



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
2007**

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Saskatchewan Rivers

Ms. Joanne Crofford
Regina Rosemont

Mr. Peter Prebble
Saskatoon Greystone

Mr. Don Toth
Moosomin

Mr. Milton Wakefield
Lloydminster

[The committee met at 15:35.]

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — March
Corrections and Public Safety
Vote 73**

Subvote (CP05)

The Chair: — Good afternoon. The business before the Human Services Committee today is consideration of supplementary estimates for the Department of Corrections and Public Safety, which is found on page 8 of your supplementary budget book.

And we have the minister and his officials. If you can introduce yourself and your officials. And if you have an opening statement on the estimates, please do so now and then we'll have questions.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am joined today by Deputy Minister Terry Lang; Maureen Lloyd, assistant deputy minister, adult corrections; Veronica Gelowitz and Marlowe Smith with management services; Bob Kary, executive director, young offender programs; Tom Young, executive director, protection and emergency services; Chris Selinger, manager, licensing and inspections; Barry Sockett, director, human resources; Sharon Wall, the executive assistant to the deputy minister; and Karen Lautsch, the executive director of strategic policy. So I'd like to welcome them all here. We're also joined by Darcy Furber from my ministerial office.

I guess the estimates are before the committee and I would urge that we proceed right to the estimates.

The Chair: — Thank you. Questions then. Mr. Toth.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Chair. And welcome to the minister and your officials to our supplementary estimates debate this afternoon. And I understand basically what we're looking at is roughly the \$20 million.

A question that pops up right off the top is, in the smaller case it mentions about additional funding provided by special warrant for estimated costs of 21.15 and your expenditure is 20.15 million. Is that the actual cost then that we're discussing here today versus the 21 that was indicated?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — It's what we're requesting under the new supplementary estimates. So it is in fact 20.15 million . . . or pardon me. Yes, 20.15 million. Yes.

Mr. Toth: — So that was . . . I'm taking it that the dollar figure that we're discussing here is all related to the recent strike by the SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union], more specifically the correctional workers in the province of Saskatchewan. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Not entirely. There's a great majority of the expenditures related to the management of the strike, but there were additional operating costs such as an estimate for the new collective bargaining agreement of 3.3 million, the Family

Day holiday related to 24-7 operations of point four five million, continued inmate counts management of 2.22 million, and the consolidated radio telecommunications project management of point seven three million.

That, of course, with the public safety telecommunications network and the work that's ongoing there to arrive at a sound replacement for FleetNet but — so those come up to \$6.7 million. So on top of the net cost to CPS [Corrections and Public Safety] as the struck department of \$13.45 million, for a total of 20.15 million.

Mr. Toth: — So, Mr. Minister, I missed. Did you give me a number that was directly related to the strike and the cost for the replacement workers?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — The net cost of the strike to CPS as the struck department for, you know, the job action commencing there on December 20 was \$13.45 million. That's the net. The gross was over 20 million but there were offsetting savings on salary of \$7.70 million.

Mr. Toth: — So I take it, when you talk about a salary savings, that was what you would normally have paid the correctional workers for that time period. So we've got the 7.7 plus the 13, so the actual cost was over 20 million to cover the costs of the individuals that were brought in to cover for these correctional workers. Correct?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Yes, the total cost was \$21.15 million.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I noted that we had a number of RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers that were brought in over a period of time, many from outside of the province. I wonder if you can give me a breakdown in regards to the number of officers that were involved over the period, and a breakdown by province for the number of officers.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I guess the overall figure involved in the bringing in of the RCMP officers . . . And actually, just to jump back to the earlier response, the 21.15 relates just to CPS itself. And again, given the nature of Corrections and Public Safety, the predominance of 24-hour, 7-day-a-week facilities, and the fact that we were out for the whole job action, that's where the 21.15 arises from. But the global figure for RCMP from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta was \$12 million. There were approximately 250 RCMP in the centres at any one time from Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba. There were 391 deployed workers from other departments. There were 80 Corrections and Public Safety out-of-scope managers and approximately 40 personnel providing medical services throughout the 47 days of the work stoppage.

Mr. Toth: — For a total of almost 700 employees.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Let me scribble this up here.

Mr. Toth: — The number of employees that were then filling in for correctional workers, how would that compare to the number of correctional workers that would be on staff at any given time? Would that be basically a bare minimum to keep the correctional centres functioning at the time, Mr. Minister,

versus what you would normally have on staff?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — It would. There would be a reduction in certain aspects of the normal course of events in corrections. There are other factors such as food services being handled off sites during the job stoppage that impacts the number of what constitutes normal and what would make for straight apples-to-apples comparison of a normal day versus how many on staff during the work stoppage, but obviously it's a smaller number in terms of the daily . . . throughout the . . . in the centres.

Mr. Toth: — What currently would be the normal number of employees working at any given time in the correctional centres, total?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Off the top of my head I'll refer that to . . . Just one second.

In terms of the struck facilities and in terms of the . . . To get an apples-to-apples comparison, we'd have to pull some of those numbers out. But across young offenders and adult corrections, it's about 1,600 FTEs [full-time equivalent]. That also includes management.

Mr. Toth: — I guess what I'm basically looking for is individuals working directly in . . . It's not directly in the centres as far as providing the security and that versus the management team, the team that was out at the time on strike — the SGEU members — that would be normally on the floor. So you're talking 1,600. What would that be? Two-thirds would be actual people working within, supervising offenders. Would that be a fair assessment of roughly how many would be providing services?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I guess we'll look to get a more precise answer to you on that one, but they would also be involved in the delivery of various programming, the provision of food services, the teachers that are in the facilities, and the 40 medical personnel that were referenced. I think that was largely a straight replacement in terms of the medical personnel that were out. There was also the maintenance of the facilities on a day-to-day basis. They are large institutions and require a fair amount of upkeep.

So again in terms of pulling out the precise numbers to get you that straight comparison, I guess we'll . . . if we could undertake to get back to you with that precise figure. But just if you could just restate your question just so we're clear on what we're looking to get you.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, what I was trying to get a comparison of the . . . When we look at the number of individuals that you brought in — the RCMP officers, the other personnel, replacement workers — just to replace the correctional workers that were on the floor, not necessarily the management. I don't believe the caretaking, any of those officials were on strike at the time. If I'm not mistaken, it was specifically — and I could be corrected on that, but that's the figure I was looking for, people that were actually on strike and what was needed to replace them. And I'm trying to get an understanding of the bare minimum of services we probably were providing in our correctional centres.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I guess I'll refer this to Maureen Lloyd, the director of adult corrections . . . or I didn't mean to demote you there, goodness. Assistant deputy minister, adult corrections, Maureen Lloyd, who, along with the senior management team at Corrections and Public Safety were intricately involved in the safe and secure upkeep of corrections during the work stoppage through Christmas, New Year's, Boxing Day, and all those good things as well. So anyway, Maureen, if you could add a bit information to the . . .

Ms. Lloyd: — Just add a little bit of detail in terms of the kind of coverage that existed in the correctional centres. Certainly we had basic coverage in the centres of units providing security to units, coverage by RCMP and managers together. We had very skeleton crews of front office staff. We had very skeleton crews in the kitchens, as the minister mentioned.

We had actually, in the health care area, very skeleton crews delivering health care. Some of those people worked seven days a week, all week, every week almost, in order to deliver health care services.

We weren't able to provide specialized services in most institutions like school programs, addictions counselling. We didn't have those kinds of program people to deliver those services for us. So we really focused on the safety and security aspect of the centres.

We focused on what we could provide in terms of case management, ensuring that offenders, you know, were released when they should be; people who could be out on early releases were able to be out on early releases.

But certainly a very small contingent of people who for the most part worked . . . you know as I say, often did work seven days a week to provide these services.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you. It seemed to me that certainly you were running with a skeleton of a crew especially, if I'm not mistaken, just from some of the tours that I've done in the past and some of the discussions we've had in the past to the fact as the weather gets colder, we tend to run into higher numbers at times and just those circumstances as well. And I'm going to get into a few questions in a moment in regards to some of the overcrowding that's certainly been brought to our attention recently.

In regards to the replacement workers and the RCMP officers, would those officers have received something like time and a half or what was agreed to be paid to the officers for the time they were employed during this strike? And if you could give it to me on a per day basis — I think you've already given the total — I'd appreciate that. Thanks.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I'll refer that to Maureen, but there was also the matter, for the RCMP as well and for the out-of-scope managers, there's often per diem involved in terms of living expenses. A lot of people were redeployed to facilities that were not in their hometown, and so of course in the case of the RCMP being shifted around the province or being shifted from out-of-province. But, Maureen, if you could give us the detail on that.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, before Maureen responds, if you don't mind, that was another question I had, so if you want to kind of break it down between what was the costs incurred in the travel and living allowances and meals and then what was the salary per day per officer. And then the total amount, if you don't mind, please, I'd appreciate that.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Okay.

Ms. Lloyd: — I don't have that kind of breakdown to provide you. What I can say is that when we essentially . . . I'd say the Department of Justice contracted with the RCMP to provide this service for us. The RCMP in Saskatchewan are contracted through the Department of Justice, and so arrangements were made essentially through them.

The RCMP provided remuneration to their staff as they would provide at any time for them. I can't speak to the specifics of how they, you know, of how much money an individual might make. But in terms of whether they received time and a half for certain time they worked, whether they received double time, whether they went back and worked in their own offices — which I think most of them did — in between their deployments to the correctional centres, that's a matter of RCMP record keeping. And they provided that back to the Department of Justice who in turn provided that to us.

Mr. Toth: — So what you're basically saying is the RCMP, through an agreement with the Department of Justice, provided a service, and you just covered the cost. You were billed for an amount for that service, and the department covered the costs. As far as individual breakdown, your department doesn't have those figures. Is that my understanding?

Ms. Lloyd: — That would be correct. We wouldn't have figures for the individual RCMP member deployed to our system. We would have figures related to, as the minister mentioned, the non-salary costs — the cost of transportation, lodging, meals, that kind of information versus the costs of salaries.

Mr. Toth: — Would that information be available?

Ms. Lloyd: — Yes, you know, we'd have to talk to our sister department, the Department of Justice, for more of the details.

Mr. Toth: — When we were talking about individuals that were filling in, you mentioned that there were a number of individuals within the department as well were filling in for different areas. I'm wondering exactly what areas management personnel would have been involved in as far as providing services in the correctional centres outside of their normal duties.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I guess I'll take a crack at it off the top. But certainly there was an effort made, where people who had past experience or particular knowledge respecting a given institution or a given practice, to try and match up some of those skills with the needs to deploy throughout the system. But across the gamut, you had people doing everything from keeping an eye on the youth at Dojack to serving up chow at Regina Correctional and all points in between. You had a wide deployment of people throughout the system. But again, I guess

Maureen could speak to more of the detail of that.

Ms. Lloyd: — Our out-of-scope managers from Corrections and Public Safety but also from other departments really filled many roles in the correctional centres and, as the minister said, from food services in some cases. I mean, we did rely on the kind of training and expertise that individuals brought with them to us, and so if they had specific skill and abilities, whether it was in health care or whether it was in food service, we certainly capitalized on those skills and abilities.

They worked in units in the correctional centre. So for example, a living unit at Regina Correctional Centre would have a combination of RCMP and out-of-scope managers — RCMP specifically designated to provide security and safety; out-of-scope managers to assist generally with the care of the inmates, everything from taking a request for a visit to getting them to have a phone call, interacting, sometimes . . . You know, you could go to Saskatoon Correctional Centre, for example, and RCMP officers would be playing floor hockey with inmates in the gym; staff would be supervising. So many roles were really fulfilled by staff.

Individual staff, depending on the centre, provided . . . the Prism Industries shop in Regina ran throughout the strike. We have a large contract with IPSCO. As you can imagine, given how busy the industry is right now, we wanted to keep that going. We found an individual manager who said, sure I'll work with the inmates, and I'll run the Prism Industries shop. We had a classroom running in Saskatoon Correctional Centre — two women from the Department of Learning — getting our inmates back in to the school work they needed to do to get into school when they got out. So really just about everything.

I want to emphasize the RCMP's role — although they did many things — was really the safety and security aspect within the correctional centres. Our managers — even some who sit back here today — worried about sewer backup, worried about whether or not the boilers were inspected right and the boilers kept operating in large correctional centres. So really people just came in, they really stepped up to the plate and provided a very valuable contribution.

Mr. Toth: — I'd be interested in knowing how the individuals serving time in our correctional centres, our inmates, took the strike. You mentioned a moment ago about RCMP officers actually being on the floor playing floor hockey with the inmates and some of the programs and . . . it's good to hear that there are people who are willing to step up to the plate.

But in view of the fact that there were certainly, quite obviously a lot fewer in number individuals working in many of these areas of responsibility that we would normally have, you would almost assume at times that there might be someone who would be trying to stretch the law at any one time. And the fact that if there were individuals out playing in sporting activities, it's quite obvious that some really appreciated the work that was being done.

But was there any significant backlash amongst the population in regards to the strike and taking advantage of the lower numbers of individuals working security, especially in view of the fact that while you had RCMP officers, you still had a lot of

people who didn't have the specific expertise in all the roles of the workers that were on strike at the time.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I'd like to take a crack at this first. I think there's a period right off the start, in terms of the transition from the normal employees being at their stations to the replacement staff coming into the facilities. There's a period of . . . you know, for myself, getting the reports on how it was going, that was the period of greatest concern was that transition from one regime to another.

But I have to say I was . . . and perhaps I shouldn't have been surprised, given the tremendous folks we have working in our professional civil service, but in combination with the RCMP they did a tremendous job. And Christmas or the Christmas season in a correctional facility can be a very hard time. And in the normal calendar of the year, it can be sort of correlated with different . . . you know, a spike in incidents or what have you. But there were a few incidents between the RCMP and between inmates. But in terms of the history or the traditional sort of number of occurrences, it wasn't really anything out of the ordinary — which again I find to be a testament to the professional civil service that we have in this province and the tremendous job they did in the facilities and the leadership of the management in CPS and the good work of the RCMP. It worked out quite well.

And again it's . . . I feel strange using descriptors like quite well in terms of describing a 47-day strike involving correctional facilities. But it really and truly did go quite well. And again that's a testament to the people I have the privilege to work with out of Corrections and the people that came into the system from the RCMP and from the civil service more broadly put. But I guess, Maureen, do you have anything you'd want to add to that or . . .

Ms. Lloyd: — Yes. I would just add that, throughout the course of the strike, I had the opportunity to visit all of the correctional centres — Regina in particular more often — but provincially all the correctional centres more than once. And I was impressed by the stability and the level of order that was maintained at all times. We had some issues around New Year's Eve, which tends to be a difficult time for both youth and adult . . . It seems the idea of a New Year's Eve party doesn't just go away when you go into custody. So those kinds of moments can lead to some misbehaviour. But overall they were extremely well managed by our folks in the correctional centres.

We have a very good group of managers, our own managers, within the correctional centres, as well as their colleagues from our head office, to anticipate the issues that could happen — to be prepared for what might go on, to be in the right place at the right time. I think they did a very good job doing that. So we felt, in looking at the number of incidents at the end of the job action, that we wouldn't have had any more incidents than normally would have occurred. So you know, it speaks to the stability that was maintained for the offenders.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you. Of the number of individuals that were replacing the correctional workers who were on strike, how many . . . Or maybe I could put the question this way: would you have been able to draw upon the expertise of former correctional workers who are, say, currently retired or moved

on to different activities to fill some of these positions?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — There was, at the outset of the strike . . . Again when the concern is at its highest in terms of making that transition, there were a handful of retirees that were brought in that had specific knowledge and experience with regards to the institutions. Each institution has its own way of doing things and its own particular culture, ins and outs. So the thought at that point was to bring those people in to try and aid the transition.

Mr. Toth: — So how many former employees were brought in during the period of the strike?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Something like a dozen. But to get you the exact number . . . 15 all told.

Mr. Toth: — And would there have been significant costs to these employees being called in?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — It would be straight wage replacement and then . . . Well I guess specifically, the terms of the contract, I'll refer to Terry.

Mr. Lang: — Yes, Terry Lang. The retired people that we brought back in were paid the salary rate that they would have been paid prior to their retirement and the premium benefits as well if they had worked overtime hours or whatever.

Mr. Toth: — In regards to this strike, when did the previous agreement expire?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I believe it was September 31, '06.

Mr. Toth: — Knowing that you were coming up to an expiry date, and it was quite obvious that efforts were made to maybe come to an agreement prior to because . . . September 6, I think you indicated was the expiry date, and we didn't go out on strike till . . . I forget the date now, but it was a little later. And I don't understand labour negotiations because I negotiate with myself. Never have been, haven't been involved in having to deal with anyone else.

But it would seem to me, at the end of the day, when we look at the extra dollars that we've had to put out to come to an agreement . . . I mean, I shouldn't say to come to an agreement, but the additional cost — and this is the part that always boggles my mind — even for an employee it . . . What did . . . I believe you said 45 days. That's 45 days lost wages. Even with some strike pay yet, that's going to be a lot of work to actually recover any of that and you never really recover it totally.

But also when it comes to the government, wouldn't it have been better to be more aggressive and come up with an agreement and continue working versus facing a strike and having to put an additional \$20 million on the table?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Well I guess, as you say, that's the bargaining process. It's not . . . It's sort of like Churchill's axiom about democracy. It's not . . . Now I'm forgetting Churchill's axiom of course.

Anyway it's a bad system, but it's better than all the rest. And

we think that agreements that are collectively bargained have the advantage of having a solid airing of both sides and making sure that throughout the larger 13,000-member bargaining unit — and in terms of the government and we being the people trying to be watchful of the public dollar — that you come up to an agreement that is built to last and that responds to the needs on both sides of the table.

I think we have an agreement that is not the nine and a half per cent that we started out with in terms of our opening bid, but nor is it the 27 per cent that the union had as an opening bid. And there is different talk throughout the process around, you know, which party had moved to where. But, you know, speaking from the government side, I thought that we had a pretty fair offer on the table right off the hop, but that was not sufficient to get the deal.

We do have a tentative deal. It's being voted on as we meet here today. That's my understanding, is that proceedings should be wrapped up by the end of the month. So you'll forgive me if I don't want to talk too much about the tentative deal with . . . not wanting to jinx it or prejudice the proceedings in the vote in any way.

But that's the bargaining process, and certainly throughout the strike I'd heard numerous people talk about how they respect collective bargaining. And I think there are things that arise out of this deal that will hopefully guard against certain of the more salient concerns in this negotiation. But at its base, that's collective bargaining.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, given the fact that . . . I'm trying to recall now, but there was a, I believe, a settlement with upper management for something like 27 per cent not too long before the SGEU started giving notice of potential strikes. It would seem to me that you're going to have union leadership looking at that settlement and automatically determining, well if government has that kind of money to put on the table for certain levels of government, then we should be able to expect more.

So I would think that you would have expected as well that 3 and 3 and 3 would not necessarily meet the goal when senior management had received significantly more.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — If I could respond to that. The figures that you'd mentioned off the top of your comments there, that pertained more to the Crown sector. The Crown sector of course, there's an argument to be made. And certainly we've had it in committee and in the House about the ability of the Crowns to render a commercial profit and how that affects both their bottom line and their need to compete and attract and attain a skilled workforce.

And again, but you know, so in that respect I'd point to, it was in the Crowns that particular measure being taken. But in a broader sense you're right in that we do have a broader context that we have to operate in, in terms of staying competitive and paying an attractive wage that ensures that we've got young people coming into the civil service, and we retain the kind of experience and hard work and knowledge that's built up.

So again we're trying to strike that balance between the funds

available and the fact that we've got . . . we live beside Alberta, for one. Or that you know, where Manitoba settles at. But in terms of the tentative deal we have, I think it's very competitive not just through Western Canada, but throughout Canada as a whole. And I don't think it's unduly generous, but nor do I think it's miserly by any stretch of the imagination.

Mr. Toth: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. And I think, Mr. Minister, when it comes to even the Crowns, public perception — no different than the Carriere case we have before us today — is Crowns are still part of the overall government even though they are a separate entity. And the public in general just view it all as one significant, large body of government. And that's the interesting . . .

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I get calls about city issues at my constituency office all the time. But still we're not going to sign off on cheques for them necessarily. But there is a different arrangement with the Crowns; that they operate in a different realm, so to speak.

I appreciate that there is that perception around it being just one, big amorphous blob out there that is government, but there is a difference between, say, SaskPower needing to compete with ATCO versus the public services in Manitoba and Alberta, and how we compete and stack up with, say, corrections workers throughout Western Canada.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. As we talk wages for upper management, Mr. Minister, there was an interesting article in, I'm not sure if it was in both papers, whether it was . . . an article related to salaries and paying adequate salaries. And maybe some of your officials saw that and would have been kind of thinking that, I hope somebody reads this article. Because I think there was . . . The only thing about the article that kind of caught my attention too, the article was talking about, you know, rewarding people for the work they do, and I do not disagree with that.

Fortunately, you and I as politicians, if you were to be rewarded for some of the work we do every time that something comes the way of a politician, right away we're defending ourselves. And that makes it very difficult. So I don't know if there's a . . . Maybe what we need to do is get people in the public sector to decide what politicians are worth when they're negotiating their salary and we'd come to a common compromise. I don't know.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I'm being made nervous by all the heads nodding around me here but . . .

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, certainly the strike and the fact that SGEU chose the correctional workers was kind of interesting. It no doubt put a lot of stress on a lot of individuals and certainly your deputy minister and associate deputy minister had a lot on their shoulders.

And I had the privilege the other day of walking in . . . And I understand Mr. Lang got away for a couple days, which he probably deserved, was well deserved and no doubt everyone else in the department after you've been trying to deal with a strike and making sure things are managed well. And I can only say that I, it seemed to me, as just a . . . well I'm a MLA and maybe showing a little more interest. In general I think the

public would have to admit that, everything said, everything was done quite well and managed probably as well as you could expect.

And I think we need to say thank you to the individuals in our correctional services and those in leadership for the work. Because as you said, even over the Christmas holidays, it probably wasn't much of a Christmastime because of that extra stress and load and making sure that we had adequate personnel to provide the services that were needed, even to the individuals, the inmates in the centres. Because even at Christmastime with family visits, and that's a lot of work to coordinate. So personally I just want to extend a thank you to the people in Corrections for the commendable job they did under the circumstances and the pressure at the time.

I have a couple of other questions that may not relate directly to this expenditure, but we've talked in the past of collective or . . . pardon me, not the . . . we've been through the collective bargaining agreement, but grievances. And in view of the fact that we've had an ongoing period of time where grievances have accumulated, and given the strike that just took place in Corrections, has there been, would you say there's been an increase in the number of grievances? And what action is the department taking to address these grievances?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — For the period of the strike we had no grievances. Okay well, my gallows humour will get me into trouble yet. But anyway, as it stands right now there are 301 outstanding grievances for Saskatchewan Corrections and Public Safety. Of those 301, 221 grievances are found in adult corrections, 99 of which are in the Saskatoon Correctional Centre. There are no grievances within licensing and inspection or protection and emergency services, and there are 80 within youth offenders.

We've been, in terms of the human resources branch, they've been working with managers, the SGEU, and the Public Service Commission on all outstanding grievances for the purposes of identifying the appropriate course of action to speed resolution of these outstanding grievances.

The grievance process is a three-step process. It's covered in the article 21 of the collective bargaining agreement. Step one is, failing resolution of the problem through dialogue at the local level, a grievance is submitted in writing to the designated supervisory official who would provide a written decision. Step two, if settlement cannot be reached at step one, a step two meeting is held by the parties which includes a representative of the deputy minister, the employee, union steward, and an agreement administration adviser — which is a paid SGEU employee — in an attempt to establish facts and to negotiate a resolution. If step three can't get the deal done, the union may apply for an arbitration.

To address grievances in a timely manner, attempts have been made to hold step two meetings on a monthly basis in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. In recent months, of course, this has been sidelined but things are getting back to normal and the new emphasis that we're trying to place on working our way through these grievances has been resumed or should be resumed quite shortly.

The parties have agreed to pilot a new process whereby a group of grievances would be presented in brief before an agreed-upon third party to determine the likelihood of success of either side if they went before an arbitrator. And hopefully this will assist in expediting the closure of several files based on this feedback. The first pilot occurred in late July, dealing with 11 grievances arising out of the Prince Albert Correctional Centre. Seven of the grievances are expected to be closed as a result of this process. With some minor changes to the process the second pilot occurred in early December 2006, dealing with 17 grievances from the Saskatoon Correctional Centre. Again though this has taken place against a backdrop of the collective agreement expiring September 31.

Our hope and our anticipation is that with a tentative deal and with that deal hopefully being completed by the end of the month that we'll be able to get back to working in an expedited manner through these outstanding grievances.

I don't know if Terry or Maureen would like to add some more at this point but . . .

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, when we look at the number of grievances, is the number of grievances that are currently on file higher than normal or would this be roughly average? I know there's been a number of outstanding . . . And moving away from the strike period, how is the department dealing with the outstanding grievances and moving forward, and are we actually seeing any significant impact or dent into the number of grievances to lower that number?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I guess by year, in the adult corrections up to 2002 I believe we had — here we go — we had 68 grievances in 2003. We had 54 in 2004, 63 in 2005, 58 in 2006. The new process came on stream in the one instance in Prince Albert this past summer. It didn't really have a chance to get off to a good start in terms of the collective bargaining situation. Our hope is that that will expedite the solution of these grievances so that we can move to resolution. We don't find it either desirable or acceptable that we have this number of grievances outstanding, but we do have some hope that this expedited process will aid in their resolution.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I jotted a note down when you were giving me a bit of a breakdown, and in regards to some of the costs of the current strike, I believe — if I have it correct — point four five million for Family Day. Did I get that number right?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Yes.

Mr. Toth: — Exactly what was that? Was that . . .

Hon. Mr. McCall: — That's the cost that's anticipated for Family Day when you take into account that (a) we've got a number of 24-hour, seven-day-a-week facilities; just by their very nature, they tend to generate a lot of overtime. Secondly, with regards to the out-of-scope managers' premium pay and the whole sort of gamut of cost drivers that are involved there, it becomes a pretty costly proposition for a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week situation. So that's the cost of Family Day.

Mr. Toth: — Well I have a bit of an understanding of what

you're talking of there. As far as the individuals who wouldn't necessarily get that day simply because of the type of work they're in, are there other avenues down the road where individuals would get in some way . . . Well they may not celebrate the same day everybody else does, but they would get a day that would be theirs to compensate for the loss of the actual Family Day.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — It's a statutory holiday and will be treated as all the others. But perhaps Terry's got some more to add to that.

Mr. Lang: — Yes. When we refer to premium pay, it's if you work on a statutory holiday, you get time and a half for your normal eight hours of work. Plus you get a day off in addition to that day you worked, right. So people working on Family Day get premium pay, but they also get another day off somewhere down the line to fit into their schedule. So it's not like they don't get the day.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you. Currently how many inmates are in the facilities in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Just one moment. For provincial correctional centres for January 2007 — the four correctional centres of course being Pine Grove for the women in P.A. [Prince Albert], P.A. Correctional, Saskatoon, and Regina — the average daily count was 1,202 for January '07.

Mr. Toth: — Would that number be capacity or over what would be normally considered capacity of these facilities?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — In terms of modified space, I believe our capacity is 1,225. So it's coming up close.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, you may have heard on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] news there was a debate — in fact I believe it was this morning — in regards to overcrowding in our jails.

And there was a comment by one of the reporters that life in jail is crowded and unpleasant. And there was another comment by the reporter that stunning new admissions by government confidential notes suggest that severe crowding has become the norm and that inmates are forced to live in spaces not designed for human habitation. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, in regards to these comments and the confidential notes, what your department sees as overcrowding. And how you respond to this news report?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I guess, first off I'd say that I believe the notes were obtained through the freedom of information Act. And you know, as such it's not something that we've got out for wide circulation, but they're certainly covered by the freedom of information Act. And I believe that's how the information was obtained.

I guess more to the point, we have a difficult situation within Corrections, but we have a manageable situation within Corrections. It's not ideal. In terms of using something like the gym at Saskatoon as contingent space for overcrowding, that's obviously not an ideal use of that space. It's not what it was built for. It's not what it was intended for.

But by the same token, we have brought on new capacity within the system in terms of the addition of the Sharber unit at Pine Grove where the overcrowding pressures were most acute. And of course within the female side of corrections that's it, you know; Pine Grove's the only facility we have. There is some opportunity for managing of counts through transfer of male inmates between the Saskatoon, Regina, and P.A. correctional centres.

And that being said, we have turned sod on the Regina Correctional Centre this past fall. And it's a very expensive proposition. We have a stipulated sum contract that will see that project cost the taxpayer \$51.5 million. And of course, the day after we did the sod turning, there was an editorial on another radio station that has a provincial audience that talked about how we could have saved our money and, you know, spent less money on machine guns and barbed wire.

We don't take that view, but we are trying to manage the best with the resources we've got within a very expensive environment for capital projects. But we do take very seriously the notion that you've got to have not just safety and security, although those are your uppermost concerns within the system. But we all, I think, take pretty seriously within Corrections the mandate that we have to work for rehabilitation, for programming, to give people the skills and the opportunities to have a chance at something other than sort of the straight likelihood of reoffending.

So that's probably a bit more convoluted than you're looking for in terms of an answer, but there it is. I also have some pictures to table with the committee, in terms of the status of the Regina Correctional Centre and the pictures. I don't have a slideshow I'm afraid — no Al Gore slide show — to subject you all to. Peter's very upset about that. Lon, perhaps even more. But anyway, I will table these within the committee or just pass them around for people to have a look.

At present, we anticipate it being completed in the summer of '08. It's a bit ahead of project right now. But it's, again, a very volatile construction environment, so we don't want to jinx anything in terms of the progress of that project. But in terms of that space coming on line, that will be a help to the situation in terms of being a better space for Corrections, and for both the correctional workers and for the inmates.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, when that project comes on line, it doesn't actually add a lot more — or any more — beds, if I'm not mistaken, in the system once the old wing is destroyed at the Correctional Centre, outside of the fact that I think, just from observing some of the observations and the type of subtlety, it certainly looks that it will make it a lot more, a lot easier for people working in the correctional centres to keep tabs on inmates and manage it even much more easily than currently in the past. And I think, I certainly believe that's positive. But I guess when you're making holes in the walls and escaping, it's time to do something.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I guess if I could say as well that we do have a longer term capital plan that we're trying to work on within the context of the longer term capital project needs of government, of provincial government as a whole. But in terms of bringing on new spaces, we want to be very certain that those

spaces are warranted because the way of jails is that, if you have them, you tend to fill them. And we want to make sure that we're doing everything we can around remand.

Thirty-seven per cent of our inmate population is there on remand right now. A lot of that is driven by the practice of judges awarding two for one in terms of time served on remand. So that's something that certainly Terry and officials have been working on very diligently and vigilantly on the federal-provincial-territorial level.

But there are things that we're looking at in terms of what we can do to both address inmate mix and the kind of people within the system. — what we can do on the front end to try and make sure that, if people don't need to be going to jail, they don't go to jail; and for those that do need to be going to jail, what we can do in the longer term sense as makes sense for the taxpayer and for the priorities of the people of this province to adequately provide the capacity in the system.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, I certainly don't disagree with you on that fact. And I think every effort needs to be made to do whatever we can to help people look beyond the current circumstances and if there is . . . And I find it hard to believe that there aren't individuals, especially first- and second-time offenders who may not have some regrets and, if given the opportunity, to turn around their lives, if we would give them that assistance that might . . . that would go a long way to addressing building more beds and putting up more facilities.

And having said that, I noticed you mentioned about the work at IPSCO, and I believe that's an excellent project. We talked to individuals in Saskatoon that are . . . I believe there are situations where we have offenders going out on construction crews and that probably goes even further than just doing training in a facility. Once you get on a crew and you get to realize what the lifestyle is, and actually a cheque, it may — or no doubt will — impact a person's life that may help them actually really turn around.

I just want to mention as well, I was in Calgary recently and I'm looking forward to talking to some individuals . . . A program a retired city police officer developed, it's called About Face. And it's a program whereby judges can refer . . . I believe it's especially first-time offenders into this program, but I just don't have all the details. And the intent of the program is to try to catch young people — especially young people — before they really get trapped in crime and get them to turn their lives around.

And I'm not sure how widespread the program is known, whether or not your department or any of your officials have heard of the program. And it's something that I think that we need to take the time to look at as well. Whether it's, somebody else comes up with it, if there's an idea that's working elsewhere, it certainly doesn't hurt for us to take a look now.

I realize it's in its infancy, but I know that the officer's already been called to other communities who have asked to see how the program works. It's obviously working quite well in Calgary in their inner core, and they're really pleased with what's coming about. So in the future I think we need to continue to work and do whatever we can to assist people in

turning from a life of crime before they become lifetime offenders, and help them to become progressive and supportive members of our society.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — If I could just add on a comment to that, I just want to say, you know, we'll certainly look into the program referenced by you, Don. But we have had . . . You know, your comments make me think of two things.

One, just the tremendous opportunity we have with the labour market situation in Saskatchewan, and you've got, I think, you've got employers that are willing to take a look at things maybe they weren't willing to look at before. And we've got people that, if they do have a job, it's a big part of them not, the scenario of them not reoffending. So in terms of aligning the work of the department and Corrections and just trying to make sure we're putting the tools in people's hands so they can make better choices once they're coming out, I think in terms of the job markets, we've got a real opportunity to do that.

The other thing I think about is the . . . not long after I got this job I ran into one of my little neighbour kids in Dojack, when I was over to Dojack to have a look through the facility. And about a month or so after that, I ran into him back in the neighbourhood and asked him if he was, you know, what he was in for, and he had been stealing car stereos. And I asked him if he was up to that nonsense any more and he said, no, I've got a job. And you know, I think those are . . . We've got a real opportunity here to do some things on fighting reoffending and in terms of the front end kind of things that we can do to cut into the circumstances that make it more likely for people to be committing crimes.

The other thing that in terms of the targeted crime reduction strategies, in Regina alone around the . . . in the help eliminate auto theft strategy, which does exactly the kind of thing you're talking about in terms of trying to divert the people that don't, that . . . You know, instead of sending them off to become bigger and better criminals, trying to intervene with the people for less serious crimes and making sure that we've got appropriate responses to the kind of crimes being committed. But the help eliminate auto theft strategy has seen a 50 per cent reduction in car thefts in the city of Regina over the past five years. And that's been a very active partnership between community, the city of Regina, and players like Corrections and Public Safety. And I think that sort of speaks to the kind of program you're speaking with with About Face.

But we've got a lot of work to do, and there is some progress being made. But certainly the situation is not where we want it to be coming out of Regina or Moosomin or throughout the province.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, in our debate regarding the number of spaces in our facilities and the number of individuals currently in the spaces and of course the news item that was out this morning about the overcrowding, when you mention 1,202 — and I think you said roughly about 1,225 spaces — is that including what would be doubled-up spaces where instead of single you've got bunks and . . . Because from what I read in the article here, putting bunk beds in what were single-bed rooms is considered overcrowding. Is that part of that number you're giving me, and would that be an overcrowding situation?

Hon. Mr. McCall: — I guess it's a point of fundamental disagreement we have with those that would contend that . . . You know, obviously a single bed is better, but in terms of being unacceptable, I don't think there's a jurisdiction in Canada that doesn't double bunk in some way, shape, or form in terms of managing counts.

Mr. Toth: — What I found very interesting as well, and in this news report the reference was made to the United Nations talking about the treatment of prisoners. And the reporter was quoting, "Where sleeping accommodation is in individual cells or rooms, each person shall occupy by night a cell or room by himself."

Now maybe I'm not necessarily always of the agreement that that is always all that bad. It's circumstances. Families share rooms. And when someone is actually spending time, there's a lot of people would say, if you're spending time, you should actually be spending time, not just having a good life. And I wouldn't necessarily view being in a prison cell as being a good life, but it certainly, I think, is a lot better than what a lot of people have faced over the years and maybe individuals face even in other parts of the world today.

But I think, Mr. Minister, if we certainly begin to look beyond just incarceration and wherever possible creating other avenues or opportunities and assisting people in changing their lifestyle, I think that certainly will go a long way to improving our society.

Mr. Minister, I believe, unless others have other questions, I'd call it good for today in regards to the \$20 million we've discussed. I'll look forward to some of the responses that you've given and go through some of the verbatim because I didn't quite catch all of the opening remarks and the comments you were making. You should have had a pause so I could have got those numbers down. Maybe I could have raised more questions as well, but I want to thank you and your officials for the time you've given us today.

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Well I want to thank you very much and thank the officials and the committee for attending to these important supplementary estimates and also to thank you, Don, on behalf of the department for your kind words about the fine job that was done managing a very difficult situation but one that turned out not too badly. So thank you.

The Chair: — Seeing no further questions, thank you to the minister and the officials from the department, and the committee is adjourned . . . sorry, until 7 tonight. Oops, we're coming back at 7.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — March
Learning
Vote 5**

Subvote (LR03)

The Chair: — The Human Services Committee will now come to order, and the item up for business tonight is supplementary

estimates for Health which is vote . . .

A Member: — Learning.

The Chair: — Learning, yes it would be. Well can I go home? Learning, vote 5 on page 10 of your Supplementary Estimates book. Welcome to the minister and her officials. If you could introduce yourself and them, and if you have anything to say to the estimates, please do.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. With me this evening to my left is Wynne Young, deputy minister of Learning. On my right is Dr. Helen Horsman, assistant deputy minister. Sitting behind us is Dave Barnard, executive director, Teachers' Superannuation Commission; David Tulloch, minister . . . director of finance, corporate services — sorry, I gave you a bit of a promotion there — and Margaret Ball, director of facilities. Also Darren McKee is with us this evening. He is the executive director of First Nations and Métis education. And Mana Chinichian, she is MPA [Masters of Public Administration] intern with the Department of Learning. So very pleased to have these folks with me this evening.

Madam Chair, I'm very pleased to be here tonight along with the department officials to speak to the supplementary estimates for the Department of Learning. When last we were here in November of 2006 it was to speak to the incremental funding of 22.23 million that was provided for school capital.

Tonight we are here to speak to additional funding of \$15 million provided for the department for a multi-service, neighbourhood-based community centre and trades and skill training facility in north central Regina. You will know that the Premier announced this \$15 million investment as part of \$100 million will be invested in a plan to revitalize Saskatchewan neighbourhoods with the greatest of needs.

In Regina the 15 million will be targeted to two initiatives. The Regina inner city trades and skill centre, a partnership with the Regina public and Catholic school boards, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, the Dumont Technical Institute, and industry representatives such as the Saskatchewan Construction Association will develop a new approach in consultation with the community to better engage youth in learning and the labour market.

The second initiative will be a north central community services centre aimed at improving services to the inner city and link to the future revitalization of Scott Collegiate. Planning for the centre is underway and includes the provincial, federal, and municipal governments; Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority; North Central Community Association; the Regina Public School Board; Regina Police Service; and community based organizations.

We believe that these investments make very good sense. These are steps towards developing a new model to better engage youth in our labour market, and these investments support efforts aimed at inner city revitalization. Caring communities, safe affordable housing, and access to education and training are continuing priorities for our government as we work

towards making Saskatchewan the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair and we look forward to answering questions from the committee members.

The Chair: — Thank you. Questions then. Mr. Gantefer.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair and welcome, Minister, and your officials. First of all I would like to say that I think that the revitalization of some of our communities, inner city neighbourhoods is a very worthwhile and important initiative. And I would ask some technical questions to start.

As I understand that the \$15 million is allocated for potential revitalization and modification of Scott Collegiate in Regina's north end. Is it limited to that, or is Scott Collegiate's renovation part of it or how does this \$15 million, how's it allocated?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — What we're looking at first is a north central community services centre aimed at improving services in the inner city. Now eventually we would like to see this tied to Scott Collegiate because we know that there are opportunities in that area for training that Scott Collegiate could be used for and revitalized into a composite high school, maybe not per se a composite high school but more in the vein of training. But we see first and foremost a community centre with services in the core area with an eventual tie-in to Scott Collegiate. This isn't money dedicated directly to Scott Collegiate.

Mr. Gantefer: — Is this new community centre then going to be established as part of the physical presence of Scott Collegiate or footprint of Scott Collegiate to use underutilized space or modify underutilized space, or is that going to be the physical base of the community centre?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — First and foremost is the focus on the community centre. Eventually Scott Collegiate may be totally revitalized. Portions of it may be revitalized. But we're not looking at the Scott Collegiate piece being finalized or finished until probably closer to 2010. First and foremost will be the community centre aspect of it. All those details are being put together now in the planning.

Mr. Gantefer: — So in the \$15 million of supplementary expenditures that are being asked for us to consider, describe for me please what the physical characteristic of this expenditure is going to be. Is it a new building adjacent to Scott Collegiate? Is it a renovation or addition to Scott Collegiate? Is it in any proximity physically to Scott Collegiate? Describe for me where this physical entity is going to be built.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — I will turn this over to the deputy minister. Ms. Young has been more involved in the planning that's happened to this point in time.

Ms. Young: — Probably the easiest way to understand this is there's three parts and they'll come at different times.

The first part is the community centre which was part of the announcement two weeks ago, and that will be some portion of

the \$15 million. The second part, which will be the majority of the \$15 million, will be a trades training centre. That is not Scott Collegiate. It will be a trades training centre somewhere in the inner city. We haven't actually got a location for it yet. And that is the partnership is between the two school boards, SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], GDI [Gabriel Dumont Institute], and industry. And that one is just in its planning stages, but the notion is that this would be a different entity than we have before. It's not a high school, and it's not a technical school. It's actually the coming together of both of those things.

So that will be planned, and that will take the majority of the \$15 million. The revitalization of Scott Collegiate — whether that's a brand new Scott or whether it's rebuilt in large part because there's lots of work to do on Scott — it is on our capital construction list. And right now the way it stands, we think it will be a few years yet before we will have that.

And it's very important for us to keep on the list because the list has been assessed and is transparent to all people, and all the school divisions have the list. So it's important we follow it. And so Scott is on that list, I think in about eighth position, and so when we get to that it will come together. And it is planned that the community centre and Scott Collegiate, the future one, will actually be physically linked together so that there will be common use of certain of the areas.

But it's three parts and Scott Collegiate will be the last of those parts.

Mr. Gantefer: — So as I understand your explanation, there will be a new structure built in proximity to Scott Collegiate that can be attached or will be attached to Scott Collegiate that'll provide these aspects of the multidisciplinary or multi-faceted training program and community centre.

As part of that — I mean and I appreciate what you said, Deputy Minister, in terms of that the planning isn't fully in place — has there been a utilization study for Scott Collegiate to see indeed what portions of the collegiate potentially could be made available or renovated to accommodate the goals of this inner-city initiative before we're spending \$15 million or whatever portion of it it is, I think you said the majority of it, on this new facility? Has there been a utilization study done to determine what is potentially available from Scott Collegiate before we build something new and we might be underutilizing existing facilities?

Ms. Young: — There is some initial planning in place. And there's planning under way for the community centre. And Scott Collegiate planning . . . I'm just going to turn around and look here.

So we've begun to look at it, but there's still much planning to do. The important thing — and you've obviously recognized this — is the three components need to be planned together. Even though they won't be built at the very same time, they need to be planned together because the trades training centre, wherever that ends up, shouldn't duplicate what Scott could be. They should complement each other. And so they absolutely, all three, need to be planned together but that doesn't necessarily

... they'll be constructed at the same time together. But that is the planning, or that is, the plan is to do all three pieces in conjunction with each other to make the best use of what Scott will be, but also this new trades training centre.

Mr. Gantefer: — So as I understand it then, there's been the utilization study of Scott as part of this whole process to see what portions of Scott's physical plant can be modified, utilized, or whatever in this new initiative and that the majority of the \$15 million is going to be committed to a new community centre in proximity to Scott. The question I have is, if this planning is just beginning, it sounds ... Like at what stage of planning are we at? Are we in the preliminary stages? Are we in the final stages? Where are we at in terms of the planning of the three phases of this development?

Ms. Young: — The phase that it's most advanced in planning is the community centre. They actually have received some federal funding for planning, and that planning is underway. They have the consultants on board, and that plan is scheduled to be completed by the end of this calendar year, December 2007.

The Scott has only had preliminary planning so far, and when we get closer to available capital funds, we will do more detailed planning around what part of Scott may be able to carry on or whether or not Scott will have to be a whole new facility. But that will come, the detail of that will come closer on.

The trades training centre, which I should be clear, won't necessarily be hooked to Scott. It will certainly be in the neighbourhood in the inner city area but not necessarily physically hooked to Scott. It will depend where we can find the site for this trades training centre. But the programming that will be planned for that, and the programming for Scott will be planned together so that we make the best use out of both facilities.

Mr. Gantefer: — Can you tell me, Deputy Minister, what age group of people and what the demographic is of the people that are targeted to benefit from this initiative?

Ms. Young: — Well again the thinking is early on, but certainly we are looking at youth that are in around the grade 10 and above level and the early years of trades training. As you know, we have a mandate to go up to but not including 22 years of age, so certainly we know that age group is in there.

The early thinking — and again it's only early thinking — is that there may be room for additional trades training and thinking because young people make different steps in their lives, and by the time that they're ready for trades training it could be later on. But certainly our initial focus is for older youth and those up until 22 years of age. So that's where our initial focus is. But it could be more than that.

Mr. Gantefer: — I appreciate in the minister's opening comments that she indicated this is like a multidisciplinary — interdepartmental almost — initiative that involves a number of folks in the planning and participation stages. Has it been determined that K to 12 Learning would be the lead agency, if you like, in this initiative? Or how is it established that this \$15 million is requested of the K to 12 budget rather than a portion

from K to 12, a portion from Post-Secondary, a portion from Justice or Social Services or whatever? On what basis has it been determined that Learning is a sponsor or is requesting the \$15 million for this initiative?

Ms. Young: — In Regina, the decision was to place the funding for this, for the future funding of it, in with the Regina Public School Board for a couple of reasons. They are the principal, one of the principals in the community centre. They've been working very closely with the other partners in the community centre. And so the decision there was for Regina Public. But very much this is an even partnership as we go through. Regina separate or Regina Catholic school system is part of this, as is SIAST and SIIT and GDI and potentially maybe others. So we consider this an equal partnership, and there isn't one of the partners that is leading. It's just that for the purposes of the funding it was placed with the Regina Public, and they certainly understand the obligations to it as we go forward.

Mr. Gantefer: — From your discussion or from your comments on the planning of this, how much of this \$15 million is expected to be expended in the immediate future? And I guess where I'm going in this is the rationale for having this in supplementary estimates rather than a part of the provincial budget that's going to be tabled on the 22nd.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Part of the rationale for having it as supplementary estimates and having the money expended in this fiscal year because this is part of one-time dollars coming into the province, and the decision was made that this is where it would be put.

Mr. Gantefer: — As opposed to the provincial budget tabled on the 22nd, it will not be part of one-time dollars?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Your budget also includes your operating dollars. And this decision ... well that's the way the decision was made, that the third-quarter funding would be, there would be money dedicated towards the community centres and the \$100 million package. So to have that done by the end of this fiscal year, the money was transferred to the Regina Public School Board as the lead in the project working with the other partners.

Mr. Gantefer: — The money has been allocated or transferred to the Regina public system, but they — by the description of where the project is at — are no where near ready to actually expend those dollars.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well if you look back at the history of north central, you will see that there has been a number of projects and groups that have been working on planning since March '03 when the north central community partnership was established. There has been a number of other things, the Regina inner city community partnership was formed also in 2003. And that included federal, provincial, and municipal along with the North Central Community Association. And these groups have been identifying some of the key goals and really putting forward the key initiatives and priorities for the north central community.

So there has been a fair bit of planning that's been ongoing with community partners already, so it's not like we were just

starting from zero at this point in time. There has been a number of things ongoing.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Minister. I notice in the press release on February 23, 2007, that it was outlined as part of the overall initiative that in addition to the cities of Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and North Battleford were also going to be considered for initiatives. Is there going to be similar projects or similar initiatives put into place for Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and North Battleford?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — The other announcements . . . well in the total package of the announcement it was housing for North Battleford, Saskatoon, Regina, and P.A. and northern communities. The trades training in the community centre idea was strictly for Saskatoon and Regina inner cities.

Mr. Gantefer: — So is there a similar \$15 million type of project being envisaged for Saskatoon then?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — The project was announced for Mount Royal that there will be, along with the same educational partners and technical partners and industry, will be at Mount Royal, and I think the value there was 17 million.

Mr. Gantefer: — Can the minister tell me where that requisition is? Is it in the supplementary estimates, or is it going to come in the general budget?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — It's in Advanced Ed and Employment.

Mr. Gantefer: — As part of the supplementary estimates?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Now, just to clarify something, I'm told that the money does not have to be expended in this current fiscal year. And if you want further explanation, I could probably get Dave to do that from the financial side, but it doesn't have to be expended by the end of March.

Mr. Gantefer: — I guess I'm curious then why in Regina's case the money was expended through . . . or the rationale, and I accept the minister's explanation of why the money is being allocated through the Department of Learning K to 12 in Regina's case and, from what I hear you saying, a virtually identical project in Saskatoon is being expended through Advanced Education. Why the difference?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — The projects aren't, while they're similar, they aren't identical by any means. Saskatoon is strictly dealing with the redevelopment of Mount Royal and the partners that are . . . some partners which are currently attached to Mount Royal, others which will be new, that it was more appropriate that Advanced Ed would run the money through their Estimates.

In the project in Regina, the community centre is a focus, but also the trades training is a focus, and it was felt that the Regina Public School Division had the ability to manage through both of those projects.

So it's a different way of looking at it. The community centre isn't attached to the project in Saskatoon; it's strictly Mount Royal. So there is some differences. Well there's also a

community centre project which they refer to as Station 20 in Saskatoon that's separate from Mount Royal. It doesn't have the linkages that they're looking at here in Regina.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Minister. You're losing me a little bit on the nuances of the difference because in my earlier question you indicated that Scott Collegiate was not necessarily attached to the learning centre and it maybe in that there might be some components of the SIAST training program used in Scott Collegiate, but not necessarily. And you know, this is all kind of pretty wishy-washy and grey area. And I think the explanation of why Mount Royal in Saskatoon is different when we have, I believe, similar partnerships going into the relationship between SIAST and I'm presuming the Saskatoon public and Catholic systems and the same kind of partners that are as articulated in Regina, and I'm wondering why the difference. If the argument is valid for the K to 12 department to be taking the funding initiative, if not the lead, you said these are all equals, there is no lead, then why the difference in Saskatoon?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — The difference in Saskatoon, I think, would be that there is a separation between Station 20 which is viewed as more the community centre aspect of the project, and Mount Royal which is currently a composite high school and has some connections to SIAST, they have built a number of partnerships. So you're looking at more of a separation in the project than what you may see in the city of Regina, and that when we're looking at Mount Royal going more into the trades training area, that it was felt that it was better achieved through Advanced Education and Employment and the current partnerships that are already in place with that facility.

The difference being is that there is two new high schools being built on the west side of Saskatoon — Bethlehem and Tommy Douglas. When those schools open this fall, what will happen, you will see a number of students that will shift out of Mount Royal and will shift out to the new high schools which are more in their vicinity and are closer to residences there. So you will see that there will be a fair bit of space that may be empty or will be empty at Mount Royal. So it's utilizing some space that's empty, and that is a big difference, I think, in both projects.

So a little more isolation and separation between the two projects of the community centre and the trades training in Saskatoon and more of a connect here in the city of Regina dealing with some planning in the community that has already been happening and the school division taking, I think, a major lead in the project and having the ability to do that. But that Scott Collegiate will remain a high school and there's a need for that. So what happens to Scott down the road, whether it's revitalized or whether there is some changes, currently the thinking is that it will still remain as a high school in that area.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you very much, Minister. Since these initiatives are occurring in essentially Saskatoon and Regina and you indicated that the initiative under this overall plan for Prince Albert and North Battleford are mainly focused on housing as I think you indicated, I'm wondering what the catchment area then is for participants in these community centres. Are they inner-city individuals, or are they broader in the entire city or beyond the city's borders? What is the area

that will be available or that people will be able to make use of these new community centres?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — I would think just by the notion of where they are going to be located that that is the area where the need is the greatest, where families and residents will need the supports. Are they restricted to those areas? I would say no. But just by the virtue of where they're being placed, that's the area that we really feel that there needs to be a focus on.

Mr. Gantefer: — The deputy minister indicated that the program is going to be largely focused on prior to age 22, I think, was your terminology, which is, I guess, the mandate of the K to 12 learning system up to 21 years of age or inclusive. Is there any provision for people more mature than that to participate in these programs from the inner city or is it restricted? I'm thinking of single moms or people that potentially are older than that demographically but that have been out of the educational system for some time, involved with raising children or things of that nature.

Is this program in these community centres going to be available to people older than the strict mandate of the K to 12 system?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — I'm thinking you're talking about the Regina project and Scott Collegiate. Well it would have the under 22 focus to it within the school. But when you're looking at the training centre and the partnerships that are being developed, of course we would look at a broader range when you're looking at GDI, SIAST, SIIT. Also the community centres, they serve the community, so you wouldn't have those restrictions. What we're talking about here is strictly the responsibility that we have. But community centres are open to the community so that would be serving the residents of the community, whatever their age.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Minister. Changing a bit of direction, I'm interested in what the . . . As you indicated that there is a multi-faceted involvement in this program. There's the Catholic board, the public board, the communities, different associations, public, police association, a number of agencies you've listed. I'm wondering what the governance model of this initiative is then going to be in terms of who's going to establish the ongoing priorities and articulate the changing needs of the community.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — This is still part of the process that we're working through. There are projects similar in nature or larger projects, kind of multi-faceted as these are, where you will often look to one of the partners as being the managing partner or kind of the anchor to the agreement. That's all part of the process that we're working through right now.

Mr. Gantefer: — Do you envisage, Minister, something like a school community council or a separate entity? Or is it going to be strictly the managing partner by the fact that they're getting the \$15 million; I would assume that this is the Regina Public School Board. Will there be an entity established other than the board itself to reflect the needs and the aspirations of this school or this community centre?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — I would think any of the options that you

spoke of would be things that would be looked at through the process of going through the evaluation and what is the best way to operate these projects — could be a non-profit organization, could be a combination of the community councils.

Whether it stays with the direct attachment to the school board, I would think you would need a broader base than that when we're looking at the community centres and all of the partners that are there. Could it be a new board? Could be. But that's what we'll work towards to make sure that we have the best representation for the communities that are involved.

Mr. Gantefer: — You have no concerns of expending \$15 million without that governance structure being a little further fleshed out?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well when you look at the work that has currently been done or already been done in the city of Regina with the community partners, and we have the Regina Public School Board taking an active role in this and realizing the importance of one-time funding that needs to be . . . I always say we have this practical streak, I think all of us that live in Saskatchewan. We try and get every dollar out of our . . . the best out of every dollar that we have to expend.

I think all of the community partners realize that this is an opportunity, that they need to focus and provide the best services that they can for the north central Regina and for the community in Saskatoon. I believe that the safeguards that are there, the people that are involved, the partners that are involved, that there will be a great deal of discussion and that the governance structure will be in place by the time we reach the point where the facility is up and operating.

There will be I think a great deal of input up until then, and I'm sure that we'll have the overview and the accountability in the project that's needed.

Mr. Gantefer: — Between the two projects, Saskatoon and Regina as I understand it — and I recognize it's not all in the Learning department; \$17 million in Saskatoon is Advanced Education, 15 in Learning here — but in total it's about \$32 million on similar projects with similar kinds of challenges and similar need to think about governance structures. Is the discussion between these two projects being done in a context of saying what may fit in one community may or may not fit in the other so that there's maybe a similar governance structure put into place? It just strikes me; in total there's \$32 million that are being committed with no clear direction in terms of what the governance structure and the accountability mechanism that would flow out of a governance structure would be for the accountability to how this money is being utilized in a prudent way. Has the minister or have the ministers or the government thought this through in terms of the governance structure as to how it will then reflect the accountability for this \$32 million in total?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Through the Department of Learning, the continuous improvement framework is being put in place, and it has a number of accountability measures that go along with that. It's a fair piece of the CIF [continuous improvement framework], so we look at that towards our partners for some of

the accountability measures.

But also within the next while, all of the partners will be getting together — both departments, also our community partners, GDI, SIIT, SIAST — to go through these issues as to accountability and governance and to make sure that we have that straightened out quite quickly. But it's something that we need to work through. I mean I understand your concerns because it is a fair piece of money that's being invested in these two projects.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Minister. As I understand it, this one-time money is primarily designed or exclusively designed as capital money to bring the projects to life. Has the department envisaged then how the operating money is going to be funnelled to these projects because there is multi partners to these. Are they going to come from multi departments? Learning has the lead, I guess is the right word, for Regina; Post-Secondary for Saskatoon.

Does that imply that the operating funds to make the project on an ongoing, annual basis, are they going to come from those two different departments as well, or are there going to be other departments involved because there's other agencies involved? How do you envisage the operating capital happen? If this 15 and \$17 million are capital initiatives, one-time capital initiatives, how do you envisage the operating commitments coming?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — That is another area where there will need to be some work done because there is a number of partners that are the same and . . . or maybe slightly different from Saskatoon to Regina. We're looking at different layers of government, not just provincial but also municipal — maybe federal would be nice also — but municipal and provincial for sure. We will be looking at the different representation that there may be in the community centres. It could be police. It could be Health, Learning — I mean there's a number — could be Community Resources and Employment, Advanced Ed, Learning. So there's a number of possibilities that are there.

Mr. Gantefer: — You haven't figured that out at this point in time.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well we're not definite on all the partners that will be there, and each department and each . . . whether it's municipal or provincial. We will have to work through what representation and what resources we will be investing or putting into that and what services are needed in that community, whether it be Regina or whether it be Saskatoon.

Mr. Gantefer: — Well I understand you to say that of this \$100 million plan to revitalize Saskatchewan neighbourhoods, \$32 million is being committed — from Learning, 15; and from Post-Secondary, 17 — a third of this money is being allocated for capital on this initiative without any planning as to what the ongoing operating commitment is going to be and where it's going to flow from.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — We're not talking about brand new services; we're talking about a reallocation of services that may be currently available. What we're talking about is relocating so

that they are accessible to the community and closer to the people that will utilize those services. So if you're reallocating services from one area of the city to another or from one location to another, I mean it's just a shifting of your resources. So there is a number of things. There may be some new resources that are needed. As we work through the program, we will work through those issues. There may be some new funding that's required but there may not be.

Mr. Gantefer: — So is this then not a new initiative but rather a reallocation of existing initiatives?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — It could be a combination of both. What you will see at Mount Royal . . . I'm flipping. I realize I'm flipping between community centres, and I really should leave that to the departments that will be directly involved in that, but what I will talk about is Mount Royal in particular. They have a number of partnerships with SIAST. SIAST in Saskatoon is short of space. There is an opportunity with Mount Royal, the student population being drastically reduced with the opening of the two new high schools on the west side, that there is an opportunity for expansion there from SIAST from SIIT and GDI. So there's a need for space in Saskatoon; we know that. And the Mount Royal location gives us that space for the partners to expand and to also improve the services and the training opportunities, trades and training opportunities for that inner city core that's there.

Here in Regina, as I said previously, there's been a great deal of planning that's gone on since 2003, setting priorities for a Regina centre, putting in place priorities and really identifying the key priorities of the community and that core neighbourhood. And I mean, that could be relocation of services. It could be some new services added on. But the services need to be where the people are.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you very much, Minister. Madam Chair, my colleague has some questions, I believe.

The Chair: — Thank you. Mr. Elhard.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Minister, I've listened pretty intently to the conversation between yourself and the critic for Learning. And having looked at the supplementary estimates, I think I have a fairly good understanding of how things are going to work in Saskatoon.

But in terms of the Regina project, I think you've failed to make a good business case here. I haven't heard anything that would convince me that we really know what's going to happen here. And I think we need to find out a little bit more about your proposal for the project in Regina because it's just simply not clear to me. And I guess I'll go right back to the beginning if I could.

We're talking about a community centre and a trades training centre — two entities in one facility.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Not necessarily.

Mr. Elhard: — I rest my case. I mean that's the problem with what answers we've gotten tonight. It's all not necessarily or we don't know or we haven't planned it or we have to work that

out yet. Can you be more specific? We've got \$15 million on the line here.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — When we started this discussion, the deputy minister quite clearly talked about it really being in the three phases in the project in the city of Regina. First and foremost is a community centre which, as the Saskatoon centre, will bring together many levels — whether it's different departments, whether it's Health, whether it's Justice, whether it's municipal, whether it's police. Other services could be children's services, could be family services that could be located in a community centre. First and foremost that is the first step in the Regina project.

Next we are looking at trades and training that's available to community, school-aged and could be somewhat older, so we're talking about grade 10 and up. That's needed. We're always at a shortage of space for trades and training. I'm sure the members have heard over the last couple of years the number of times about shortages in the trades and training and opportunities for young people.

So now what we're looking at here is putting the services where the people are, putting the services so they're accessible. Many people, for whatever reason . . . and there can be multiple reasons that the traditional education system may not have worked for some people at some point in their lives. What we need to do is be able to reconnect to those folks. We need to be able to give them the support and the opportunity close to where they are, to be able to access the training — and whether it's trades training or training to get back on their feet — and access what's needed for them in their lives and to be able to go on to a successful career or a successful opportunity wherever it is.

So putting these facilities where the people are, where the needs are, is not only giving opportunity for those people, but it's also working to revitalize the area with the housing component, also the community centre, and eventually the redevelopment of Scott Collegiate which will remain a high school in that area.

Mr. Elhard: — So where will the trades training centre be located?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — That's part of the process right now, is looking at is there something that's available that can be converted. Is there a need, and what are the needs of the partners? What do they look for in a trades training centre? Maybe something that is available within the community may have to be built. That's something that the planning is ongoing currently at this point in time.

Mr. Elhard: — So to make the point, if we do run the risk of having to build a trades training centre, it may or may not be part of the community centre. It may or may not be part of Scott Collegiate. And we've got \$15 million dedicated to this whole project. Is there more money planned for this project at some point because I'm not sure that you can accomplish those things with \$15 million. And you've talked about a lot of different partners. Are some of these other partners contributing financially to this? Is there more money over and above the \$15 million that is anticipated to be spent?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — In the current discussions or the

discussions that have happened to this point in time, the plan is to have the community centre connected in some way to Scott Collegiate.

Mr. Elhard: — Not a physical connection?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well it may be, yes, not just . . . I don't know how else you would have them connected, to have a physical connection to Scott Collegiate. So that is one part of it. The trades and training centre may not be physically hooked to the community centre or to Scott Collegiate. What needs to happen is the partners need to be clear on what's needed and to look for the best location that's within the inner city.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, I think we just heard a fairly deliberate attempt earlier to say that there is no necessary connection, physical connection between the community centre and Scott Collegiate. It might be anywhere within walking distance or viewing distance of the school, but not necessarily physically connected. Now you're saying they will be physically connected. And so I guess I'm not sure that the minister knows or her government knows what they've actually got planned here, and what I don't know is what we're getting for \$15 million, even though the goals are laudable.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Now I was sure that the comments were made that the trades training centre would not be physically attached, that we were clear that the community centre and Scott Collegiate were always considered as being together, connected in this whole project. But it's always been the trades training centre that there has been some discussion as to where it would be and whether or not it would be physically connected to Scott Collegiate.

Mr. Elhard: — Could we solve some difficulty with the semantics here if we called this a trades training program because there is no physical centre at play here?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — But there will be. I mean that's the full intent of this and having the money dedicated to it is that there will be.

Mr. Elhard: — So for \$15 million, you're going to build a community centre and a trades training centre?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — That's the plan. Now will there need to be . . . Will \$15 million do it? Early projections are it should. But we also are well aware of the increases that we have had in construction costs in the last two years. Inflation. Some of the rising costs in that sector have hit a number of projects, so we are aware that in the long run there may need to be some other dollars invested into the project. And I also want to say that the redevelopment of Scott Collegiate is not included in the \$15 million.

Mr. Elhard: — With the variety of partners you have welcomed to the table for this particular project, are you expecting any of them to contribute money toward the physical plant that you're hoping to erect?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — I believe it would be the expectation.

Mr. Elhard: — So \$15 million isn't the total cost. What is the

total cost of this project?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — The consultants are working on the project for the community centre currently, and we are expecting by the end of this year to have the final details for it. For the trades training centre, that process is in its much earlier stages, and we don't have those figures right now, and it won't be for a bit.

Mr. Elhard: — Would it be safe to guess that the \$15 million will just cover the cost of the community centre?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — I would say no. Now can I say to you, the people that do the planning on the physical plant on any of these projects are very experienced in what they do, so you always have an idea of the cost of . . . I mean basically of what you're looking at. It's not like we're going into this with our eyes closed. We know that the \$15 million is a very good start on this project. Could it cost more? If the needs of the partners are higher, it may cost more. There may be a requirement to invest some more dollars.

But now I take a bit of a . . . Well I guess I disagree with your comments that there isn't a good business case for this, and maybe I take some frustration with the notion that everything we do has to or is purely quantified by the bottom line. I disagree with that because we are more than dollars and cents. We are people that live in the province of Saskatchewan. We are communities.

This is a community that needs support. Are we going to go in blindly and just spend whatever it takes? No we aren't because we don't have those resources to do that. But is there a need for support, and is there a need for a community centre and training opportunities in those communities? Yes there is. And we are going to do the best we can, and this is a very good start to address some of the issues within those communities.

And the project has gone farther than that with the housing component because we know that outcomes for children and for families, whether it be educational or whether it be health outcomes, the list will go on and on, that when families have a stable quality housing arrangement — whether it's a rental or whether it's an opportunity for lower-income people to purchase their own home, whether it's through sweat equity or whether it's contributing to a down payment, whatever the arrangement is — that outcomes for children and for families go up greatly in situations where they have that stability in their lives.

So what this project does is begin to address some of the neighbourhoods in Saskatchewan that need to have a focus put on them and some supports put in place that are accessible to the residents and that they will see benefits from, and that all of us will see benefits from.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, I think I said the goals were laudable. And I don't think anybody has any questions or any hesitation about the money committed to housing. But what you're asking us to do here is approve a \$15 million expenditure that is open-ended, that we have no understanding of how it's going to be financed other than the \$15 million.

You've already admitted that there will probably be an additional amount of money needed from the other partners to make this work. We don't know what the governance is. We don't know who's going to own this in the final analysis. We don't know for sure if and when the trades training centre will be built.

Madam Minister, on behalf of the taxpayers of this province . . . You know, I'll use an analogy. If I took this kind of an unspecified plan to my bank because I wanted to build a shopping mall, I'd be refused. There just is simply not enough hard information. It's maybe this, maybe that, we're working on this, we hope this will be the outcome. This has a good and beneficial social purpose in the end, but we're talking about \$15 million of taxpayers' money. And I think we need to be more explicit about what that's going to provide, who else is going to pay money, what the total cost will be, who's going to retain ownership, and how this is all going to be governed before we can give approval to this.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well what I would say is any project . . . And when you were building your shopping mall, you wouldn't just start with an idea, have all your plans in place, you would need some funding to get the project off the ground. You would need to start somewhere.

The community in north central Regina has been planning since 2003. They have put in place the priorities, the key priorities, and identified areas where they feel there needs to be improvements. There has been a great deal of work put into this. What this funding does is allow them to continue on with the planning and to reach a conclusion with the projects and the priorities that they have identified as being important to their neighbourhood and important to the people that live there.

You need to have planning money. It takes time to plan. And what this \$15 million does is let them actually get down to the project and start to put the . . . I mean all of the specific planning in place for what they've already done.

Will the partners be expected to bring in money? They will because they'll be relocating programs and funding that they may currently have into different facilities in different areas of the city. It's the same with Saskatoon.

So you are reallocating some resources. May there be some new resources required? Yes there may be, but we need to be able to move on with the planning. And that's what this allows them to do and to be able to move in the three phases to achieve many of the things that they have been planning since 2003. This isn't like it's just dropped out of the blue. This has been in the works for a long time. Now that the finances are there, we are able to dedicate some money towards this project. Then that's what we've done.

The partners are major partners and major components in the education system in the province of Saskatchewan. They will have the ability to plan through this project. They will have the ability to partner with the other groups that have an interest and a stake in these projects. And that's what we're allowing them to do.

Is it all drawn in blueprints in black and white? Not as of this

point in time. But it will be, and this is support for the community that is needed and long past due.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, I understand that it takes time and it takes money to plan appropriately. But we were led to believe at the outset that this \$15 million was to go toward a capital project that was actually going to build a building, a community centre. Now you're telling us that this is money that you're spotting these people for planning, so that planning can go ahead. That's precisely what you said, and I . . . Now what is it? Is it for physical facilities, or is it for planning an additional work to making this project reality?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — It will allow the last portion of the planning to be done, but it will also be money to build the community centre and to build the trades training centre.

Mr. Elhard: — May I ask you, Madam Minister, then what do you anticipate the other partners to contribute to this project because it's apparent that \$15 million is not the final price tag.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — What we will have to look at is in the final planning to see which partners and which services will be located in the community centre. It could be Health, could be the police services. Those are already two that have voiced an interest in it. Also it could be library services. There is a number of things, so what we need to do is to see which partners are definitely locating some services in that community centre and then the decisions will be made as to how the funding is divided, how the operation is divided. Could be relocating from current programs within the city, some could be if needed new programming, and that's things that will be decided down the line as to what's needed in the community and the partners that will be relocating into the new facilities.

Mr. Elhard: — I think we've run out of time, and I have quite a number of other questions I'd like to ask you, Madam Minister, on this particular project. One final question, I don't think it will be a tough question. Since we're giving this money to the Regina Public School Board for the investment on this project, is it expected that the Regina Public School Board will retain ownership of this facility going forward?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — The Regina Public School Division will retain ownership of Scott Collegiate but the feel is that the community centre and the trades training will be set up under a different model. And this gets back into the previous comments with Mr. Gantfoer when we talked about governance. And I do have to say the money is not going to be expended until the governance and these issues have been dealt with. The accountability is still there and will remain there, but the money will not be expended until all of those pieces have been put in place.

Mr. Elhard: — As I indicated, there are a lot more questions. But thank you, Madam Minister, for your time here tonight. I appreciate your attendance at committee and the attendance of your officials, and we don't want to hold them any longer than necessary, so thank you very much.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, and I'd like to thank the officials from the department who were here this evening. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you and thank your officials and thanks for the questions. We now are . . . Our next item on the agenda is some witnesses to The Status of the Artist Amendment Act. And I would entertain a motion that we go in camera. Ms. Crofford.

Ms. Crofford: — I'll so move.

The Chair: — Agreed? Agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — It will just take of couple of minutes while we change officials and clear the room for the in camera session.

[The committee continued in camera.]

[The committee adjourned at 22:08.]