're required to prepare estimates in a format that the Public Accounts Committee decides, and the estimates that are in there are following the same format as the rest of the officers of the Assembly, so it's consistent with that.

Before I discuss our actual request for resources, I want to make a few remarks. We've said that for many years legislators need certain information about our operating plan and our financial plan to assess our request for resources. We say that legislators need the same information when they assess the request for resources for other agencies.

First, legislators need to know that we're delivering the products and services that they need. Our operating plan sets out what we're planning to achieve in the way of products and services, and our measures and targets to monitor and report on how well we actually did in achieving those objectives.

We encourage legislators to review the operating plan and provide advice as to how we might improve on what we're doing.

Our work with the Public Accounts Committee, and more recently, with the Crown Corporations Committee helps us to gauge legislators' views of our work. And as I said earlier, the Public Accounts Committee has supported this operating plan.

Second, legislators need to know whether our request for resources is reasonable to carry out our operating plan. Page 33 of our business plan contains a report from the auditor who audits our office. The auditor reports that our request for resources is reasonable to carry out our operating plan.

Now we'll talk about our request for resources which appears on pages 5, 6, and 7 of the business plan. This year our request has two parts. We are requesting two appropriations. The first appropriation is for the same purpose as in the past. In our request for resources to audit government agencies during 2002-2003, we base our request on what we know about the number of government agencies and the state of their records at October 31, 2001 when we put this plan together.

For our first appropriation we request 5.379 million for the year

ending March 31, 2003. This request is \$243,000 more than last year, or about 4.7 per cent. We face cost pressures for 2003 totalling about \$320,000, or about 6.2 per cent. We plan to absorb \$77,000 or about one and a half per cent of the costs related to those pressures.

We explain on pages 5 and 6 the pressures that increase our costs for 2003: \$100,000 of the increased costs relates to new agencies the government created during 2001; \$204,000 of increased costs relates to providing the same economic salary adjustments and benefits that the government gave to other employees in the public sector; \$77,000 for increased costs relates to a new 10-year lease we signed with our landlord to continue to occupy the same space. The cost of renting space has increased substantially since 1996 when we last signed the lease with our landlord. Our search for the best price for our premises resulted in us remaining at the same location.

Also when you are considering our request, I want to point out that in June, after our accounts are audited, we will return about a half a million dollars to the General Revenue Fund. This amount is represented by around \$300,000 we had on hand at March 31, 2001 before the Act was changed and about \$200,000 representing the excess of our appropriation for 2002 over our actual expenses.

Also we forecast we will pay fees and other revenues to the General Revenue Fund of \$89,000 during 2003. Until this year, we could reduce our request for an appropriation for the amount of our fees and revenues. The changes to The Provincial Auditor Act now require us to pay our fees to the General Revenue Fund which results in increasing our appropriation requests.

We continue to try to find better ways to do our work. For example, for the year ended March 31, 1999, we had 61 employees to carry out our work. For 2003, we are forecasting we will need 59 employees. During the intervening four-year period, the number of new agencies created by the government increased the amount of work our office must do. To carry out all these new audits would require about three more employees than in 1999.

Our second appropriation is a contingency appropriation. The purpose of this appropriation is to provide resources for the office to respond to unplanned work, pressures to improve the timeliness of our work, and unplanned salary and benefit increases.

Until this year, we kept enough money on hand equal to about a month's salary and benefit expenses to respond to these matters. The changes to The Provincial Auditor Act require us to now pay the money we have on hand at the end of the year to the General Revenue Fund and to obtain a contingency appropriation.

We are requesting a contingency appropriation of \$348,000 for 2003. This amount represents one month's salary and benefit expenses. If we use the contingency appropriation during 2003, we would make a full report as to why we used the appropriation and the amount that we used in our 2003 annual report.

In closing, I want to say that for the last six years this committee has supported our office's request for resources and recommended the amount requested to carry out our work plan. The committee's support has allowed us to discharge our duties to the Assembly. Thank you for your patience. Any questions?

The Chair: — Provincial Auditor (PA01), is the committee ready for the question? Okay. (PA01), and the amount to be voted is different than the amount in the *Estimates* book because it contains statutory amounts. So the amount to be voted under (PA01) is \$5,254,000. Is that agreed? That is carried.

Subvote (PA01) agreed to.

Subvote (PA02) agreed to.

The Chair: — We are . . . completed the Provincial Auditor vote. Thank you very much, Mr. Wendel, for being here. And the next item before the committee is the Chief Electoral Officer . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, yes, Mr. Wendel.

Mr. Wendel: — I'd just like to thank the committee for their support again. I appreciate it very much. We'll do our best to continue to earn that support.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Wendel.

**General Revenue Fund
Chief Electoral Officer
Vote 34**

Subvote (CE01)

The Chair: — And I just should advise members that this amount is statutory so it does not require a vote, but Ms. Jan Baker is here to answer any questions. So I would invite Mr. Speaker to introduce his officials.

The Speaker: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Beside me is Chief Electoral Officer Jan Baker. She's been before the committee several times, so I think members are familiar with Ms. Baker. And I would just invite Ms. Baker for some opening remarks.

Ms. Baker: — Good morning. I too will keep my comments extremely brief. However, I did want to remind you, particular to my budget submission, that our expenditure estimates are presented in accordance with our offices' functions in what the office refers to as base year and non-base year format. Specifically our base year estimates comprise expenditure estimates associated with our annual operational activities. Our non-base year estimates include potential annual electoral events.

Specific to the office's 2002-3 expenditure estimates and in addition to the office's normal operating costs, our estimates associated with the provincial boundaries realignment and hosting of the Conference of Canadian Election Officials.

As you are familiar, funding for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer is based on statutory provision. The Board of Internal Economy recommended for expenditures associated

with the office's base year functions, an allocation of 811,000 for fiscal year 2002-3.

That said, I'd be pleased to answer any specific questions you may have at this time.

The Chair: — And now just to remind members that the chief electoral (CE01) is statutory so there's no need for a vote. But were there any questions at this time?

Mr. Krawetz: — Just a quick one, Mr. Chair. On salaries, Jan, you've had a fairly significant increase there. Is that for addition of new people or is that in preparation of hiring people to deal with the Boundaries Commission reports?

Ms. Baker: — No that's . . . the staff complement has now been filled. Initially, in the onset in 1998, the office identified a staff complement of five, went to Public Service Commission, prepared job descriptions, and identified potential salaries.

However the office functioned in a provisional staff capacity for a lengthy period of time. We have now staffed up our office and prior to meeting the staffing requirements, we returned to Public Service Commission, the salaries were enhanced substantively. I, as the other independent officers, have received a substantive salary increase.

Mr. Wakefield: — Good morning, and just a quick question about the Electoral Boundaries Commission. Can you give us any comment on the progress and when it may conclude?

Ms. Baker: — Well as you are well aware, an Electoral Boundaries Commission has been established. The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer has been identified as providing the technical support. I believe the preliminary or interim report is due July 9; a final report due October 9.

In the interim, following issuance of the interim report, will be public hearings that will be conducted by the commission across the province.

To date, I'm pleased to comment that we are on schedule.

Mr. Wakefield: — Good.

The Chair: — Any last questions?

Okay, well then we'll just initial that we have done this. And I would thank Ms. Baker, Chief Electoral Officer, for being here this morning. Thank you.

Subvote (CE01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Legislative Assembly
Vote 21**

Subvote (LG01)

The Chair: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps you could introduce the officials that are here? Is that appropriate?

The Speaker: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Yes,

it's quite appropriate. With me at this time is Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk of the Assembly, and of course, Greg Putz, is with us as well, Deputy . . . assistant to the Clerk.

Well members of the Assembly, I'm pleased to be here. And in the fact that everything's gone so quickly, the remarks that I was making . . . going to make have really expanded, given the time that I have available.

So I will . . . I do have a few comments and I will make them first and then introduce other officials when they . . . as they arrive.

I wanted to mention, first of all, that to put into context what I believe what the purpose of the Legislative Assembly office, working with the Speaker's office, is, and that is to provide the physical and human resource infrastructure that's needed so that the members can do the work that they're supposed to do in this legislature; namely, to be able to pass and amend any laws, and second to make sure that the voice of the people is heard. And so all of our work is geared towards that.

Every year it's a challenge to assess changing needs and look for ways to improve and do the best with the budget that's available. And I've found that one of the main things is that the — even though we do have a budget that's quite specific — the Legislative Assembly Office has to be prepared to be flexible because there are things in the budget that can change. And pressures on the budget can change as you go . . . as we go through the year.

The budget is composed of two parts. There's what is known as the statutory part where . . . which is mandated by law and not decided on an annual basis. And this is based on . . . The amount that goes into there is based on entitlement, according to a formula. And this is what is used to pay for all the constituency offices and the members' travel and the members' wages.

Then there's the budgetary part where the decisions are made based on the need of staffing to the Legislative Assembly Office and also the committee support. The committee support of course is the part that has to be quite flexible because this is often . . . in this case what the Assembly office has to do is respond to the needs that are put before the committees and sometimes these things aren't planned until partway into the session.

I want to take a few minutes to thank all of the people who are . . . work for the Legislative Assembly Office and mention a couple of accomplishments of the past year.

Visitors' services, we feel that the visitors' services are doing a really good job if the MLAs aren't forwarding complaints to the office.

And I must say that the reputation that our visitors' services have established in this Legislative Building — which is one of the major tourist items, tourist destinations in Regina — is very good. And also in addition they conduct a summer day camp for kids and they assist in all the special events in the legislature. And I would like . . . I really feel good about putting on public record a thank you for their work.

With respect to *Hansard*, this last year they did a conversion to digital audio transcription that has replaced the audio tapes, and we now have a system which is more efficient, has better sound quality, and therefore a more accurate transcription. And we haven't had any members complaining at all about being misquoted in *Hansard*.

Hansard has also gone through a recruitment and training of staff and this is a bit . . . something they have to do on an ongoing basis. And they are doing conversion of back issues of *Hansard* so that they are also . . . will be accessible by Internet. And this is being done on an ongoing basis when staff time is available.

The Clerk's office has responded to the requests of the Assembly to support three special committees last year. The one was on the child abuse through sexual exploitation; the Committee on Health Care; and plus the Rules Committee which has been working on proposals for the future.

There were two conferences that a lot of preparation went into. One was the Public Accounts Conference which had to be cancelled due to the September 11 events, and the other one was one that was executed, and that was the CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) Canadian seminar which was held here last October.

In addition to that the Clerk's office was involved in the placement of . . . second placement of the internship program. And what we've done with this program and with the administration and implementation of the first intake and this program, although it was initiated through the Speaker's office to get it on the ground, we've made a decision that the administration of it should be transferred to the Clerk's office.

So I want to go now to some of the things that were done last year and some of the highlights for the human resources administration and financial services office. And I could at this time maybe just pause for a moment and point out who these people are so that you can . . . you'll be able to identify.

First of all, with the Clerk's office, I think you . . . members are probably mostly familiar with the Clerk's office but we have . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Just Greg so far.

But with human resources and administration and financial services, we've got Linda Kaminski who just walked in, and is there anybody else from that? She's the director of human resource and services. And I will just proceed with that.

That office was responsible for the complex and for the . . . implementing the complex, very complex collective bargaining agreement. And it was partly retroactive, so there was a lot of work had to go into that.

They implemented the policy on the constituency assistant sick leave and vacation pay and they have taken . . . gone to all of the constituency offices actually and done the work in the Assembly here as well with respect to an inventory asset system which takes into account the depreciation schedules and greatly improves our ability to be able to account for all equipment that's owned by the Assembly for the work of the members.

They also did a . . . the work that was required following the changes in directives with respect to caucus grants, the amalgamation of the directives and grants to make it more streamlined and complementary to . . . streamlined complementary portions of it.

With us today also we have, I think, from Journals . . . nobody here from Journals. Now Journals is the . . . they're the people that put up . . . put together the *Votes and Proceedings*. And I just wanted to make mention that they are the people that set up the composite that you see in the hallways and also did the new little seating plan that everybody has access to and that visitors are often given when they come into the galleries.

People working with Pat Shaw in security have gone through and implemented a new photo ID (identification) system and I think pretty well everybody's used to using it now, and it enhances our ability to keep security in this place. And also we've got closed-circuit cameras which are monitoring all building entrances.

Marian Powell is here from the library and Pat Kolesar. And library has . . . after the renovations, has re-established a stack area in the building and they've also worked on improving the public access to the CD-ROM base.

From information services, we have, let's see, Guy Barnabe is here, I think. Where is Guy? Anybody with you, Guy? And I wanted to mention that one of the policies that they're responsible for is to keep our system refreshed. We have this sort of a . . . Those of us that are not always technically literate and completely up to date sometime wonder why is it that we need to do this. Maybe if we had a word . . . (inaudible) . . . it might be good enough just to stick with that for several years. However, experience is that if you go in that direction then it catches up with you three or four years down the line and then you have to replace an entire system.

And so instead of doing that, we've taken the approach of doing ongoing refreshment of the system — I like that word — and keeping the system up to date where they're doing an evaluation and deployment of a new system coming up — Windows XP system — some of you may be familiar with that. And also they are the people that maintain our Internet Web site, and I'm very pleased with the way this is done. I believe it's Greg Putz that's sort of supervising this aspect of it as well.

I just want to pause for a minute then and go back to introduce the other people who I wanted to introduce originally. I've already introduced Gwenn Ronyk. Seated beside Gwenn is Marilyn Borowski, director of financial services. Linda Kaminski, I've introduced. Marian Powell, Legislative Library, and Pat Kolesar, I've introduced.

Gary Ward, director of broadcast services — he's on his way. Well we'll do that again later.

And Judy Brennan is here — Judy, director of *Hansard*. And Lorraine deMontigny, director of visitor services. And let's see, Guy Barnabe, I've introduced him.

Also with us is Ken Ring, Legislative Counsel & Law Clerk. Margaret is not here at this time. And Margaret Kleisinger and

Linda Spence, behind me, from the Speaker's office — Margaret, being the assistant to the Speaker, and Linda, the secretary to the Speaker.

I want to talk just very briefly now about the Office of the Speaker itself. We had conducted our fourth annual Social Sciences Teachers' Institute this April and we had 21 teachers in attendance in the year 2001. This year we had 20 teachers but they included Ted Buglas, who's the program coordinator of the Ottawa Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy, and we were quite honoured to have him here.

In total now, that program will have had through it about, about 90 teachers in the province. So I think it's had a fairly big impact.

This year, in addition to that, I visited the . . . about 45 schools, and of course, you contact teachers that way as well. In total, that . . . we've talked to about 2,000 students per year — this year and of course the years previous. Our estimate is over the past five years that we're . . . have touched approximately 14,000 students in the province of Saskatchewan.

And the main idea of that program, of course, is to promote parliamentary democracy, to promote our political system, and to promote the work that MLAs do in their constituencies.

I want to thank all members for their support of the Speaker's outreach program, that is both the school visits and the teachers' institute. Teachers are especially appreciative of the fact that the . . . of the large and excellent turnout we get to the banquet and for the work that individual members undertake to meet with the teachers in their respective roles in the Legislative Assembly.

And I have a handout that will be given to you. It's with respect to the institute. It has a few quotations and some feedback that we get from it. It becomes . . . It's a very popular thing for teachers to do and rather prestigious; I think teachers feel pretty good about it when they get back home.

The Speaker's office and the . . . is responsible for coordinating the inter-parliamentary visits. Our work with the Midwest Legislative Conference is expanding and we are meeting presently to . . . we're working on preparation to meet and go to Fargo. The nature of the work here is evolving as well in a different sense than as CPA is. CPA was . . . all of our CPA stuff is largely . . . is directed at procedural items.

We're finding that when we . . . as we go to the Midwest legislators' conference that their . . . they tend to deal much more in substantial issues and provide basic background information useful to all parties on big issues.

And so in order to accommodate our members and to better fit into that system, what we're doing is developing a partnership between the Speaker's office and the Intergovernmental or the office of Government Relations and protocol. And they've agreed to go 50/50 on a lot of these things because a lot of the items here require our background information being prepared . . . or preparation of background information regarding sort of a Saskatchewan position. And also occasionally requires, we feel may require, people who would actually speak for those

particular departments.

And an MLA can go down and speak on behalf of the legislature, on behalf of . . . An independent MLA is not always able to speak for a department unless so mandated, whereas . . . and they're meeting with people who in many cases can speak for their . . . well when they speak on these issues, they speak from a slightly different vantage point simply because of their system being somewhat different.

But in order to accommodate that, we're finding that our partnership that we're forming with Intergovernmental is quite valuable. And so Intergovernmental for example has agreed to work with us as we sponsor towards the planning of the 2005 event and work with the sponsorship of it and in organizing that.

And they're sending down some representative to Fargo this year and as well the Clerk is going to be going down to Fargo this year as well as the members that are named by CPA and representative caucus. And then they'll be bringing back that information to our steering committee and we'll be trying to . . . sort of evolving and making our decisions as we go along. And I hope . . . so that we can host an event which our American friends will enjoy and also learn a lot about Saskatchewan when they get here. And also so that it fits.

The members will be aware that we have a continuing relationship with the Partnership of Parliaments with Germany. And I'll be hosting a group of . . . a delegation from them this July.

One of the things that we spend a lot of time on out of our office is a protocol of events. This wasn't something that members are often . . . directly deal with, but I do want to take time to thank all of those people who are involved with setting up the teas. And that is, through you to thank the caucus staffs, the staff of the Legislative Assembly, and the staff of ministers who are often asked to serve in these events, and they do so very willingly.

And of course to thank Steve Bata and the staff of SPMC who do all the setting up for these events and Trent Brears and the Dome Cafeteria for setting up the teas and the goodies.

And these things, although I find myself that they, what they do is they . . . although there's . . . you don't end up doing substantive things at these ceremonial events, they certainly do lend an air of importance to government, particularly to our visitors, and make people feel good about the fact that we do have a legislature, we do have members. And it's an opportunity in many cases for people to meet their members and in turn an opportunity for members to acknowledge a lot of the work that's being done in the constituencies. So I thank all members for their support on this and on these protocol events.

I'm getting close to the end here. I got a couple of things I want to mention. There was the opening of the Cumberland Gallery, which is done by, mostly by SPMC but it's . . . it features a different Saskatchewan artist every event. And Steve Bata, I think, deserves a lot of credit for making that new attraction to our building.

I was pleased to deliver the glass artwork that was displayed in the Cumberland Gallery for a brief time, to deliver it to Nunavut on behalf of the legislature. I was also very pleased, as one of the first things I did coming in last year, was to host the Prince of Wales on behalf of the legislators here.

And I just want to mention then a couple of challenges coming up. One of the biggest challenges, of course, is going to be to meet the budget commitment of absorbing the \$190,000 that we were requested to do by the Board of Internal Economy.

The department that's headed up by Gary Ward is going to have a big challenge and that is to . . . We anticipate that the costs of televising the proceedings to . . . via cable and via satellite are going up. Our contract is running out at this year-end. We've had a pretty good deal from SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network) up until now. At this stage we're just sort of being given a heads-up that those costs could increase.

The other challenges with respect to committee meetings, we can no longer use room 225. So we're getting . . . We have this committee room only and of course, Clerks know and members know how difficult it is to get that in place.

We want to evaluate the internship program and we intend to complete our strategic planning process.

Thank you very much for your attention to those remarks, and I throw the rest open to you.

Oh, I did want you also to have a copy of a chart which indicates the full-time equivalents, which I'll have passed around.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your brief remarks. And Administration (LG01), are there any questions to Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Prebble: — Really just a comment, Mr. Chair. I realize this has largely been . . . this is being dealt with in the Board of Internal Economy and we're here in more of a ratification role, I suppose. But I think there are . . . as a member who's not on the Board of Internal Economy, I do want to make a couple of comments.

One is, first of all I just want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and all the staff that are here. I feel we're very well served. And, you know, as a member who's had three terms in this Assembly I feel that we're very privileged to be well supported and I appreciate that very much. I appreciate the work of our staff.

I do want to say that I hope the question around access on our new front entrance for the handicapped will be addressed in a more effective way in the months ahead. I think this is not only relevant for those who are disabled — it's obviously very relevant for them — but as a matter of improving public access generally to the front of the building, it is very relevant.

There's a lot of elderly people who can make their way up the steps but I'm sure would prefer not to if it was well known that we had good access at the front. So this is not only crucial for those in wheelchairs, but I think it's also very relevant to

anybody who's, you know, having some difficulty climbing the steps of the Assembly, including probably some of our staff in the building and perhaps the odd MLA.

The second thing I want to say is that I think we need to, in the budget planning process for the year ahead, review the resources that are available through the Law Clerk. I think the Law Clerk is doing excellent work and yeoman service, if I might say, in terms of the demands particularly during the Assembly, which are heavy.

I've certainly had occasion to use . . . I use . . . I've used all the services in the Assembly but I think we place a lot of pressure on our Law Clerk. And this area is of significant importance because for members to gain access to legal opinion through government departments is a very difficult thing to do, and I say this having had some considerable experience in the matter.

Government departments are not there to serve members of the Assembly. They're there to serve the cabinet and the government. But members, in their work, need legal advice and we get very good legal advice from Ken Ring. But I think we need access to a greater array of advice which Ken could coordinate for us at times and I would . . . first of all, I want to say I really appreciate what he does.

And secondly, I think we need to examine members' needs in this area, and I would like to see that done in the year ahead. And this includes the work of the standing committees and the special committees that we set up which are often meeting during the time that the Assembly is on and place additional demands on the Law Clerk which are often very substantive. And frankly, I have no idea how he responds to them to the extent that he does.

The final thing I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that I'm extremely pleased with the work that you are doing and that our staff are doing with respect to the Teachers Institute and your outreach. And I think this is an area that we should look at expanding further, because I do think we face a real challenge in the province in terms of young people understanding parliamentary democracy.

And I think, frankly, we're seeing a shift in a decreased lack of confidence among young people in their legislators and in this Assembly and I think that . . . and a decreased understanding of the role of the Assembly in a democratic society. And I therefore see the work of the Teachers Institute as being very, very high priority.

I'm very pleased that we're doing this work. And I think that, to the degree that we can involve even more teachers in this process and expand this work, that's an area that is very worthwhile.

Now all . . . to do all of this in a year where there's budget constraint is obviously not an easy matter, but I think these are, in my mind, these are important priorities for future budget planning. And I wanted to mention them because I'm not on the Board of Internal Economy, but I wanted to put them on the record. And I hope that they will be considered by you and by our staff and by the Board of Internal Economy in its future planning. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — Thank you. I just want to mention that I did have the assistance of Graham Addley, MLA Graham Addley, the Deputy Speaker, on the outreach. And he visited several schools and that was a help.

The Chair: — Okay. LG01.

Mr. Wakefield: — Just one comment if I could before that. I think it was two sessions ago they experimentally started using the streaming video onto the Internet. And I think this last term it was for the full session.

And I just wanted to go on record as saying that I think that's pretty valuable in the rural areas where cable isn't readily accessible. That is one way to have our Legislative Assembly profiled on a . . . when it's sitting. And I think that has worked out very well. And I hope the experience that you've had through your office and your co-operation in getting that set up, it's certainly appreciated and I hope it's ongoing.

Mr. Prebble: — I have one other point that I want to make and that is with respect to the . . . I just want to say I continue to have a concern with respect to public access to the legislative broadcast in the Saskatoon area.

We need to address this issue, in my mind, and I hope this is something that staff will look at again in the year ahead. The legislature is invisible in Saskatoon. It is on a band that no one turns to unless they do it consciously. We need to get it on a band where people will come across it as they flip from channel to channel. And therefore the level of visibility in Regina, in terms of cable, is much higher than in Saskatoon.

I'm not in a position to comment with respect to rural area. I'm sure rural members will have comment on that.

But we . . . the legislative channel is invisible in the Saskatoon area and I think we need to do something about this. And I'm very struck by how many more people are conscious of . . . watch the legislative channel in Regina, versus how very few people watch it in Saskatoon. And I think this is related in part to its location on the band in Saskatoon. And we need to do something about this because we are expending a lot of good money, well-spent money on our broadcast service. We need to make it available to the public at large and it's certainly not being viewed in Saskatoon.

The Speaker: — Thank you. And just in response to Mr. Wakefield's comment with respect to the video streaming, our intention is to continue with that.

Subvote (LG01) agreed to.

Subvote (LG02)

Mr. Krawetz: — On the bottom of the summary sheet as presented for LG02 you indicated that SPMC will begin billing for the costs of cable service. Obviously this is a new change and we're seeing an expected cost of \$7,000. What prompted SPMC to make this decision?

Ms. Ronyk: — If I may answer, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Chairman, SPMC has paid for all the cable outlets in the building for . . .

since they've been put in and they did do a review of their costs this year and when they realized the size of these commitments they did ask us to pay the share that our Legislative Assembly share.

Actually the other tenants in the building, Exec Council, have always paid for theirs; the Assembly has not. And they think to be fair, we should be paying along with the other tenants. This is the dollar value that is attached to all of the outlets that we use within the Legislative Assembly and the cost of it.

Subvote (LG02) agreed to.

Subvote (LG03)

Mr. Krawetz: — Legislative internship program is now the responsibility of this area and you have indicated that this is a cost of \$85,000. And in your remarks, Mr. Kowalsky, I believe you said that you're going to review the legislative internship program.

Is this type of expenditure within the budget as discussed when we were talking about implementing the internship program? Or has this become an additional financial burden on the Legislative Assembly that was not expected?

The Speaker: — Well the \$85,000 was what was expected and was budgeted from the very beginning of the program, except we started with only half of it last year because we . . . the way the budget year works. So we only needed half of that into last year's budget item, and this year we've gone the full 85,000.

We're going to be doing an evaluation of it simply because it's . . . first, it's a new program so we want to do a bit of a formal evaluation of it. But we'll be able to do that within the allotted budget — no new expenditures necessary on that.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. I just wanted to follow up on something that Mr. Prebble had mentioned, and that was the barrier-free entrance. And it struck me that we had a commissionaire sitting there all winter when the likelihood of the entrance would be used is fairly low and now in the summer when it probably will be used more often, we've closed it.

So I guess I would like to make a recommendation that we look at the cost of perhaps having it open during the tourist season, which is summer, and closing it in the winter and seeing if that would be possible.

The Speaker: — Thank you for your comment on that. I just want to make sure that members understand that there is access through that at all times. The only thing that really is . . . we're looking at changing — and we have to be flexible on this; I'm going to be meeting with a group today, as a matter of fact, from the Voice of the Handicapped — and that is as to what hours we would staff it.

But if you go to the entrance, you'll find that at any time if there isn't anybody sitting there, as a staff member or an MLA you can enter using your card. But as a visitor from any . . . for the hours there, you simply would push the button, and the camera is taking a picture of whoever is there, and the people up in security will answer, respond, and allow the person in if it

happens to be somebody disabled or somebody they can recognize. Or if it's somebody that's elderly, they might just invite them in and go down and meet them.

We need some more stats to be able to sort of evaluate it over a long . . . over a period of time. But I think your advice on the hours is . . . on the summertime, the peak hours, is well taken.

Ms. Harpauer: — And the second area I wanted to ask, if I remember correctly, at one point in time we were talking about setting of this room, that meetings could be televised from this room. Is that something that we are pursuing or not?

The Speaker: — That was referred to from the Rules Committee to the Board of Internal Economy for costing out. And at this stage, the board has not authorized any money towards putting cameras into this room or any other room.

It's a plan that we have on hold. The staff is ready to respond to it and it really depends a lot on the recommendations of the Board of Internal Economy, also . . . to the Rules Committee and also the direction that the Rules Committee itself will go in.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you.

Subvote (LG03) agreed to.

Subvote (LG04) agreed to.

Subvotes (LG05) and (LG06) — Statutory.

The Chair: — And thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for being here today on vote 21.

The next item before the committee are a number of resolutions which need to be moved by members. And I would invite a member to move that we adopt a resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2003, the following sums:

For the Conflict of Interest Commissioner \$122,000.

Moved by Mr. Harper. Is this agreed? That is carried.

The next motion is resolved that there be . . . Pardon me, the next resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2003, the following sums:

For Information and Privacy Commissioner \$105,000.

Can I have a . . . Moved by Ms. Jones. Is the committee ready for the question? Is this agreed? That is carried.

The third resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2003, the following sums:

For the Legislative Assembly \$5,977,000.

Is the committee ready for the question? Or I guess we need to

move it. Moved by Mr. Yates. Is the committee ready for the question? Question? Is this agreed? This is carried.

The fourth resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2003 the following sum:

For Ombudsman and Children's Advocates..... \$2,651,000.

Is that moved by Mr. Prebble? Is the committee ready for the question? Is this agreed? That is carried.

And the final resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2003 the following sums:

For Provincial Auditor..... \$5,602,000.

Do we have a mover? Moved by Mr. Krawetz. Is the committee ready for the question? Is this agreed? This is carried.

And the last . . . Oh, there is one supplementary at the back. I was mistaken. The final, final one:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2002 the following sum:

For Ombudsman and Children's Advocate \$55,000.

Do I have a mover? Moved by Ms. Harpauer . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, I'll reread it again. Supplementary estimates, so I guess I did. This is moved by Ms. Harpauer. Is the committee ready for the question? Is this agreed? That is carried.

Mr. Wakefield, would you like to move that the committee . . . the motion to adjourn . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No?

A Member: — We're not done yet.

The Chair: — Well we're only . . . have about a minute left, so . . . Ways and means motion. Okay. Okay, we need a mover.

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2002, the sum of \$55,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Do I have a mover? Moved by Mr. Yates. Is the committee ready for the question? Is this agreed? That is carried. I guess we'll have to have Mr. Yates sign that.

And the next one is no. 2:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, the sum of \$12,046,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Do we have a mover? Moved by Mr. Yates. Is the committee ready for the question? Is the . . . is this agreed? That is carried.

The next motion, we would need someone to move:

That this committee recommend that upon concurrence in the committee's report, the sums as reported and approved shall be included in the Appropriation Bill for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

Do we have a mover? Moved by Mr. Krawetz. Is the committee ready for the question? Is this agreed? That is carried.

Now the draft report by the committee has been distributed and we need a motion which I will read momentarily. Okay. And we need a mover:

That the draft report of the Standing Committee on Estimates be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

Do we have a mover for this? Moved by Mr. Wakefield. Is the committee ready for the question? Is this agreed? That is carried.

We're out of paper so I think we might be done. What we now need is a motion to adjourn. Moved by Ms. Jones. Is this agreed? That is carried.

Thank you very much, members, for your good work this morning.

The committee adjourned at 10:18.