



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSE SERVICES

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSE SERVICES

Hon. Don Toth, Chair
Moosomin

Mr. Kevin Yates, Deputy Chair
Regina Dewdney

Mr. Denis Allchurch
Rosthern-Shellbrook

Mr. Darcy Furber
Prince Albert Northcote

Hon. Rod Gantfoer
Melfort

Mr. Delbert Kirsch
Batoche

Mr. Len Taylor
The Battlefords

Mr. Randy Weekes
Biggar

[The committee met at 09:08.]

The Chair: — Good morning committee members and guests who have joined us, who will be making presentations in a few moments. Welcome to the committee meeting. Sorry that it's taken us a few moments to get organized here but there's, as you can appreciate, been a number of changes with some announcements made last week or the previous week in regards to makeup of cabinet and the NDP [New Democratic Party] electing a new leader. And as a result, we now have to have a number of substitutions in regards to committees, so that committees can begin their function or the ability to move forward in their responsibilities.

Before we get to that though I'd like to just, we'll be laying on the table the annual reports of the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Chief Electoral Officer, and our librarian. And in a few moments we'll just be discussing these annual reports.

Changes to Membership on Standing Committees

The Chair: — Regarding the consideration of membership on standing committees we have, the committee members have, I believe, a list and I'll be entertaining motions from both the government and opposition in regards to the makeup of these committees. And we'll begin with the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies, and look to Mr. Gantefer for the makeup of the government members.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move:

That the names of Denis Allchurch, Fred Bradshaw, and Dan D'Autremont be substituted for the names of Dustin Duncan, Nancy Heppner, and Jim Reiter on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Chair: — Do we have any discussion in regards to the makeup of the government members? Seeing none, is everyone in agreement with the motion as presented?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Okay. And I'll look to Mr. Yates for the makeup of the opposition caucus.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would move:

That the names of Buckley Belanger and Trent Wotherspoon be substituted for the names of Kim Trew and Kevin Yates on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Chair: — Any questions in regards to the makeup of the opposition members on the Crown and Central Agencies? Seeing none, are members in agreement with the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you. And just give me a second, I'll do my quick signature here. We'll move now to the

Standing Committee on the Economy, and I recognize Mr. Gantefer.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the names of Dustin Duncan, Darryl Hickie, and Lyle Stewart be substituted for the names of D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert, Jeremy Harrison, and Warren Michelson on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Chair: — Any questions regarding the makeup of this committee and the motion? Seeing none, the members in agreement with the motion presented by Minister Gantefer?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. I recognize Mr. Yates for the opposition.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would move:

That the name of Len Taylor be substituted for the name of Darcy Furber on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Chair: — Before we move forward to Mr. Yates, I actually probably should be reading these into the record. So the motion by Mr. Gantefer that we've agreed to is:

That the names of Dustin Duncan, Darryl Hickie, and Lyle Stewart be substituted for the names of D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert, Jeremy Harrison, and Warren Michelson on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Now we'll move to the motion by Mr. Yates:

That the name of Mr. Len Taylor be substituted for the name of Darcy Furber on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Any questions? Seeing none, do we have agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you. Now we'll move to the Standing Committee on House Services. I recognize Minister Gantefer.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Delbert Kirsch be substituted for the name of Donna Harpauer on the Standing Committee on House Services.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Minister Gantefer:

That the name of Delbert Kirsch be substituted for the name of Donna Harpauer on the Standing Committee on House Services.

Any questions? Seeing none, is the committee in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you. I recognize Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move:

The name of Darcy Furber be substituted for the names of Andy Iwanchuk on the Standing Committee on House Services.

The Chair: — It's been moved by Mr. Yates:

That the name of Darcy Furber be substituted for the name of Andy Iwanchuk on the Standing Committee on House Services.

Any questions? Seeing none, is the committee in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. We'll move on to the Standing Committee on Human Services. And I recognize Minister Gantefer.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Joceline Schriemer be substituted for the name of Denis Allchurch on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Chair: — Minister Gantefer has moved:

That the name of Joceline Schriemer be substituted for the name of Denis Allchurch on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Any questions? Seeing none, is the committee in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you. I recognize Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — We have no change.

The Chair: — The committee members are staying the same? Okay. And that's agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[09:15]

The Chair: — Thank you. We move to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. I recognize Minister Gantefer.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the names of Warren Michelson and Wayne Elhard be substituted for the names of Fred Bradshaw and Joceline Schriemer on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Minister Gantefer:

That the names of Warren Michelson and Wayne Elhard be substituted for the names of Fred Bradshaw and Joceline Schriemer on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Any questions? Seeing none, have we got agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. And I'll recognize Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move:

That the name of Kim Trew be substituted for the name of Trent Wotherspoon on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Mr. Yates:

That the name of Kim Trew be substituted for the name of Trent Wotherspoon on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Any questions? Seeing none, is the committee in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. We move on to the Standing Committee on Private Bills. I recognize Minister Gantefer.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the names of Greg Brkich and Serge LeClerc be substituted for the names of Denis Allchurch and Laura Ross on the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Minister Gantefer:

That the names of Greg Brkich and Serge LeClerc be substituted for the names of Denis Allchurch and Laura Ross on the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

Any questions? Seeing none, is the committee in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you. And Mr. Yates?

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would move:

That the name of John Nilson be substituted for the name of Trent Wotherspoon on the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Mr. Yates:

That the name of John Nilson be substituted for the name of Trent Wotherspoon on the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

Any questions? Seeing none, is the committee in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. We'll move on then to the Standing Committee on Privileges. And I recognize Minister Gantefoer.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Dan D'Autremont be substituted for the name of Greg Brkich on the Standing Committee on Privileges.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Minister Gantefoer:

That the name of Dan D'Autremont be substituted for the name of Greg Brkich on the Standing Committee on Privileges.

Any questions? Seeing none, is the committee in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you. And I recognize Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move:

That the name of Darcy Furber be substituted for the name of Len Taylor on the Standing Committee on Privileges.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Mr. Yates:

That the name of Darcy Furber be substituted for the name of Len Taylor on the Standing Committee on Privileges.

Any questions? Seeing none, is the committee in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you.

Finally the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. I recognize Minister Gantefoer.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the names of Dan D'Autremont, Laura Ross, and Lyle Stewart be substituted for the names of Fred Bradshaw, Jeremy Harrison, and Jim Reiter on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Minister Gantefoer:

That the names of Dan D'Autremont, Laura Ross, and Lyle Stewart be substituted for the names Fred Bradshaw, Jeremy Harrison, and Jim Reiter on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Any questions? Seeing none, do we have agreement from the committee?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. I recognize Mr. Yates.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move:

The names of Pat Atkinson and Trent Wotherspoon be substituted for the names of John Nilson and Harry Van Mulligen on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Yates:

That the names of Pat Atkinson and Trent Wotherspoon be substituted for the names of John Nilson and Harry Van Mulligen on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Do we have any questions? Is the committee in agreement with the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you.

Just before I turn the Chair over to Mr. Taylor, just want to advise the committee that we will go into considerations of Information and Privacy Commissioner annual report, Chief Electoral office annual report, and the Legislative Librarian shortly. Following the consideration of those reports, we'll meet for consideration of a committee report, and at that time we'll also add the election of a Deputy Chair and a rule change to committees.

Thank you, members, for your assistance so far in the meeting, and I invite Mr. Taylor to take over.

Information and Privacy Commissioner Annual Report

The Deputy Chair: — All right. Welcome to consideration of reports section of the meeting. Mr. Speaker, I see the Information and Privacy Commissioner here and officials. Mr. Speaker, perhaps you could properly introduce the commissioner and his officials.

The Speaker: — Thank you, Mr. Taylor. It's certainly my privilege to introduce Mr. Gary Dickson who is the privacy commissioner. Diane Aldridge and Pam Scott too have joined Mr. Dickson for the discussion this morning in regards to the annual report.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Dickson, do you have some opening remarks for the consideration of your annual report?

Mr. Dickson: — I do. And good morning, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, and members of the committee. On April 7 of this year, I had the opportunity to appear in front of this committee in respect of our estimates. The focus for the committee at that time was our staffing and workload demands. We are still finalizing our annual report for 2008-09 for presentation to the Assembly at the end of this month, so my intention this morning is focusing of course on our last annual report, 2007-2008. And what I wanted to do just in a moment is highlight four key issues outstanding from that report.

The first one is that Saskatchewan citizens and public bodies, in our view, deserve something better than our first-generation freedom of information and protection of privacy Act, or FOIP Act. And this is from pages 6 and 7 in appendix I of that annual report.

The second point would be that private sector workers in Saskatchewan need protection that they've been denied for too long. This is page 6.

The third item I wanted to touch on was, workers' compensation claimants deserve fair treatment when it comes to access to information which they're denied now. That's referenced on page 9.

And then the fourth one is, how do we ensure that citizens who have municipal police services rather than the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] have the same rights and protection as those Saskatchewan residents who are served by the RCMP?

Just on the first point, in 1992 *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, or FOIP, came into force. Top songs then were by Michael Jackson, Boyz II Men, Nirvana, Def Leppard. The top movies for people in Saskatchewan who wanted to see a movie would have been *Wayne's World*, *Basic Instinct*, and *A Few Good Men*. Jay Leno debuted as host of *The Tonight Show*. And in Saskatchewan, we still had about 30 health care regions and over 100 different hospital boards.

An awful lot has changed, Mr. Chairman and members, since 1992. We've seen an explosion in terms of information and communication technology. Internet has expanded in ways we probably couldn't have ever imagined in 1992: powerful search engines; there's data profiling, data matching that goes on regularly. We've all kinds of electronic surveillance. Biometric identifiers are commonly used. And government services are being delivered in different ways. Most government information is soon going to be all in digital format instead of paper records.

At the time that FOIP was enacted in 1992, we'd only had in Canada a little more than six years of experience with that kind of a law. We now have 27 years of experience in Canada with public sector access and privacy legislation. Most other provinces have revised and updated, modernized their Acts: number one, so they work better for citizens; number two, so they work better for public bodies; and number three, they just deal with these new issues and challenges nobody could have imagined in 1992. Alberta, you might be interested to know, is now undertaking its fourth statutory review of its FOIP Act, and their Act didn't come into force until 1995.

So in 2004-05 annual report, we detailed amendments. We did it in a package called Privacy and Access: A Saskatchewan 'Roadmap' for Action. We talked about it in our last annual report. We need to ensure our FOIP Act can do the job for protecting privacy and access in 2009.

The second point just would be that, as members I think already know, we have federal privacy legislation that ensures for every business in Saskatchewan the rights of customers are protected. What a lot of people don't recognize though, in Saskatchewan — whether it's the video store, the grocery store, the sport shop,

the feeder co-op association, those kinds of organizations — customer information's protected. But when it comes to employee information, it's open season.

There's a couple of exceptions. If you have a federal work or undertaking — like interprovincial trucking, airlines, banking — employee information is protected under the federal law. But if it's any of those other businesses that we go to and your constituents go to every day, it is open season.

And why that's significant is, I don't know about the members, but for me, the businesses I deal with don't have a lot of my personal information. It's typically my employer that will have details of my financial information, maybe some health information, relationship information, performance evaluations. There's a lot more prejudicial information we typically see in terms of employees.

British Columbia and Alberta addressed this on January 1, 2004 by developing private sector privacy legislation that meant all employees in those two provinces have a degree of protection. Whether you're an employee or whether you're a customer, you have a degree of privacy protection. We haven't done that. BC [British Columbia] and Alberta have that legislation. It's worked well. When you talk to the commissioners and you talk to government and you talk to chambers of commerce in those provinces, they're very satisfied with the way it's worked.

I'm going to suggest to the members, I think a significant impediment to expanded trade with our two most westerly provincial provinces is impeded because we don't have equivalent privacy protection.

The third point just very quickly. You know, we have in 2005, we had 39,904 claims in front of our Workers' Compensation Board; some of them might be multiple claims, so maybe not 39,000 individuals. Only 1,100 of them actually appealed. Now what members need to know is that the way WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] interprets the FOIP Act in Saskatchewan, it's only those people who have filed an appeal get a right to see their claims file. So what that means is, 2.8 per cent of claimants in Saskatchewan, at least in 2005, had a right to be able to go to WCB and say, I want to see what you've got in the claims file in terms of personal information, other kinds of information. 97.2 per cent of WCB claimant, the door was shut to them and they were denied access.

And then just the last point, municipal police services. Interesting in Saskatchewan, they've been omitted from our FOIP Act. We're the only jurisdiction in Canada where we have kind of two levels of rights. If you live in a community where the RCMP provide your municipal policing, you have the benefit of the federal *Privacy Act* and the federal *Access to Information Act*. When it comes to a municipal police force in a city like Regina or Moose Jaw or Saskatoon or P.A. [Prince Albert], what happens there, there is no oversight in terms of privacy and access to information. PEI [Prince Edward Island] is the only other jurisdiction that has that kind of anomalous setup.

Anyway, those are the points I wanted to make, Mr. Chair. And I'm looking forward to the members' questions.

[09:30]

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much, Commissioner. Are there any questions from members? Mr. Gantefoer.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and welcome to the commissioner and your staff. As I think has been publicly reported, there's an interest in the three western provinces to sort of move as many things in symmetry together as we can in order to facilitate interprovincial business, interprovincial trade, interprovincial mobility, if you like. And it's interesting that you indicated that British Columbia and Alberta have similar privacy legislation for the private sector. Can you tell me, are the two pieces of legislation that have been tabled since '04, I think you said . . .

Mr. Dickson: — It came into force January 1, 2004, sir.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — So are they similar in their structure and nature? And is there something there that we could replicate in terms of moving Saskatchewan onto a similar footing?

Mr. Dickson: — I have some direct experience with that. In 2003 I chaired a committee of privacy lawyers in the province of Alberta that were giving advice to the Alberta government. And what was unique about that, we actually had the chance to sit down with the drafters from the province of British Columbia and the legislative drafters from the province of Alberta. The two provinces — and I've never heard of this before — the draftspeople actually were swapping drafts, and the two governments developed legislation. It was designed to harmonize for that very trade purpose you're referring to, Mr. Gantefoer. And the legislation, parts of it are almost identical in the two provinces.

And so as I've suggested — I think when I first came to this province when I met with folks from our Ministry of Justice, I suggested — those provinces have done all the heavy lifting. It would actually be a very straightforward matter for Saskatchewan to be the third province in that system.

The other thing you might be interested to know is the federal PIPEDA law — *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* — that applies in provinces that haven't done what BC and Alberta and Quebec have done. It's quite complicated and it doesn't deal with employee information at all. But there, the House of Commons standing committee on access to information, privacy and ethics has just issued a report. They actually think the federal law should look . . . is going to take a number of those features, it looks like, from the Alberta-BC model.

Sorry it was a wordy response, but I think it's a case where I think there's pretty compelling evidence that this is a much better legislative regime for small and medium-sized businesses than the federal PIPEDA that was really written, I think, primarily for the Air Canadas, chartered banks, organizations with big legal departments, and organizations that like wallowing in all the nuance and complexity. Small and medium-sized businesses don't need that. They don't want it, and it doesn't work for them.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you. Have you had the

opportunity to make this pitch, if you like, to Enterprise Saskatchewan or Enterprise and Innovation because it would seem to me that that would be the lead agency in terms of the economic aspects of this. And you know, if a obvious concern that would obviously be there, it sounds like it's been dealt with in terms of the impact on small and medium-sized businesses. It would seem to me that that might be a direction that should be pursued.

Mr. Dickson: — The short answer is no. I have had no contact with those organizations on this issue. My principal concern is being trying to persuade the Ministry of Justice folks, as the ministry that seems to have responsibility for it, but I appreciate the suggestion, sir.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Okay. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Gantefoer. Are there any other questions for the commissioner? Okay. Mr. Gantefoer.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you. I was leaving room for some discussion on the topic. On WCB, as I understood your presentation, that individuals who have filed an appeal have the right to access the information in their file, but any other claimants do not? Or could they? Or is it enabling? Or it's not there at all.

Mr. Dickson: — Let me come at it this way. I had actually sought legal advice one time. This concerns me enough to see whether our office would have standing to go to court and ask for a judge to clarify what our *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* means around this because the legal department for WCB has taken exactly the position you've described. And we have a bit of a stalemate. People make access requests, and if they haven't filed an appeal they're just told they don't get access to their information.

And in fact we've encountered people who have filed appeals simply because they wanted to see what was in their file, and it was the only way to do it, which just seems to me to be a really cumbersome work-making kind of initiative that we don't need in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: — All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Gantefoer. Are there other questions? Seeing none, Commissioner, any concluding remarks?

Mr. Dickson: — No, just to thank the members for their ongoing interest. And I hope that they will find interesting commentary and reflections in the annual report they'll be receiving probably in the next two weeks.

The Deputy Chair: — All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, any concluding remarks?

The Speaker: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank Mr. Dickson and his staff for taking the time to come and join with us this morning, sharing their information as the Privacy Commissioner. And certainly look forward to . . . or the Information and Privacy Commissioner, for a continued

working relationship. And I know there's always challenges in your office, but thank you and thank the members.

Mr. Dickson: — Wish everybody a good summer.

The Deputy Chair: — All right. Thank you very much, Commissioner, and your officials. That concludes discussion of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's annual report.

Chief Electoral Officer Annual Report

The Deputy Chair: — We will now move to consideration of the Chief Electoral Officer's annual report. And I will call Acting Chief Electoral Officer Dave Wilkie and his officials to the chairs.

Okay. Thank you very much. Seeing the officials seated, I will call on Mr. Speaker for introductions.

The Speaker: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just before I introduce the officials, as members are aware, we're currently advertising for a Chief Electoral Officer. So we've been pleased that over the past period of months, Dave Wilkie, who has been more than willing and quite capable of acting as our Chief Electoral Officer. And he's joined here today by Brent Nadon, manager of election finances and Jeff Livingstone, manager of information technology and registrar of electors. And I believe this is the makeup.

In reality of the Chief Electoral Office at this time, over the past number of months there's been a number of positions that have become vacant which, as the Acting Chief Electoral Officer has indicated to the board, has created some challenges. And members are aware that in the very near future we will be also facing by-elections.

So the board has invited Mr. Wilkie to not only act as the Chief Electoral Officer but given him the opportunity to hire on a contract basis for six months to fill some of the positions, given the fact that his office is going to be stuck with having to make sure they're ready for by-elections. So I'm looking forward to hearing how things are going at the office at this time. So I'll turn it back to you, Mr. Chair.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Welcome, Mr. Wilkie, to the committee. The floor is yours for any introductory remarks on your annual report.

Mr. Wilkie: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, this is our annual report for the 2007-2008 year. And so I'll make some comments, particularly I guess, this is the way the annual reports have been set up. It's our report card on how we've progressed on a number of matters in regards to our office.

And it leads back to a strategic plan back in 2005 which at that time looked at the year 2005 to 2011 and broke down our different plans into three areas: and that was short-term activities to be completed by April 1, 2006; and then medium-term activities to be completed by April 1, 2007; and then long-term activities to be completed by April 1, 2011. So I'll be talking about how those have progressed.

And there's a number of other things in the report, as you'll see,

talking about our mandate and annual activities. And I won't go into too much detail about those matters. And then at the end it makes reference to the *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Volume III: Recommendations for Changes to The Election Act*. And that was tabled on April 30, and having been present in the House at that time, I saw that many of you did in fact start looking at it. So I hear that that's being well read.

Okay. So if we do go to the planning overview which is on page 6, it outlines all of our values and our mission and our vision, which are all tied in with what our strategic initiatives are. And what I'll do now is to comment on some of the accomplishments that were in that particular fiscal year, but also to comment on some of the things that still need to be done and some background on those.

So the short-term ones were pretty well met by the time period of April 1, 2006. Any of those exceptions will be covered shortly. And so if we go to the change management strategy, we can truly say that with the November 7, 2007 general election, that elections in Saskatchewan have moved from those of a technical election, which were in the past, to more of an implementation of a culture of change and modernization with a new service-oriented attitude. So that has begun in earnest. It has been a little bit slowed because of lack of staff, but that was carried out through the last general election.

And then some of the legislative changes that came about in 2005 and were in effect for the general election were the change from returning officers being made by order in council appointments to being now made by the Chief Electoral Officer's office. And now that's based on being recruited and appointed based on merit. And so a lot of work was done in the 2006-07 year leading up to that, and I'll give you some statistics a bit later.

Then also there was a lot of work done on improved training for returning officers and election clerks, as we had been directed by the all-party committee on electoral reform back in 2004. So that was done, including longer training for returning officers, smaller class size, role playing, PowerPoint presentations. And our software developer Professional Systems — who developed the electronic voters list system — and Canada Post all gave presentations. And we got lots of very positive feedback from returning officers and election clerks on those changes: new manuals, new forms, new materials, field liaison officers.

And to throw in a little bit of an unusual matter, we did have also to get ready for the Cumberland by-election. Usually we don't have by-elections so close after a general election, but an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] did resign within two months, and so we had to do that as well during our lack of staff.

[09:45]

Now some things which we have not been able to make much progress on: the elections finance recording system. The Board of Internal Economy failed to provide funding for that in fiscal year 2008-09, and we didn't have staff to request it for 2009-10. So there's nothing been done on that particular objective.

The contact centre. That was something that was very

successful — 97 per cent of our calls were answered, whereas in 2003 only 23 per cent of the calls were answered, according to our stats from SaskTel. And then we have made lots of improvements in regards to our outreach strategy with regards to Aboriginal persons; changed our advertising significantly and added radio advertising. We added some brochures and updated our guides in order to put references to *The Election Act* right in the guides, and we used voter information cards which were also very positively received by voters and our election officials.

Our website was made more user friendly. We did a lot of work on youth matters in regards to youth-related advertising; we put a supplement in the alternative newspapers in Saskatoon and Regina. And so we've done quite a bit of work on youth. And we're pleased to say, although we're not taking all the credit for it, but we're pleased to say that we did buck the national trend in going from a voter turnout from in 2003 which was 70.95, we went to 76.02 in the 2000 general election — an increase of over 5 per cent which no other jurisdiction in the country can claim. So even though that's a trend in a lot of jurisdictions, that did not happen in Saskatchewan this time.

One of the other things that we have not made too much progress with is the automation of electoral geography product strategies, and that was something that the original consultant that worked on the plans in 2005 to 2011 originally thought that could be done before the 2007 election. But no resources were forthcoming, so only eight constituencies were remapped for the 2007 general election.

Much more work has to be done on this because the people that used to do the maps manually are no longer with ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan]; they've all retired. And because of a number of population changes, we know that the returning officers want all of the maps to be changed, if we do update it for changes in population growth or shifting of population. And this is the internal boundaries; we're not talking about the external boundaries which are changed every ten years. But the internal boundaries should be changed. If we do have the resources then, we would hope to do that. Also for the 2012 Boundaries Commission, we need resources to do that, otherwise the paper-and-pencil method might not work this time around.

As far as all the changes from Bill 119, we're done. And with the exception of one minor change in the legislation in Bill 119 was the movement towards the permanent voters list, and at that time it was felt that the details would be put in regulations. And in fact, if my memory serves me correct, Mr. Chair one year ago had suggested that perhaps the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer should work on those regulations. And in fact, in the draft or in the document, volume III, which I was speaking of a moment ago, there is in fact a draft for possible regulations. So that is something that we took to heart a year ago from what the Chair had mentioned.

And then if we look ahead to 2011, we have started on some of those. In regards to becoming a leader for electoral reform, we have done the debriefings, the first time in the province where we did extensive debriefings of all of our suppliers, all of our people with regards to all of our contacts really: representatives of registered political parties, voters with disabilities, all of our

returning officers and election clerks, and our advertising agency — all the people that we have contact with. And those were in fact . . . helped us to come up with the volume III document.

We've already talked about implementing a permanent electronic voters list. That is at the moment on hold, insofar as we need the actual changes to the legislation or regulations before we can progress much more. We have got the electronic part of it, but we don't have the permanent register part of it. It means that it will have to be . . . the information laid down as to how we keep it up to date. That means that there has to be regulations or legislation in order to have the information from all of the sources in the province, such as SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], the Department of Health, vital statistics, and so on in order to keep that information up to date so that a full enumeration is not required every election.

We have started just a little bit on the new cadre of outreach initiatives, but due to lack of staff, that has stalled. I've already talked about the electronic voters list.

And then in the annual activities, just to mention specifically about returning officers, we have in the 2007-08 year, 16 new returning officers were appointed by the CEO [Chief Electoral Officer] through the open competitive process. And in addition, 10 new returning officers were appointed by the CEO via direct appointment. And that meant that if there was difficulties recruiting in a particular constituency, or the vacancy came during the training or in fact within a couple of weeks of the election being called, there was no time to advertise. So if we got one applicant through various connections, or in fact if the election clerk was promoted, then those were done by a direct appointment.

Then in the rest of the report, it talks about all of our annual activities with regards to registration and financial reporting, the political contributions tax credit system and tax receipts, annual campaign period reporting, annual disclosure. We have had our 2006-07 detailed expenditures has been tabled. That was delayed due to lack of staff. Our 2007-2008 is about ready to be tabled. Our 2008-2009 detailed expenditures is also about ready to be tabled, so that should be shortly.

And then it also talks a bit about our operation expenditures for Elections Saskatchewan, and it gives some detail about the November 7, 2007 general election and the financial administration of that election and the liaison activities.

Also it talks about the human rights complaints. After the election, the one, the complaint that was originally lodged after the 2003 general election was concluded. And the tribunal decided or determined that our office had made sufficient accommodations for blind or visually impaired voters, but during his testimony at the tribunal hearing, the former Chief Electoral Officer did mention some things that the office was going to do. And in fact we did do those, coming up with a new voter template and also meeting with representatives of the disabled community in both Saskatoon and Regina. And so that has been done and some of those suggestions were added in to volume III.

The complaint that was mentioned also in the report, in regards

to a concern from an individual in Saskatoon who is a wheelchair user, that particular complaint has been since resolved with the Human Rights Commission as of March 2009.

And then, as Mr. Speaker has mentioned, it does also outline our staffing difficulties. That section is there. And then it makes reference to the volume III which has been completed.

And then the final area is the 2007-2008 financial statements which are at the end of the document. That gives you an idea again what is included in the 2007-08 annual report, as well what particular things have been positive and what other things need more work on them.

So we're now open to questions, Mr. Chair, if there are any questions.

The Chair: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Wilkie. Opening the floor for questions. Mr. Weekes.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Welcome to you and your officials. We have got two or three things I just want to touch on. Returning officers and clerks, you say you already appointed some returning officers?

Mr. Wilkie: — Well I'm speaking of, because this is the 2007-08 report, speaking in anticipation or as we led up to the 2007 general election, we do have some vacancies. As it turned out, as sometimes happens, the two constituencies where there are by-elections, both the returning officers chose to resign.

So we have recruited someone for Saskatoon Riversdale, and tomorrow I'm training that person and her election clerk. And we've got two possible applicants whose application forms should be in by Tuesday for Regina Douglas Park. And we have also, because there was a rumour about a potential vacancy in Regina Northeast when that returning officer resigned, we did find someone for that spot as well. So those three vacancies have been filled, but we do also have vacancies in Moose Jaw Wakamow, P.A. Carlton, P.A. Northcote, and Saskatoon Eastview. So those ones will be filled closer to the election. We're anticipating those being filled between January and April 2010.

Mr. Weekes: — Just a follow-up on that. You said the officers will be hired by merit now, which was different in the past. What is actually the procedure of finding returning officers and clerks? I mean obviously it's a part-time job, and it needs to be done when the election's called. And I mean I realize the difficulties in finding people, but what is the procedure? And being hired by merit, what are the qualifications and those types of things?

Mr. Wilkie: — Okay. I guess there's the two streams. If we don't have a pending by-election, then the normal procedure is that ads are put in the newspapers of the community where the vacancy is located. Also we've got in touch with various service groups in the area, and the former returning officer or the election clerk are asked if they know of anyone. We have also, again when we have lots of time, we have requested the political parties if they have anyone they'd like to forward on the information to.

And in meetings — the electoral community has meetings across the country at least once annually — and BC has some new ideas, so we're going to change our advertising in order to stress the community aspect of being a good citizen by taking on this role.

Also we anticipate because of some of the problems we've had because of the low rate of pay relative to other jurisdictions, we will, as was mentioned in volume III, we will be requesting that there be some increase in pay for those positions.

If we don't get any response, which occasionally happens, then we also make contact with federal returning officers, Elections Canada, municipalities — every possible angle that we can think of, we try to advertise in. And then there is an application form. So they fill out the application forms so we know in detail what their background is, and we based it on other jurisdictions such as British Columbia and Manitoba and Quebec which have a similar system. And now Elections Canada has since joined the system of independent, independently appointed . . . where the Chief Electoral Officer appoints the returning officers.

And so we've worked with the assistant director of Legislative Assembly HR [human resources], and so when we come in, there's a process of rating the people for various aspects that we're looking for in a returning officer. And then they're short-listed and then we have a series of questions again that the Legislative Assembly HR helped us with.

[10:00]

And then we go, the assistant director of HR and myself went, we had interviews in Saskatoon, Regina, and Moose Jaw to interview people. And then we would . . . Whoever got the most points based on our system would then be invited to join us. And then we have a contract and certain items that they have to follow in order to continue to be a returning officer with regards to independence, with regards to lack of conflict of interest, and so on.

So that's the aspect of . . . If we have lots of time in this shortened period, we have made contact with, for example, the assistant returning officer of the federal constituency that encompasses Douglas Park. She gave us some names. We've been following that. And in Saskatoon Riversdale, every community organization in the area has been contacted and email, phone. We had a number of people in Saskatoon, returning officers, the returning officers looking. We had talked to about 25 potential people. For various reasons they turned it down, but we eventually did find someone that has agreed to do it.

Mr. Weekes: — If I may, one or two more points. In the last election — I'll just use my Biggar constituency as the example — the returning officer lived off in one corner of the constituency, couldn't find office space in the small community, so she ran it out of her basement . . . [inaudible] . . . fine and dandy.

My concern is that it wasn't real handy to the candidates and the process, having the returning officer that far away from the main centre in the constituency — and that's where the two main parties had their offices — and the returning officer was

quite some far away. Is there any changes to that situation?

Mr. Wilkie: — I mean, that's the consideration when the returning officers are being hired. If we have the luxury of having a number of applicants, then that's a consideration.

In your case, it's someone who's appointed under the old system, order in council system. She initially did have some office space in mind, I believe in her own community, and then that wasn't available. So as a last minute substitution, she used her house.

When we're hiring people, that would be a consideration as to where the most people are. But if people are already in the system, we've generally gone with the location where they are located.

Mr. Weekes: — Just one more if I may. Volume III, proposed changes, there's . . . One item I know that comes to light is that I believe the recommendation is not to list the occupation of people on the voters lists. It's raised some concerns that, you know, to do targeted mailouts and things, that information is needed, and it's been used in the past. What's the background on making that change and the concern over why it was raised?

Mr. Wilkie: — Okay. Couple things. First, we're the only jurisdiction in Canada that still does that, is one item.

Secondly, if we have a permanent register of electors, there's no way of updating people's occupations. So that if you're a certain occupation when the permanent register is put into place, then even if you change your occupation 20 times in your subsequent working life, there would be no change. And then thirdly, we've had a growing number of complaints from voters that they don't want their occupation put on the voters list. And in some polling divisions, there might be three-quarters or 80 per cent of the places where the occupation should be is left blank because the voters refuse to give it. So it's becoming less and less useful.

And again, privacy concerns. We think that, at some point in time, there could be a privacy complaint on that specific . . . We're dealing with, currently, a privacy complaint — not specifically about that, but about a related item regarding candidate returns and information regarding suppliers being on our website, the address of suppliers. So that's sort of the background.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Weekes. Mr. Iwanchuk.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Yes. Thank you very much. My question would be around voting and if perhaps there's any thought . . . You mentioned people who are disabled, but people who are blind, so that they could vote without assistance. Any comments on that?

Mr. Wilkie: — Well, we did do some background looking into all the possibilities when we first got this complaint. And as an aside, this particular individual has since — not in this period we're talking about, but since that time — has put in another

complaint to the Human Rights Commission and also federally.

His request was to have machines in every poll in the province, and unfortunately the cost of that would be almost impossible to justify, I would think. He also, previously he had requested for Braille ballots to be in every poll across the province, and logistically that isn't possible in the short time period between the time that candidates are nominated and the first advance polls.

The former chief electoral officer offered the option of blind voters being able to, the same as someone might apply for an absentee ballot, that they could do that. But he rejected that suggestion, so it may come down. I know that no other jurisdiction in the country has yet, provincial or territorial or national, has yet got these machines. But I know municipally they did do it in New Brunswick, and I believe Ontario is looking at it, but it may be a case of perhaps having one of these machines in each constituency, which would be 58 versus having them in each location, which might be 1,600 for 3,000 polls.

In these meetings in Regina and Saskatoon, generally the blind and visually impaired community was satisfied with the new template which has the numbers in Braille and in large print on the side. They weren't aware of the new template, so we certainly have to do a better job of letting all the visually impaired groups know that. And I think now that we had those meetings, we have more contact with them. But some of the individuals at those two meetings said that only 10 per cent of the visually impaired or blind community actually knows Braille, so we're still looking at different possibilities. But cost is a major issue as well.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Iwanchuk. Are there any other questions? Seeing none, Mr. Speaker, any concluding remarks?

The Speaker: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. And I first of all thank you, Mr. Wilkie and Mr. Nadon and Mr. Livingstone, for joining us this morning. And I want to thank them for the time and effort they're putting in. I know that there's been some challenges in the office and hopefully beginning to be able to work through some of them, if not all of them. And I know that once a new CEO is in place, that will really give the office an opportunity to move forward. And so thank you for your time, your hard work and efforts. And as we look forward to the upcoming months and by-elections, we're anticipating that things will move fairly smoothly despite the challenges you've faced. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Mr. Wilkie. That concludes consideration of the Chief Electoral Officer's annual report. We will now take a few moments to exchange chairs, and in a moment we will move to consideration of the annual report of the Saskatchewan Legislative Library.

Saskatchewan Legislative Library Annual Report

The Deputy Chair: — Okay. Welcome back. We are now to

consider the annual report of the Saskatchewan Legislative Library. Mr. Speaker, may I call upon you to do the introductions, please.

The Speaker: — Thank you, Mr. Chair and members. Joining us this afternoon we have Melissa Bennett and Pat Kolesar from the Legislative Library.

A little over a week ago, I had the privilege of doing a major tour of the library and meeting many of the staff, and I guess I would say I was somewhat impressed with what our Legislative Library accomplishes. And what I found out that maybe a lot of members aren't always aware of, or even aware of, is the volumes of material that the library and librarians have to go through and work their way through, and back and forth from one small office to another small office or to storage rooms. What was very interesting is some of the fairly recent information that is available, that I think if members were aware it was there, might find interesting.

Of specific note, I was informed that the papers of the most recent president are already in the library. And what really amazed me is almost every item or every note that the former president had made are in these big volumes. And I think down the road it might be interesting to members just if you're . . . whether it's the past president or other presidents. And I don't believe we have that for prime ministers.

But the information that our librarian is responsible for and the library has is extensive. And I think members have found in the past that having the library handy in the Assembly has certainly been an excellent means of giving members the opportunity of doing research, whether it comes to legislative duties and the responsibilities, or even other responsibilities that they would be involved in as members in attending conferences, and just having our librarian and the staff do some research and presenting us with background information so that we're at least have some information, and we're a little more informed when we go on a conference.

So having said that, I want to thank Melissa and Pat for their time and effort and for their presence here at this committee meeting this morning.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Ms. Bennett, welcome to the committee. Do you have opening remarks on your annual report?

Ms. Bennett: — I do. And I want to thank Mr. Speaker for that very kind introduction. And it is true that I am so pleased to have the opportunity to be here today to share some information with you about the library. As Mr. Speaker mentioned, he went on a tour of the library last week, and it is so exciting for myself and actually anyone in the library to be able to showcase the treasures that we have in the library location. And so I appreciate the opportunity today to be able to talk to you a little bit about the library, and reviewing our annual report gives us the opportunity to do that.

[10:15]

Pat and I both really do deem it a privilege to be able to provide leadership to the Saskatchewan Legislative Library. It has a

long-standing important role and history in our province, and we are honoured to be able to serve it. And as I said, we are pleased to have time with the committee to share information and respond to your questions about the library's current state of affairs.

Although the Legislative Library is part of the broader organization of the Legislative Assembly service, as you well know, it does submit its own annual report to the Legislative Assembly. And this practice is prescribed by *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, and it really is a practice that began in the library's very early days where it always provided regular reports to the legislature on its condition and its development. And over time we've continued to do that.

The annual report under discussion today is for the fiscal year April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008. It seems a little bit like a long time ago now, but that's the report under review. This report was tabled in the legislature in the fall of 2008. This fiscal year was a pivotal year for the library with a focus on taking stock and renewing a vision for the future. It was the first fiscal year during which I was Legislative Librarian for the full fiscal year period, having started my position mid-year of the previous fiscal year. So it was a special year for me, and it's a special annual report for me.

If I could pick a theme for the year, it would be taking stock, setting strategic directions for the future, and initiating change. The library had two particularly significant events during the fiscal year. And you may remember at the beginning of the fiscal year we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the appointment of the first Legislative Librarian for the province of Saskatchewan, John Hawkes. And we had a reception in honour of this anniversary, and it was an important process that enabled us to review and reflect on the library's past history, its challenges over time, and its achievements.

It was a very suitable prelude for an important mid-year activity that was undertaken by the library, and that was strategic planning. The library engaged its entire staff in a strategic planning process. The strategic planning exercise created a five-year strategic plan for the library, and it was a valuable experience that enabled us to take stock of our challenges and opportunities, rejuvenate our momentum, and create a vision and strategy for the future.

My report to you today will consist of three topics. First, I'd like to give you a high-level picture of the library by providing a brief overview of the library's mandate and operations as well as its current strengths and challenges. Second, I'll summarize the library's new strategic plan. And third, I will report on performance during the report period.

So to start with a high-level view of the library, the purpose of the library, as you know, is to provide confidential and non-partisan information services to the Legislative Assembly; to maintain and develop the research and the legislative collection; and to ensure the collection's present and future accessibility to parliamentarians, the civil service, and the people of Saskatchewan.

The library is a very valuable resource in our province. It is the official repository for all Saskatchewan government

publications. We are a full-deposit library for Canadian federal government publications, and it is the third largest research library in Saskatchewan. As most of you know, the library is also the oldest library in the province, with its collection dating back to 1876.

The library's core operations essentially involve the acquisition and receipt of published information resources in all types of formats; the organization and preservation of these resources; and the delivery of services that provide our clients with ready access to information, both from our collection and from beyond our collection.

The first service priority of the library is to serve the Legislative Assembly, and the library provides customized, in-depth services to this group of folks. The second service priority is to provide basic library service and borrowing privileges to members of the public service and make the library collection accessible to the public.

With respect to public access to the library, the library's catalogue is available online on our public website. We provide in-library use of collection materials. We will loan material via interlibrary loan through a local library, and we certainly do receive a lot of phone calls, emails, and walk-in traffic from public clients.

The library has an estimated 1,300 registered clientele. So these are clients who are eligible for borrowing privileges and have signed up for a library card. The number of non-registered clients is not counted.

The library delivers weekly customized current awareness or media monitoring services for a select group of primary clientele, particularly Members of the Legislative Assembly — 73 clients, including 44 MLAs, are currently registered for this service.

The library handles an average of 2,000 reference and research inquiries on an annual basis. About half of these requests are from our primary client group, and one-third is from public clients, and about 20 per cent is from members of the Saskatchewan Public Service. The library's web pages receive an average of 16,500 unique visitors on an annual basis. And on an annual basis, library clients use an average of 12,000 collection materials.

To give you a little information about the library's collection, Mr. Speaker gave you an example of some of the interesting items that we have. The library's collection size is estimated at approximately 700,000 items. This includes an estimated 152,000 printed volumes; 8,000 electronic serial titles; 2,200 print serial titles; 6,300 reels of microfilm; 522,000 sheets of microfiche which our staff keep in perfect order; 765 audiovisual recordings; 3,300 CD-ROMs [compact disc read-only memory]; and 2,650 maps. Approximately 20 per cent of these collection materials are accommodated in the library reading and reference rooms that you're familiar with in the Legislative Building.

An estimated 80 per cent is accommodated in the library's collection annex in the Walter Scott Building a short walk away. Most folks don't have the opportunity to see that location

because it's not a public access area. That is the area that we showed Mr. Speaker last week. We have courier runs that go twice a day from our Legislative Building location to the Walter Scott collection annex, in order to retrieve material that clients have requested or that our reference librarians are using to actively answer questions.

The library budget is currently \$1.7 million, and the library has 18.81 FTE [full-time equivalent] employees.

Part of the purpose of presenting to you today is to provide you with an honest assessment, in my view, of the library's condition, both with respect to its strengths and its challenges. I'll start with our strengths, and I do believe that the strengths can be grouped into four categories. The first one would be our people, the second one would be our services and our collections, the third would be our strategy, and the fourth would be our heritage.

Our people really speaks to the library staff, who are skilled. They're dedicated, professional, hard-working, and enthusiastic. We consistently receive positive feedback from clients about our staff — glowing comments, actually. It satisfies me as Legislative Librarian to be able to have such an outstanding staff and such great service from them. We have a great team, and they respond well to every challenge that they're given.

Our services and collection speaks to the strong suite of programs and services that have been developed over the last decade and longer for members of the Legislative Assembly and additional clientele. And as well, the library has a very strong, established collection. And in particular, we have an excellent selection of top-of-the-line electronic news media and electronic database services. And I've had a colleague elsewhere in Canada comment to me on the quality of our library's collection, so it is noted by other legislative libraries in Canada.

Our strategy speaks to the fact that the library has developed a strong vision for future development, and there is a sense of optimism and openness to innovation and change. And our heritage speaks to the library's remarkable uniqueness derived from its history, context, and mandate, which of course is irreplaceable.

The challenges facing the library can also be grouped into four categories — the digital environment, accommodation, collection management and access, and human resource management.

The digital environment, as you know, has produced a tremendous increase in published information. It's introduced new and changing formats, increased client expectations that everything be in digital form, and new complexities in information management. Information systems and work practices in the library field generally have had to adapt to this, and this context demands new library information systems and revamped library policies, approaches, and processes in our library environment as well. This remains a challenge for us.

Accommodating the library collections in our existing facilities and ensuring effective access and preservation is also a continuing challenge. This has been a critical issue for us over

the last three years. And as you will hear, this issue has been the focal point of several of our initiatives during the report period.

The library has a number of priorities and concerns with respect to collection management and access. And they include ensuring that we have a focused and sustainable collection; conservation of aging and worn materials; managing digital collections; and addressing large volumes of unprocessed, donated material. Largely this is material that's been dispersed from Saskatchewan government departmental libraries that have closed in the last few years and their government publications, their Saskatchewan government publications have come to this library for final storage.

The library also has a number of priorities and concerns with respect to human resource management, including succession planning, restructuring workflow processes to better leverage our human resource capacity, ensuring health and safety in our working environment, and training and skill development.

So I'd now like to turn to reporting on the library's performance during the particular report period in the annual report you have before you. In the report period, the library focused on delivering on the library's core operations, and in addition, it undertook some special initiatives that modify or enhance our core in order to address the challenges that we're facing.

Development of the library strategic plan was the key accomplishment during the report period. The strategic planning exercise, which engaged all of our staff, was a valuable experience for the organization as a whole. It produced a collective sense of direction and purpose. It created strategies that would consolidate the library's strengths while addressing its challenges.

And at the very highest level our plan identifies a practical vision for the future. There are seven themes to the practical vision. And to summarize them, they are: an informed and supported client base; credible valued information services; a focused and sustainable collection; optimal use of technology to enhance our work processes and our service delivery; functional user-friendly facilities; a protected, productive team; and a nurtured and valued staff.

To achieve these high-level goals the library staff developed three strategic directions, each of which are supported by strategies and a number of key action steps. And the strategic directions are toward greater client awareness and benefit, toward planning for service excellence, and toward fulfilling staff potential.

The library strategic plan was developed in the third quarter of the report period. In the fourth quarter, the library began initiating activities to advance the plan. Another key accomplishment in 2007-08 was the redeployment of library funds to employ an additional reference librarian at a half FTE. The library had been challenged with a shortage of reference librarian staff during the previous five years, since a position had been lost through budget cutbacks in 2002. The library was experiencing significant difficulty meeting the demands of its front-line services, and it had cut back its reference service hours.

In addition to the half FTE, the library created a budget proposal to extend the position to a full FTE. And this was approved in February of the report year for implementation in the 2008-09 fiscal year. I can tell you that this position has made a world of difference in the library.

We are currently preparing our annual report for the year 2008-09, and we will be happy to report in this annual report that this additional position has enabled the library to meet front-line service demand and has improved our reference service hours. It's also enabled our reference and electronic resources librarian to devote more time to electronic resource development. And it has contributed towards succession planning.

In the report period, the library implemented procedures for the creation and maintenance of a repository for Saskatchewan government publications issued in electronic format. By the end of the report year the repository contained 116 electronic documents and 14 electronic periodicals. There is still more work to be done with the electronic repository, but this was a good start.

As some of you know, the library has been very concerned about a lack of bookshelf space for library collections, particularly in the Legislative Building location. For those of you who were on the Board of Internal Economy, you've heard about this issue many times. It has also been a concern about how long space in the collection annex will last. In the report year, the library began a number of strategies to address this particular concern. The library began a long-term initiative to measure the size of the collection and to determine its growth rate. This is not an insignificant task, as you can appreciate. The library completed a count of its book collection, and I would like to thank Pat for leading this project.

[10:30]

In the next report period, the library focused on counting the government documents collection. A count of the library collection had not been conducted since 1986, and the library's growth rates, as you can appreciate, would be quite dated. The new count will give the library baseline data, and in a few years of monitoring, we will have an estimated growth rate that reflects the current environment. So I should be able to give the Board better projections on how quickly we will use the space that we have.

In response to the strategic planning theme of creating functional, user-friendly facilities, in the fourth quarter of the year, the library established a project team to identify strategies for developing the library's existing facilities for both improved collection accommodation and service to our clients.

The library also mandated its collection management committee to undertake targeted reviews of selected collection areas in order to remove materials that may no longer be required. Targeted reviews commenced in the subsequent report year. I am pleased to note that in the year since the report period, these strategies have borne fruit. Earlier this year the library submitted a proposal to increase bookshelf capacity in its Legislative Building location by extending its existing elevated shelving and mezzanine. This was approved in the most recent

budget process and the project is commencing this fiscal year. The library also has completed several targeted reviews of the collection, and we have identified several areas for what we believe will be significant space savings.

And lastly, in the report period the library began an initiative to restructure operations in our support services unit. This has been necessary to address succession planning concerns. We have since had two staff retire from this particular unit — two out of a total of seven. We need to streamline workflow and better leverage capacity, particularly to better support our Saskatchewan government publications legal deposit program. In addition, restructured operations are needed to build the unit's capacity to deal with the electronic publications management and the implementation of technological change.

Overall the library made important progress in the report year, and it achieved a vision and momentum that is continuing to bear fruit. I thank you for the opportunity to share these highlights and observations with you. And I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you might have about the library.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much, Ms. Bennett. Are there any questions for the librarian? Mr. Weekes.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Ms. Bennett, for your report and to your staff. Just one question: do the librarians have a conference that they go to once a year in Canada? And the bigger question is, is there any information transfer or technology transfer among the provincial libraries and the House of Commons library?

Ms. Bennett: — Yes. There's a group that we call APLIC, for short. It's the Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Canada. And it consists of all of the legislative librarians in the different provinces and territories as well as the Parliamentary Librarian. That group has a business meeting once a year. Every second year, the group has a conference during which time they will bring staff of the library as well, and there'll be a set of conference topics for the staff.

Pat and I had the opportunity last year to attend a meeting of APLIC, which also included a conference program. And as well, the world federation of libraries was holding its world conference. So this is a world conference of all types of librarians in the world, and they were holding it in Canada. And so we had the opportunity to also meet with a subgroup of that body, which is parliamentary librarians worldwide. And it was just a fantastic session that focused specifically on providing library services in the context of a legislature — Congress in the States; House of Commons in Canada. It was very useful. But yes, we do have regular meetings of those folks.

I would say that the library profession itself is a very active professional community and very active with email listservs, conferences. And there is a very heavy exchange of information, also a number of published journals that we can use to keep up with trends in the field.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: — Are there any other questions on the

annual report? Seeing none, Mr. Speaker, do you have any concluding remarks?

The Speaker: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members. And thank you Melissa and Pat for spending some time with us this morning, speaking about your vision and goals for the library.

And I think if there's anything over the years — and I've been around a few years — in regards to the librarian, I think for many members the demands on members' time do not necessarily give us the opportunity to really do the research and find out what our Legislative Library offers to us. And so I think just having had the privilege myself of doing a tour gave me a better appreciation for the work of the librarians and the information that's available to members. While we may not take as much advantage, it's there. And for those members who have in the past, who have been called on to have the librarians do some research, it's truly appreciated. So thank you, Pat and Melissa. And thank you to members and the Chair.

The Deputy Chair: — Indeed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Ms. Bennett. That concludes consideration of the Saskatchewan Legislative Library annual report. We will be moving on to consideration of the committee report and another matter.

Before I leave the Chair, I wish to let members know that I have submitted my resignation to the Clerk as Deputy Chair, and that means that we will have to elect a new Deputy Chair before we leave today.

I thank members for their attention and hospitality during my time as Deputy Chair of the House Services Committee. And I'll still be a member of the committee, and I wish the new Deputy Chair all the best. Thanks.

Election of Deputy Chair

The Chair: — We'll now move forward with consideration of and election of a Deputy Chair for the House Services Committee. So I'll open up the floor for nominations. I recognize Mr. Iwanchuk.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — I'd like to move a motion:

That Kevin Yates be elected to preside as Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on House Services.

The Chair: — Do we have any further nominations for Deputy Chair of the House Services Committee? Seeing no further nominations, moved by Mr. Iwanchuk:

That Kevin Yates be elected to preside as Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on House Services committee.

Any questions? Seeing none, is the committee agreed to the motion as presented by Mr. Iwanchuk?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you. Any comments from the incoming Deputy Chair? Okay.

We also have, it has been brought to my attention there's a rule change to be brought forward.

I've been informed there's been a few other changes that need to be looked at. And so rather than moving forward too quickly, giving the committee the opportunity to at least look extensively and ensure that rule changes that are necessary are implemented properly, we will hold this off until the fall, if that's agreed to by the committee members.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That's agreed to. Thank you.

As I understand, members have before them a draft of the seventh report of the Standing Committee on House Services. Do you have any questions? Maybe first of all I should ask for a motion to accept this report. I recognize Mr. Gantefoer.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on House Services be adopted and filed with the Clerk pursuant to rule 135(6).

The Chair: — It has been moved by Mr. Gantefoer:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on House Services be adopted and filed with the Clerk pursuant to rule 135(6).

Do you have any questions in regards to the motion presented by Mr. Gantefoer? Seeing none, is the committee in agreement that the seventh report be submitted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you.

At this time I believe that we have completed all the committee requirements this morning, the considerations for this morning. Can I have a motion to adjourn? Mr. Weekes has moved that the committee do adjourn. Is the committee in agreement with that motion of adjournment?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Thank you, committee members. That's agreed to, and it's carried. The committee stands adjourned until the call of the Chair.

[The committee adjourned at 10:41.]