



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

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## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

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Ms. Judy Junor, Deputy Chair  
Saskatoon Eastview

Mr. Denis Allchurch  
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Mr. Cam Broten  
Saskatoon Massey Place

Ms. Doreen Eagles  
Estevan

Mr. Serge LeClerc  
Saskatoon Northwest

Mr. Greg Ottenbreit  
Yorkton

[The committee met at 19:00.]

**The Chair:** — I'll call this committee to order. I'd like to welcome all committee members here this evening. It's good to see you once again. It seems we hardly spent any time in this room over the last number of months here. We have an agenda before us, committee members, dealing with the supplementary estimates this evening of the ministries of Education, Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, and the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. The first item on our agenda is the Ministry of Education, but before we move into that, there's a few housekeeping matters that I'd like to take care of before I call upon the Minister of Education.

The first issue that I'd like to make committee members aware is that we have a substitution this evening. Mr. Wotherspoon is substituting for Ms. Junor. Secondly, we have some people in new positions with the committee here this evening. We have Ms. Kathy Burianyak who is our Committee Clerk, and Ms. Joelle Perras is our committee researcher, and I'd like the committee to welcome both of them. We look forward to working with them.

Now before I ask the Minister of Education to introduce his officials, I'll just take a bit of time for the benefit of the committee members and also for those people viewing to briefly review what it is we are doing here this evening. What we are doing this evening is we're having the ministers of the various ministries appear before the committee to have their supplementary spending approved by this committee.

The supplementary spending is very specific to specific votes. And I would ask committee members to confine their questions and comments generally to those votes because the minister and his officials have prepared for those areas. Those officials are with the minister tonight. If we range too far beyond those votes, the minister may not have the appropriate officials here this evening and also the proper preparation may not have been done.

As I had said, the minister and his officials are witnesses before this committee. The ministers have the option of taking notice and providing, in letter form, the information to the committee Chair, which would then be distributed to all committee members. So if we can just observe those past practices, I think we can have a very fruitful and productive evening.

So with that I would call upon Minister Krawetz to introduce his officials. And if he has few brief opening comments, I would invite him to make those comments after his introductions.

**General Revenue Fund  
Supplementary Estimates — November  
Education  
Vote 5**

**Subvotes (ED03), (ED08), (ED10), (ED15), and (ED04)**

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and good evening to all committee members. We look forward to explaining some of the expenditures that we're putting forth in

supplementary estimates. And I want to begin, first of all, by introducing the people that are with me today.

My deputy minister, Audrey Roadhouse, is seated to my right, and Helen Horsman, the assistant deputy minister, is seated to my left. Behind me is Dave Tulloch. To the right is Dave Tulloch, director of financial planning and management. And next to Dave is Lois Zelmer who is the executive director of early learning and child care. Next to Lois is Joylene Campbell who is our Provincial Librarian, responsible of course for the Provincial Library program. And seated next to her is Rhonda Smysniuk. Rhonda is the executive director of school finance and facilities. Behind Rhonda, over to my far left is Elaine Caswell who's the director of children's services. And then is Rosanne Glass, executive director for policy, evaluation, and legislative services. And next to Rosanne is Sue Amundrud who is of course the executive director of curriculum and e-learning.

Mr. Chair, of course it's because of the economic times in the province of Saskatchewan that we're able to put forward some new expenditures that were not part of the discussions back during the budget debate in March. And we will have an explanation for you of why we are requesting \$10.336 million, which is of course explained on page 14 of the Supplementary Estimates document.

The first largest expenditure of significance, Mr. Chair, is that funds will be required for the expansion and enhancement of e-learning and the satellite network program, and that amount is going to be \$3.05 million. The next largest amount is 3.045 million for the single integrated library information system, and it will also be used to enhance and expand the CommunityNet in public libraries. Next amount is 1.905 million for the approved increases for community-based organizations and support for child care. And these are relevant to other CBOs [community-based organization] as well in the province of Saskatchewan.

The next amount is 1.255 million to enhance technology-supported learning in school divisions and to upgrade CommunityNet connections in K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] schools. Smaller amount is \$150,000 transfer from the Ministry of Health, and this is to deliver the autism program that is in its second year through the early childhood intervention centres in Regina, Saskatoon, and North Battleford.

And then there is the final component that is not to be voted. It's a statutory commitment, and that statutory commitment is \$931,000, nearly \$1 million, for the enhancement to the Saskatchewan teachers retirement plan. And I can give an explanation as to some of the things that have, you know, caused that to be increased.

These initiatives strengthen e-learning in schools and public libraries in Saskatchewan and also continue the development of child care and autism programming in Saskatchewan. The initiatives will contribute to improvements in our education system, resulting in higher student achievement and help to support our economy, which will improve our quality of life.

The initiatives will help provide the foundation for a cohesive learning system by increasing learning opportunities throughout

the early years, child care, and pre-K to 12. The initiatives also include investing in educational infrastructure which will have an enduring impact on future generations in Saskatchewan. These investments will help make a better life for students, families, and communities so our youth can build a better future here in Saskatchewan.

Our government is committed to identifying new ideas to help our province increase its potential and extend our prosperity to all residents.

Mr. Chair, with those comments, rather than get in . . . I had thought that I would do an explanation of each of those areas, but I think it might be more advantageous for all members if we go directly into questions that members may have on specific areas and we can explore then the full explanation for any and all of those areas.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. And I agree. I think it would be more productive if the explanation of the specifics was left to the questions because I'm sure there'll be questions and you'll have ample opportunity to give those explanations.

I recognize Mr. Wotherspoon.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to the minister and our deputy minister, our assistant deputy minister, our many staff and directors that are here, and all committee members that are going to make this a worthwhile process here tonight. So thank you for your time and for your answers.

To start we're going to spend some time focusing in on child care. And the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow will carry those conversations.

**The Chair:** — I recognize Ms. Higgins.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and a welcome to the minister and officials from the department. I noticed that the Chair was the only person who said that he had missed being in this room for a considerable period of time.

But anyway I do have some questions about the child care issue. And I mean, you're well aware — and I know that the ministry is well aware — that when we look at the number of issues in the child care sector, the availability of spaces may be the most public issue but it's not the only one, that there are a number of areas within early learning and child care that need to be addressed and need to be supported as they move along, and especially in today's economy.

So it's not just creating spaces. I mean there are other issues, whether it has to do with capital to address meeting code or starting up or whether it's capital addressing. I think it's \$3,000 still for start-up per space. And many child care centres have expressed that that's pretty difficult to get started on, \$3,000 per space. So I mean there is a number of issues.

And there's also issues with the depth of the subsidy — who qualifies and how much you qualify for and what kind of support you will receive. And also issues around recruitment and retention, and being able to maintain staff and have

adequate staff that are needed throughout the province.

So I mean, the issues kind of go on and on and then we can get into the day-to-day type of things when we talk about nutrition grants, which are a concern for both child care centres and home daycares. I mean it is an issue and especially with the rising cost of food. I mean it goes on and on.

So any announcements for child care I wholeheartedly support and I think that would be a common feel across the province, that we need to make sure we're doing the best we can to move this whole sector along.

When I look at the amount of money that is listed in the supplementary estimates, you've got the 1.905 million that is . . . Child care facilities is what it says. In the Throne Speech there was an announcement of 1.7 million for child care spaces. Are we talking about the same money or no? Can you . . .

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Yes.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well so okay. No. So then what I need is a breakdown of the 1.9 and what exactly it will be used for.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Okay, I can begin. Thank you for those questions and you've highlighted quite a number of areas, of course, that are of concern to the ministry and I think to all people in Saskatchewan. We have received a lot of phone calls about the availability of child care spaces.

And you know, the province of Saskatchewan doesn't rank very high with regards to the number of child care spaces, in especially Western Canada. I mean I've used these numbers before and when we compare ourselves to BC [British Columbia], Alberta, Manitoba, we're the lowest. And we're the lowest in any way you look at it per capita and you break that down. So we need to move on that. With the growth in the population in the province, with the desire to have more child care spaces, we are.

And I think what you heard, to answer maybe one of your questions, is that the explanation for what has happened so far is of course that we increased the number of child care spaces by 500 in the last budget. So that's where the large expenditure has taken place.

The additional dollars that you're seeing here today, in fact it'll be \$2.055 million under the (EDO8), which is early learning and child care. That's broken up into 1.905 million as explained for child care facilities. But really what it is, it's for the lift to the salaries that were explained back in the middle of summer when all CBOs were given a significant amount of money to enhance the salaries. What we were finding — and your comment, Ms. Higgins, is very accurate — is that to recruit and to retain well-educated personnel is difficult, and the salaries that we see right now we felt that they required an enhancement, and they did.

[19:15]

Now to answer another part of your question, the 7 per cent lift, because we as a ministry only support child care total expenses to the amount of 30 per cent — which has been in place for a

long time — the salary uplift that was provided doesn't necessarily equate then to a 7 per cent lift. Okay in fact it's going to translate into . . . I believe all child care centres will probably — the employees and that in those child care centres — are going to receive about a 5.6 per cent wage lift. So that entire 1.9 million is not going to add any more spaces with this dollar. It's going to add to the salary level of the people that are working within the CBOs of child care.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Okay then, the 1.7 million that was spoken of in the Speech from the Throne, then we're not looking at that until next spring for budget.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — That has been under way already. I could maybe ask Lois to indicate to you where we are with the 500 child care spaces. I know that they've been allocated throughout the province. In fact we had a bit of a carry-over from the previous year where we had some spaces, but I'd sure . . . I know Lois has those technical things much better than I do.

**Ms. Zelmer:** — Well in the previous year with the addition of the federal money, we were able to put 1,050 spaces with development time through to the end of March. That 1.7 that was mentioned in the Throne Speech is in fact this spring's 1.7 for the 500 spaces. So we're hopeful that most if not all of those spaces will be up and running by the end of March '09. So it's not a new 1.7; it's the 1.7 from the spring.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Okay, so it's not a new 1.7. It's a reannouncement from the budget last spring.

**Ms. Zelmer:** — Yes.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Okay. So then question: of the 1,050 that were previously announced, are they all in place, up and running? Or how is that going?

**Ms. Zelmer:** — They aren't yet, given the delay in the allocation with the election period, late '07. We didn't make the allocation to the centres until it was January '08, and we did give them through to the end of March '09. In particular finding a site is becoming increasingly challenging with the cost of infrastructure. So we have those in place, and we're hoping as many of them as possible will be open by '09, but they're not all open yet. We'd given them that longer period to account for the delay in the announcement in '07-08.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Okay. So this is basically a reannouncement of budget funding from the spring.

**Ms. Zelmer:** — The 1.7 for 500 spaces, yes.

**Ms. Higgins:** — The 1.7, okay.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — We're not debating the 1.7 million. The explanation is for the 1.9.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Yes, the 1.9.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — It's not new spaces, it's the lift of salary.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Okay. Well I was looking at . . . Sorry. And I was confusing this because the Throne Speech is normally new initiatives. Now it was somewhat different this year with the way the government put forward a number of new initiatives. And so the assumption was — which you should never assume, and I know that — the 1.7 was also a new initiative that was coming forward. So then I had felt it was 1,000 spaces for this year. So okay. No, thank you very much for clarifying that. Now you've just screwed up my whole line of questioning. I mean, you just changed everything.

So okay. The 1.9, when we look at a lift to the CBOs, is that absolutely for wages only, or is there anything else that can be taken out of that? Or is it up to the boards that will operate the child care centres or how it's used? Is there flexibility, or is it solely for wages?

**Ms. Zelmer:** — The CBO lift is a government-wide initiative. Social Services has been the lead and CPS[Corrections and Public Safety], Justice, Health, and we are involved in that. And child care is a particular subset of the Education lift. The language has been that it is generally directed towards recruitment and retention. We do, when we send the money out to a child care, ask them to account for how they're going to spend it, usually in the form of a board minute. It could be wages, it could be pension and benefit plan, much in the same way as the previous lifts we've given to child care. It's about support for their staff in general.

**Ms. Higgins:** — There's flexibility with how it's used.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — We're hoping that boards apply it . . . Okay, I mean it's not an edict. We are recommending to boards that this be applied to wages, but if there's some critical component, I'm sure the board will have some discussions with Ms. Zelmer, and we'll see, you know, we'll be able to understand why they choose to do something slightly different. But we're hopeful then that it translates into a little over 5 per cent wage increase to all CBO child care workers.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Do you have any idea as to what the wait lists are like currently across the province for child care spaces?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Well we track some of those kinds of things, but of course there are others that are still, you know, checking with individual family child care, and those you'll never know.

We know that in areas of growth where there have been new job creations, especially Saskatoon, Lloydminster, this area of Regina where we're . . . have parents that are living in even some of the bedroom communities like White City and Balgonie, there is a significant demand for child care.

And that is why I believe very strongly in an enhancement to this program. And I hope that that translates into growth into the future in terms of the number of child care spaces. Because we know that there are people who, because of the opportunities to work, because of the education initiative where some people want to go and continue or finish with studies, they require some child care. And we're seeing that there's a deficiency in the number of spaces.

**Ms. Higgins:** — So has the criteria for allotment of spaces changed any? Has it been revised or adjusted with the changing in the economy and the province, or are we still using the same with priorities to attachments to post-secondary or advanced education, North, rural?

**Ms. Zelmer:** — We do still for last year have those criteria in place. That's how they were allocated last year, but we did introduce a look at ratios of numbers of spaces relative to numbers of children in a community under a certain age, so that it allowed us to give some geographic equity around numbers of kids relative to numbers of licensed spaces. We also knew we had an intense pressure around infant spaces, particularly in urban areas, so we overlaid both of those things.

We are in conversation in our ministry with our field staff. And we'll take to the minister our interest in . . . One of the primary concerns child cares are facing now is the finding of a site. So that is part of the readiness to develop, and what steps can we take to assist them in finding a site that will allow the development to happen more quickly.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Going back to the Speech from the Throne then, can I ask if increasing the pre-kindergarten programs by almost 25 per cent, is that last year's program or initiative re-announced also — almost an update of what's gone on, not just new initiatives into the future?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Right. The pre-K programs were enhanced by 38, and there are actually I think 25 new spaces because the other 13 existed in current space. And maybe I'll ask Lois to clarify that as well.

**Ms. Zelmer:** — The issue there is, do we provide only program funding or capital funding? So if it's not a brand new program, we can more quickly get the program out there because the school doesn't have to generally find a teacher and find a space, so it's easier and faster to do the second or the fourth program.

**Ms. Higgins:** — In the release that was done today, support for ELCC [early learning and child care] facilities . . . You're frowning. Now is that new money or is that existing money that was within the department's budget?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — That's existing money that we're now putting in place to ensure that the monies that were identified in the budget are in fact being expended, and that explanation is all from the budget.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Okay. ECIP [early childhood intervention program] funding then — back to the estimates where we're supposed to be — the 150,000 for ECIP, is that one-time or ongoing funding?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Well it's one-time in that the Ministry of Health . . . and this is a two-year program already so this is a program that was in place in '07-08. This is the program that was put in place to deliver autism. And it was an arrangement with the ECIP centres in Regina and Saskatoon and North Battleford, and through those programs we've hired interventionists, autism interventionists, that are working. It's in its second year, and whether or not the Ministry of Health is going to continue with that direction is unknown at this time.

It's a program that Education has paid for even though it's come through Health, and that's where it started two years ago. So we're continuing with that this year because we're seeing some very good things happening in those three centres, and the program will be evaluated.

**Ms. Higgins:** — And how about just general ongoing support for the ECIP program? There was increases this year, or was there?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Under the budget, under ECIP programs, the enhancement was from \$2.888 million in the previous year to 3.191, so there was . . . difference between that would be \$203,000. Okay, so there was a significant increase to that, to the ECIP program, within the budget.

Now this additional 150,000 is required to ensure that that autism component that is a partnership with Health, that it continues for the balance of this year.

**Ms. Higgins:** — So this will fund it until the end of this fiscal year, and when will a decision be made as to whether it's continued or not?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Could I ask Elaine, please?

**Ms. Caswell:** — We're currently meeting with Health to evaluate the outcomes of those ECIP workers, and a decision will be made within the next couple of weeks.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well I know those programs, ECIP in particular, has a huge impact on communities and families. I mean, they're really important. So I would encourage the funding, the Minister of Finance or whomever, to make sure that the program continues because they have a big impact on the community.

Do you have — and this is more of a general question — do you have in mind long-term targets or short-term targets for where you would like to see . . . You commented on Saskatchewan's number of child care spaces. We are at the lower end out of all of the provinces. And we can get into the debate as to how they're added, and, I mean, different provinces count in different types of spaces. Do you have any long-term targets that you have set to reach within the next year, six months, year, five years, three years?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Well as I've stated, the increase of 500 child care spaces along with the extra spaces that were worked on by the previous government with the federal government to get that additional funding in place . . . And we were happy to see that happen because, as indicated already today, you know, we're putting in place well over 1,000 in this last, let's say, 14 months. So that is not enough.

What we're looking at doing is to develop a plan and develop a program that will be a long-term plan. I think that we need to plan for more than two years. Now whether that's three or whether that's five remains to be seen. But we are looking at the province as far as growth. Through the Ministry of Health we're able to get numbers of the number of children who are one-year-old or two-year-old, three-year-old. And that's going to be helpful as indicated by my official already tonight because

we're going to be able to concentrate on those areas and to look at ratios. And we're going to be able to look at ratios of the number of child care spaces to a particular area and how many children there are. So those are all being looked at right now.

[19:30]

And do I have a plan all ready that has been accepted by cabinet? The answer to that is no. We're working through that at the moment as we continue our deliberations on budget projections. Whatever we do will require dollars, and I hope that the amount of dollars that we are able to find for early child care is going to be sufficient. But we know that that will always be an area that needs to be enhanced.

**Ms. Higgins:** — How many more years of funding is there that will be coming from the federal government, the seven and a half million, or has it changed with per capita changes?

**Ms. Zelmer:** — The federal child care spaces initiative, the June 2007 money is through to '13-14. The early childhood development, the ECD, which pays for KidsFirst, is also through to '13-14, as is the 2003 multilateral framework. So they're all through to '13-14 with a 3 per cent escalator.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Okay. So then is any of the CBO funding that can go to wages out of any of those programs, or is this separate? I know there are some restrictions on the federal dollars, what they can be used for. But this 1.9, is that federal money or is it money from the province?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Well it's an expenditure of money from the province of which of course we did receive the federal money, so that has been put into the pot and we're now looking at being able to allocate it for additional spaces. And that's why we're planning to try to see what we can do over the next three years because we know already there is a commitment from the federal government on their commitment with an escalator clause that's going to ensure that we're going to get that money from now till 2013.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Okay. What I need to understand though is, when the seven and a half million dollars is allotted through the federal government for the number of years that the agreement states, my understanding is that it was to be used for creation of child care spaces or there was some flexibility to use it for development or enhancement of other early childhood programming, but that it wasn't to be able to be used for operating.

Now for 1.9 to go into wages would be on the operating side of the ledger in my view, and maybe I'm wrong on this. So I don't quite know where this fits. And I understand how it all goes into the GRF [General Revenue Fund] and it's disbursed from there. But previously there would be an accounting of the program, the amount of dollars that were in there, what had been used and what was still there to be used for either creation of spaces or . . .

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Two things I want to clarify. First of all, with regards to the federal money, we will be providing — the federal government is asking and we will be providing — a full explanation of where their 7-plus million dollars is being

spent. And I'm not sure on the clarification of some of the concerns that you've raised regarding capital and programming and the like, but I can assure the federal government, and I can assure you and all the people in Saskatchewan that we will spend the dollars on child care.

Now back to the question of the \$1.9 million that is being used for lift, that is all provincial money. You know, the expenditure for the federal monies was planned as a part of budget. And we're working through those way back, you know, before the current fiscal year started. This expenditure now is provincial dollars that we need for the wage lift.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will turn it back to my colleagues. Just one other comment. I do want to say provincial library funding is the types of investments that are long past due, and with the tightness of budgeting it was always a difficult decision. So when the province is doing well, it's a very good expenditure, and I would just like to wish the libraries well in how they disburse it. And I'm sure they will use it wisely, and they will squeeze every nickel of value they can out of the money that comes their way. So it was a very good investment. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Wotherspoon.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Just to follow up with a couple last questions on the child care here. Just a question here with regard to the post-secondary certificate and diploma training seats. Can the minister comment, please, on whether those seats are full, as we speak, in the programs across Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — No, I don't have those answers at my fingertips, Mr. Wotherspoon, but maybe Ms. Zelmer has.

**Ms. Zelmer:** — The full-time daytime early childhood educator programs tend not to be full. We don't see much of a flow of students out of grade 12 into the ECE [early childhood education] programming. What we are seeing is a large number of staff who will go into child care with the minimum training and then do the additional training, with support from the ministry, online. And we've addressed this with SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], and they tell us that this is done on a cost-recovery basis. So the more folk who sign up and do the programming, the more staff they hire. So it isn't a matter of allocating additional seats to SIAST through AEE [Advanced Education, Employment] as we've done in the past.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — The minister's recognized that there's a shortfall of spaces here right now and a challenge across the province in shortage of spaces. I know a daycare provider in Regina here that has a 400-person wait-list and 200 spots alone for 19 infant spaces. I know the story's the same up through Saskatoon, provider to provider, North Battleford. I was chatting with some folks down in Estevan. I know they've got 70-person wait-lists. So I know this minister's spoken about addressing this and is doing so by adding a 5 per cent lift to the compensation. Yet we aren't filling the programs that we need for the diploma and certificate seats.

So I guess my question is, I believe the wages start in around that \$13 range and 5.6 per cent of that is, you know, 65, 70

cents. And certainly there's significant cost borne to go and study, whether through tuition or through housing. And I'm just wondering if the minister can comment whether or not he sees this 5.6 per cent lift as being adequate to address the shortfall that we're seeing and the need to bring new spaces on line.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Well I guess I'll begin, Mr. Wotherspoon, by saying that it takes a special person to want to be involved in education, and as an educator you know that. And of course even with child care, it even becomes greater responsibilities. The salary, and I've talked to people who work in the daycare centres, the salary is not sufficient. And we saw the need to help and that's why a fairly significant wage increase was implemented. We've also added through the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, we've also added the ability for people to apply for additional bursaries, for additional scholarships — for all those kinds of things.

So we're trying to promote it. We're trying to ensure that wherever we can help with . . . As Ms. Zelmer's indicated, when people are actually hired and in the system and want to take additional training to be able to upgrade themselves and to be able to increase the amount of salary that they're going to be receiving, we're helping them with that, and we're going to continue to do that.

The salary discussion will be an ongoing discussion and I'm sure we'll be talking about this year after year.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Well thank you. I guess it is kind of the chicken and the egg effect as far as the need for compensation to fill the seats and to be able to generate those good folks that want to be involved in early childhood back into those places where they can be very useful.

And just before we move on to the other piece, I would just certainly encourage the ministry to continue to be looking at that \$3,000 grant amount for new space creation — the capital A.

You know, if myself and my good friend from Massey Place were opening up a child care facility at this time and we were going to serve 50 individuals, I think that would allow us about \$150,000 for capital. And you know in my constituency, it's pretty tough to buy a small bungalow with a basement for \$150,000, let alone a building that's something the community can be proud of and something that's safe and high quality for our children.

So I know we do have this dynamic economy and it comes with some challenges. There are the dollars there as well, and I'd certainly encourage the minister to take a look at that number because I think it could be certainly significantly higher.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you for those comments, Mr. Wotherspoon. You're right in wanting to enhance, you know, if we're going to attract people.

I had an interesting visit to Ukraine. I visited a child care centre where it was filled to capacity. And a very important focus is played on child care in Ukraine and a lot of . . . As you know, there are many immigrant families that are coming to

Saskatchewan from Ukraine and they're looking at our child care system and they want to be assured that if both parents are going to be employed, that they can, you know, have adequate child care.

As far as yourself and your colleague making an application, I'm not sure that the permit would be successful and the licence . . . No, I'm just joking.

But I do want to say also and, you know, I've been asked this question about, well how good or how bad are we? You know, for the people that, you know, are watching and paying attention to this, I want people to understand, and depending upon again the numbers that you use for pre-kindergarten programs, early child care spaces, it varies.

But overall, in the province of British Columbia there are over 82,000 spaces. In the province of Alberta there are over 72,000. And in the province of Manitoba there are over 26,000. And in the province of Saskatchewan, with our 500 increase last year, we've now moved to 10,400 spaces. So I think, you know, comparing numbers, we know that Alberta is about three and a half times bigger than us. But when you look at our numbers of 10,400 and you multiply that by 3.5, well you're not even in the ballpark when you start to compare to Alberta's 72,000.

So we have a long way to go, there's no question about that. And we're going to try to focus on that. We're going to be looking at some innovative ways and maybe some partnerships of providing child care spaces to ensure that we meet the demand of a growing economy and the momentum that is here in Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — I'm glad the minister recognizes the shortfall and glad he recognizes the sector as a very important area. And when the sun is shining, it could be said it's time to fix the roof and this would certainly be a key area to be addressing.

I have some general questions, Mr. Chair, for the minister in regards to all of the estimates that are before us here today. And so if I can ask them and then if any apply to a particular estimate, maybe the minister can respond. So the first one, I'm just wondering if . . . And we've got an answer on one of these already, but we'll go through it again. Which increases represent a one-time increase or what ones represent an ongoing or a structural increase within the budget? So which ones are one-time spending, which ones are going to be built into further budgets as we go forward?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Well that's a fairly broad question, Mr. Wotherspoon. I think I'm going to have to probably go into each of the areas because there's a combination of one-time spending and ongoing, over three-year spending, in the announcements that we've made, especially in the library enhancements.

And maybe I'll begin there, when we talk about the single integrated library system. And the request there, as you see, is for \$3.045 million. Now we're going to be spending the dollars on a number of initiatives. Some of them are going to be one-time, some of them are going to be ongoing. We have worked with the provincial library boards and we know that it'll



take up to four years to deliver on some of the things. But for the single integrated library system, we're looking at an expenditure of 2.1 million. Of that, monies that are being asked for today, 2.1 million will go into the hardware and software and the upgrades. Okay.

Of the CommunityNet infrastructure that's going to be needed, we're going to be looking at about \$370,000 that is going to be needed for that. The upgrade of the hardware at the provincial libraries, the 10, and now that's going to be — obviously if it's an upgrade of the hardware — that's a one-time thing of 325,000 this year. But we're looking at doing that 325,000 for each of the next three years beyond that. It's a four-year expenditure.

[19:45]

And, you know, to support the system right now, we require another \$250,000. So that number adds up to 3.045. Some of it is one-time, some of it is going to allow the 317 provincial libraries to choose to upgrade their hardware in year 2 or year 3 or year 4. It will depend upon how they're fitting into the single integrated library system and whether or not they're wanting to move forward on that.

The enhanced technology supported learning, I can maybe move into that which is the very top number, the 1.255, which is distributed through the school operating. That 1.255 is to enhance technology supported learning in school divisions and to upgrade CommunityNet connections in K to 12.

Six hundred and fifty thousand will be spent by way of providing that money to school divisions in the delivery of distance education. So distance education, as these courses are established now at the different division level, will be ongoing because, as you are very aware, the correspondence courses, we will still operate a paper model, I guess is the best way of saying it, but we're moving away from that and we're going to be doing that through technology supported learning.

The upgrade of the existing K to 12 CommunityNet connections, that's 605, so the 650 that I talked about and the 605 now add up to be the 1.255 million at the very top. That's to ensure that the CommunityNet connection at the schools is adequate and that. The technical part, I'll have to rely on somebody else to tell you about all the megabytes per second and everything else that is required to ensure that we can have the video conferencing and everything else at the school levels. But those are the things that we're going to do with that \$605,000.

I think we talked about the programs regarding child care, and you know that those are going to be expenditures right now. And with the salary lift, we're going to have to continue with those kinds of things.

The last one probably I guess is the 3.050, \$3.050 million, that is the third number within our estimates document for operational support of curriculum and e-learning. We're going to be able to equip all pre-K to 12 schools to receive data and video broadcasts. That's about \$1.4 million. We'll be implementing new interactive voice and data capability to improve participant interaction and response. That's a full

million. And we're going to refurbish existing comprehension and uplink equipment to provide an improved broadcast signal and system reliability of about \$650,000. So there's your expenditure of the 3.05 million.

As you see, some of it is a one-time expenditure, some will be, further budget will be required next year to ensure that those kinds of things continue. So I think I've given you a broad cross-section.

The last one of course is the statutory commitment of \$931,000. We don't have a choice in that. And as you know, the contribution to the Saskatchewan teachers retirement plan is extremely . . . It has so many different components to it that it's almost like taking a guess. We rely on the information that is provided to us by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

This year we found that the previous budget of . . . Excuse me for one second here. I'm on the right page — \$44.249 million which was approved in the spring budget is not quite sufficient enough and we're asking for an additional \$931,000. Various factors come into play there. We can talk about, you know, things of additional teachers retiring, teachers going on leave. There's a whole number of factors that have now contributed to the fact that an additional 931,000 is needed.

It's a statutory commitment so regardless of whether the number next year is more than 44 or less than . . . You can be assured it will be more than because, you know, we're seeing about \$4 million increases to the STRP [Saskatchewan teachers retirement plan] plan, which as many people know there are two pension plans that are in existence. The older pension plan of course is a closed plan and there are no teachers that enter that plan. But on the new plan, every time a new teacher starts teaching, every single year there's new people that are added to it. I would suspect that we're starting to see some retirements off the STRP plan as well because it's been in existence since 1979.

Sorry for that long-winded answer but I think it gives you just a cross-section that there are commitments of dollars both for short term and for long term.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Through the expenditures that are itemized here today, are there increases in staff — part-time, full-time — going to be added to the ministry?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — No. As you are aware, Mr. Wotherspoon, the number of full-time equivalents for Education changed quite significantly in the budget last year, and this will not change the staffing component, neither up nor down.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Just a question here, if any of these expenditures involve a budget or an allocation within them for communications or advertising contracts; and if so, what specific piece is there a communications or an advertising budget attached to?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — . . . not advertising one penny. So I guess the answer to that is, no, none of these \$10 million will be spent on any advertising. They're all going to be to direct expenditures for the components that are listed.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — And within any of these expenditures, is there purchase of land or purchase of buildings or any additional leases taken on?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Wotherspoon, of the current amount, there is no expenditure for land or anything of that nature, or office space. Ms. Campbell is just indicating to me that for the libraries and the consortium that is going to be created of the 10 public library boards, as they work to build that consortium, not in this fiscal year but maybe the following fiscal year, they may require some office space for that consortium to actually exist and to do its work. But of these current dollars, the answer is no.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — If we go into the one allocation here, (ED03), you broke apart that this is the school operating funding increase. And this is on the tech supported learning, or is to support tech supported learning in 605, I believe 605 to CommunityNet — which is welcome there, that's for sure. Any way we can promote bringing education to the student utilizing our technology in our broad, vast province I think is excellent, but my question is how, in the other parts where there was 650,000 . . . I guess if I can just see how are these dollars going to be allocated, how is this decision going to be made where these dollars are going within the divisions, and to what divisions.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — I'm going to get Sue Amundrud to explain that. Initially when we decided . . . I mean the discussion about correspondence courses and moving to education supported learning, that has been in the works for four years. And we fulfilled that, you know, discussion and indicated in our budget that we were moving in that direction.

And we were wanting boards of education who have developed courses, who have developed online courses and have a proven track record, we want them to take advantage of providing this because the provision of a particular course with the correct curriculum can be done out of Moose Jaw, it can be done out of La Ronge, it can be done out of you know Yorkton, Good Spirit School Division. So we're working with school divisions, and I'm going to ask Sue to give a broad explanation of everyone that's involved and you'll have a better understanding of where that \$650,000 is going.

**Ms. Amundrud:** — Thank you for the question. The 650,000 is this year's commitment toward supporting the school divisions who take over courses that were formerly offered by the ministry. And so 500,000 of it is to assist school divisions in ensuring that they are not out of pocket as they move in this direction on our behalf, and an additional 150,000 is for subsidy for the adult students so that they are not charged at the same level as normally would be — so that in fact it's not an additional financial burden for those adults who are trying to upgrade and yet at the same time we did not want the school divisions to be out of pocket by charging a lower rate. And so there is 650,000 allocated this year. There was a commitment for a similar amount in the next budget year, so over the two-year period that it takes for the school divisions to take over the work that has formerly been done by the ministry.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you for that answer. Would you be able to clarify what divisions will be receiving transfer

dollars then to support the new course delivery?

**Ms. Amundrud:** — We currently have seven divisions who have taken on that kind of responsibility. That includes Horizon, Northwest, Prairie Valley, Regina Public, Saskatchewan Rivers, Greater Saskatoon Catholic, and Saskatoon Public at this point in time. We're in negotiations right now with two additional school divisions. That includes Good Spirit and some additional courses to Northwest who are looking at taking on courses beginning probably in either December or January.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you for that answer. What did the process look like to determine what divisions would receive funding, how much, and for what service?

**Ms. Amundrud:** — That was pretty easy, yes. Basically it was negotiating with who was willing and who felt capable of taking things on. Certainly we were encouraging all school divisions to consider it. We had a preference actually for rural school divisions who were willing to do this, but it basically boiled down to who was ready and willing at this time for this year's funding. And for next year, some of the school divisions that haven't taken advantage right now are in fact considering and working towards building the capacity so that they can take advantage of it next year.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — I think what you'll see, Mr. Wotherspoon, is that as boards of education look at a teacher within their system who is innovative and has the desire to create a course that they're prepared to deliver online, it meets the requirements of the ministry, I think you're going to see more school divisions that are going to take advantage of that. And what we're looking for is to have, as Sue has indicated, a good cross-section across the province.

Right now we're not having that yet. We're seeing, you know, of course a greater response from the large urban areas. Well because probably there are more teachers also in those systems too. But we're encouraged. We're encouraged by other school divisions now after six, seven months of looking at it and initially maybe, you know, pushing back and saying, no we're not interested in that but we will take advantage of the courses for our students from whichever division will provide them. Now we're seeing some interest in that.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you. So of the 605,000 that's going to the CommunityNet program, where are those dollars going specifically?

**Ms. Amundrud:** — We're looking at all of the schools that currently are short of what we consider basic broadband, which is one and a half megabytes per second symmetrical — that's one and a half megabytes up, going out, one and a half megabytes coming back down. And we do have a number of schools that are not at that stage at this point, and so we're working to build those. We do have a long list; we could provide it if you wish in document form.

[20:00]

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you.

**The Chair:** — This discussion about correspondence courses being offered by school divisions is of great interest to me because I have had a number of constituents ask me about it. And with Mr. Wotherspoon's indulgence, if I could just ask the minister and his official to give us, the committee, an example of some of the courses that are currently being offered by school divisions to students.

**Ms. Amundrud:** — Certainly. We actually find we have a number of courses being offered, and as the school divisions have taken on this challenge, there are more courses being offered than the ministry ever was able to. For example in our English language arts area, all five required courses at the secondary level, plus creative writing 20 and 30, media studies 20, and journalism studies 20 are all now available by distance education. We did not offer all of those.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — And I might add for those people that are watching, the five requirements of course are two requirements in English grade 10, one requirement in grade 11, and two requirements in grade 12. So those five are being delivered plus the additional courses that Sue . . .

**Ms. Amundrud:** — Plus the additional electives.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. Mr. Wotherspoon, thank you for permitting me to get some additional information for my constituents. Thank you.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — You mentioned that there was numerous schools that were short of the basic broadband to be able to tap into some of this wonderful innovation. Just wondering if you have a specific number of schools that aren't able to access broadband right now or don't have that capacity? And a secondary question of how long, with this investment, will it take to have all of those schools up and operational with the capacity needed?

**Ms. Amundrud:** — There's about 245 of our schools right now that are not at that capacity. We expect to be able to bring almost 200 of them up to that level. There's a number that we're still looking at the technical feasibility. We're negotiating with SaskTel in terms of a rollout schedule because that of course will have to be planned. We can't do them all in just a couple of months, so we'll do them as quickly as possible. We'll plan the rollout schedule in consultation with SaskTel and with the school divisions. We're very aware that some feel far more need than others right at this particular point, and wherever possible we'll hit those highest needs first.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — The other point, Mr. Wotherspoon, is that besides the CommunityNet broadband, we're also ensuring that the satellite network is there as well because there will be particular schools — regional libraries as well, you know, in the North and elsewhere — where we're going to have to ensure that those programs can be delivered by satellite, and that's why we're spending some additional dollars there as well. So it's a multi-prong approach to ensure that very shortly we'll be able to say everyone — libraries, regional libraries, school libraries, all schools — will be able to access the material through either a broadband or through satellite.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — So I don't know if I have a specific date,

and maybe one's not available at this point. Do we have a specific date? Do we have a goal in mind, or do we know there's an achievable date to have all schools online? And I did hear the number 200 that are kind of being rolled out in due course here. But I did hear, I believe — maybe I heard incorrectly — that there was about 40-some that are going to have more significant barriers from a technological perspective to coming online. And then I'm wondering if there's contingency plans and timelines on those schools.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Well the contingency plan is to ensure that the satellite system is up and running by next fall, so that's your sort of final date. Now as we work with all of the other libraries and schools from now till then, there are some connections that will be made very quickly because of the ability to do that. There's others that are going to take a little while. They may be made in the spring or next summer, but by next fall with the satellite system up and running, we'll have everybody then that will be able to access one way or the other.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you. Maybe take a look at the (ED10), the operational support within curriculum and e-learning, and the spending specifically within that estimate. Now this was cut last budget by \$89,000 or so, and now of course the money's being restored and significantly more money is being attached. I'm just trying to understand where, you know, what the reasoning was at that point to cut, and now a few short months later to restore that funding and significantly more.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — I can give you an explanation, first of all, of the budget. The budget was reduced by one of the programs. I guess I see a program that was referred to as the secondary level digital learning program where the previous year there was a \$602,000 budget, and that was reduced to zero because it was a three-year project and it finished. So the change from the values from the previous year to this year took into account those kinds of things.

Curriculum and instruction, I know we made some changes there in response to re-evaluating how we were delivering programs. And I think I explained those to you — there was about a \$300,000 change as well there. So when you add those two numbers up, that's more than the total of the entire budget, as far as the reduction of the budget of '07-08 to '08-09.

Now for this year, or for the supplementary estimates that you're seeing before you there, I've already given you a fairly broad breakdown of the \$3.050 million that we're putting there. And again that's for the expansion of the e-learning satellite network: 1.4 million will be going into schools for the data video of broadcasting; \$1 million will be going into the interactive voice and data capability to improve participant interaction and response; and then we're going to be looking at about \$650,000 to refurbish existing compression and uplink equipment. So pretty technical things as far as this person is concerned, but they're required. They're there to ensure that the programs that are going to be delivered by satellite can be delivered to the schools that we want to deliver them.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Minister. We've answered actually quite a few of the questions as we've chatted here, which is good. I do have a question. You know, with the

elimination of the correspondence school and recognizing that there are 240-some schools that aren't able to access the new, innovative approach to learning as of yet, I did hear, I believe you mentioned that there's still maybe a paper copy available. And my question would be that this program that is being phased out, the correspondence school, and will students in schools across the province have equal access, as that program phases out, to the courses that they would have traditionally through the correspondence school?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — The situation that exists, Mr. Wotherspoon, is that the correspondence paper model is going to exist as we see it at least for three years, maybe more. There are home-schoolers that will require the correspondence courses. As indicated by Sue, the number of courses that we're going to be offering as we move forward may be less three years from now than they are right now. I would probably be able to guarantee that.

Now the students that want to take a correspondence course this year before we get the satellite system up and running next year, before the broadband, you know, expansion occurs, they will have the ability to access a correspondence course. There's no one that is going to be left out. So in that way, as the schools get on-board, those students that are currently wanting to take a correspondence course can.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Minister. Just as a note, we just hope that you continue to pay attention to that just to make sure that is the case. Because of course as we transition to this other program, the educational equity across the province is really important as far as to what courses a student can access in a particular community.

And I know you probably certainly received a few letters — I know that I have — with concern in that regard. And taking what you shared here tonight is something certainly that I can communicate back, that the full host of courses that were available last year in every community through the correspondence school are still available this year and will be until the new program is up and running.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — One of the things that I failed to mention, Mr. Wotherspoon, also is even though a particular school may not have the broadband capability that they're going to have next spring, it's still access. It's at a slower speed, but it's still access.

What we want to, you know, have as a uniform system is of course that students, regardless of the area that they're located in, will have the ability to access a course, to be able to take part in video conferencing. So those are the kinds of things that we're going to work towards. You know, we're not there with all of them. But we're there right now with the courses being able to be accessed, but they may be at a slower speed.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Minister. We'll move on to the estimate here with regard to the Provincial Library (ED15). And the minister will be aware and certainly we welcome the investment in the single integrated library information system. I know this has been very well received by the libraries across Saskatchewan and certainly expressed through the Saskatchewan Library Association, and I'm certain that the

minister's heard that message as well.

It's nice to see that we're going forward in an arguably leading-or cutting-edge way in a particular area at a time where we have the economic opportunity to do so. So we commend the investment. Question being, does the estimate itself represent the entire cost of the system? I guess I'm looking at procurement of this system. Has the exact technology been, and company been, identified? And is that cost a certainty?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — The discussion around the single integrated library system with the public library boards has been going on, my understanding from talking with the officials, about four years. So there's been a lot of discussion about moving forward. And the concern in the last year — I guess since I have become the minister responsible for libraries — was that there were libraries that were going to move forward with a plan of their own, or they would rather much have a plan on a province-wide basis because of course a single integrated system will mean that we'll have 317 library branches right across the province that are going to be able to access the materials.

Now as far as the development of that single integrated system, I might ask Joy if she could make comment as to where we are, regarding the actual implementation of that system and how we're working towards that.

**Ms. Campbell:** — Well the 5.2 million over four years will cover a fairly significant proportion of the costs. There are costs that will . . . And the 1.3 million for the local computers was a very nice addition to the funding for the consortium overall and for the purchase of hardware and software. We won't know the exact cost of that until the vendor is selected and the negotiations are completed, but we have had advice from the ITO [Information Technology Office], and we've had other kinds of people give us the best estimate that we could get.

The 1.3 million for local computers will make a difference for those branch libraries. It will assure that there will be a minimum of one computer that's purchased with provincial funding, and we believe we can do better than that. And again we've had advice from the Information Technology Office about the best way to get the best value as was mentioned, squeezing the most value out of those dollars.

I'm not sure if I've answered your question as fully as I might. There are a few costs that are not covered in the provincial funding. Those costs are for data migration from one system to another, data migration. The ongoing maintenance of the actual software once it's . . . Like there's an initial purchase and then the ongoing maintenance. What we know is that those library systems all have an integrated library system right now. And there will be an opportunity to redirect funds that they're currently spending on maintenance of their current system, can be redirected to this. I think that captures the major pieces.

[20:15]

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — So it's through the actual procurement process here. Do we have a timeline on, sort of, tenders to establish and contract the vendor? And who in the end is carrying this activity and who's going to be making the

decision?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — As indicated in my opening comments about the consortium of the 10 public libraries, I mean that's who is entrusted with developing this. And I know that they've done some things, and I'm going to ask Joy again to bring you up to date as even the fact, I believe, that we're in a short list process.

**Ms. Campbell:** — Yes. The wonderful thing about what happened was that the library systems had together — all 10 of them with Provincial Library — created a request for proposal. And then that request for proposal, the five library systems that wanted to move forward used that RFP [request for proposal] document to go out to the vendors and then so it was based on the principles of equitable access. And then we're now at the stage where there was vendor demos the first week of November. The three short listed vendors came to that process.

We were very cognizant of the process that would be used by Government Services, Glenn Deck and his staff, and so we were using that model and we did have discussions with them. We're not actually using them to do the process but we've used that model. And yes, so we're not that far away from having a decision about which vendor.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — And if I might add, Mr. Wotherspoon, as I indicated, the \$2 million is being put into the control of the consortium. There are going to be agreements that will be signed by those 10 public library boards in becoming part of that consortium. And then they're going to be the ones that are responsible for following the process that's just been explained. So it's not going to be the Minister of Education that's going to be asking for an RFP or a tender; it will be that consortium that has been working on this for a long time.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Just on the topic of libraries, I believe the minister has had a recent opportunity to sit down with the Saskatchewan Library Association. I was privileged to do so as well. They raised a couple other items, and maybe they're not within the line of questioning here tonight but certainly to ensure that they're on the table, I'm just wondering if the minister can comment on where he may be at on thoughts around some of these needs.

That would be some of the infrastructure with regards to headquarters needed for various libraries. We won't go into the specifics on that one there. The other piece being the same challenge that we're seeing in many sectors about the retention and attraction of qualified and professional staff. And I believe the Saskatchewan libraries are looking for a partner in looking at a study that would determine some of those needs or where they should be at.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you. Yes, I had that opportunity to meet with the Library Association, and those two issues of course are their concerns. Capital as far as the library system is responsible for, there has been no provincial dollars that have been assigned to capital. Municipalities have the responsibility for ensuring that that local library branch has a building and it's maintained, and they work with the library board to manage those structures.

The difference becomes when we start to look at the 10 public library . . . I'll call them regional libraries — and those infrastructures. Some of those buildings were built many years ago — 40, 45 years ago — with dollars that came about as a result of centennial projects and all those kinds of things where additional dollars came into the province and they decided to invest those into public libraries, those infrastructures.

That is something that has been raised. I've had that opportunity to hear from the library boards. And as we move forward, it's not going to be a decision that can be delayed for a long time because, you know, when you start to look at maintenance costs, when you start to look at roofs that are leaking and the kind of damage that can occur, we have to put in place a mechanism that's going to do that. Whether we will create partnerships, whether we will create a consortium responsible for capital, that's to be seen.

The other thing of course is the salaries and the attraction of well-qualified people to the province of Saskatchewan. It was interesting to find out that, of course, the master's program for library technicians is not available in Saskatchewan and they have to travel out. But we also provide a scholarship bursary for an individual when they return, and there are way more applicants for that one position or that one scholarship than what we provide.

So there is a love of being involved with books and being involved with all the features and all of the resources that libraries provide. And we're seeing tremendous people enter into that field. There will always be, I guess from their point of view, a lack of salary or insufficient salary and those are kinds of things that will have to be dealt with by the local boards as they move forward.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Minister. Going back to sort of a general question that I might ask, might be best responded to in written form. I'll ask the question. I'm wondering if we can have the ongoing costs. As we've talked about the different spending here, which ones are ongoing? And if we can have those itemized, and if we can see what percentage increase those represent to the budget.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Wotherspoon, would you like that for each of the five? I mean, I don't think I need to explain the teachers retirement plan one. Right?

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — No, we don't need that.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Okay. So for the four amounts?

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Correct.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Okay. We'll provide that to you in terms of breaking those expenditures down to ongoing and one-time.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you. I know our minister is very well natured and very affable, so maybe he'll allow my next question to stand in the forum we have here right now.

I know that school boards will have provided notice that may be reviewing school closure to your ministry at this point. I'm

wondering if you can let us know how many schools. And I'm wondering, written form, if we can have a follow-up of which schools specifically have a review in closure.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — I can tell you, Mr. Wotherspoon, that a number of boards, as per the regulations in the handbook that guides them now, had to make a decision by October 15 as to whether or not they were placing a school under review. I can tell you that five schools are currently under review and they are: Abbey, Morse in the Chinook School Division; Wishart and Nokomis in the Horizon School Division; Landis in the southwest school division; and Lyndale School in the South East Cornerstone Division. As you can see by those numbers, that gives you six because Lyndale is being considered for some grade discontinuance and not necessarily a closure. So the review is taking place in those school divisions — Chinook, Horizon, Sun West, and South East Cornerstone.

There is an additional school that I want to mention right now, and that is Chaplin. That falls into a previous category because motions were passed a year ago for that school and it is moving through the process of closure. So the communities now that are affected are those that I've listed and they are going through that process of school review as identified in the handbook.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Minister. I guess at this time I think we're on the conclusion of our time. I'd like to thank our minister and certainly our deputy minister and assistant deputy minister and staff and committee members for their time this evening.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Wotherspoon. And, Mr. Chair, if I might, I want to thank the committee members, including the Chair, for the questions.

You know, these are exciting times in education and we want to be able to talk about some of the great things that are happening in our schools. I believe that all of the changes that we're making are to ensure that there is a greater selection and a greater outcome for students and that's what we're working at. And I want to thank the members for the questions.

I want to thank all of my officials for giving up their Monday night. I know they wanted to watch Monday night football, but this is as good as it gets. Thank you to them.

**The Chair:** — I too would like to thank the minister and his officials for the information that they have provided the committee with this evening. It will certainly help the committee's job in consideration of the request for additional spending in the ministry, make our job easier.

And I'd like to thank the excellent co-operation of all committee members in the hour and a half that we've just taken.

We'll take a short recess to facilitate the change of ministers and officials. And as soon as Minister Norris and his officials are in place, we will resume.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

[20:30]

**General Revenue Fund  
Supplementary Estimates — November  
Advanced Education, Employment and Labour  
Vote 37**

**Subvotes (AE03), (AE02), (AE06), (AE04), and (AE08)**

**The Chair:** — I believe the committee is ready to resume our consideration of supplementary estimates this evening. The next item on our agenda is supplementary estimates for the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour. We have with us this evening before the committee, Minister Norris and a number of officials. At this time I'll call upon the minister to introduce his officials, and if he has a brief opening statement, I would invite him to do so after he introduces his officials to the committee.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the committee, thanks very much for the opportunity to join you this evening. Before I begin, I would like offer those introductions. Many of you will know Wynne Young, our deputy minister. In no particular order: Rupen Pandya is just here; Karen Allen is beside me; Kevin Veitenheimer is just back in behind; Jan Morgan, Brent Brownlee, Rhiannon Stromberg; and Mike Berry who's an intern is also joining us tonight so it's a nice opportunity to welcome Mike here as well — some experiential learning.

Mr. Chair, our government is committed to building a more robust Saskatchewan through strategic investments in higher education, workforce training, research, and innovation. The Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour for our mid-year expense forecast is projected to be about \$106 million — 106.1 million to be exact — over the amount originally identified in the '08-09 expense budget.

Members of the committee, this increased expense forecast reflects additional mid-year investments in key areas including \$100 million of a capital transfer for the academic health science centre at the University of Saskatchewan, a project which is vital to Saskatchewan's research and higher education infrastructure as well as enhanced health care for the people of this province.

As well, \$3.5 million in funding to the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission to purchase an additional 900 technical training seats, apprenticeship seats, in recognition of the province's growing demand for skilled trades workers, and that announcement was made in P.A. [Prince Albert] on a nice summer day.

One-time funding of \$2 million to First Nations University for one-time conditional and incremental provincial funding for collective agreement ratification that went back to 2005, and to support First Nations University in developing a strategic long-term plan to help ensure its success, its sustainability, and most importantly to allow its students to succeed.

Point one six million for SIAST to address a funding shortfall for phase 1 of its nursing project.

From there what I thought I would do is highlight some of these in a little more detail, and I know there will be some questions,

and we can walk through some additional elements of these.

On the academic health science project, where construction is under way at the University of Saskatchewan, 100 million capital transfer for this initiative advances the interests of the province by helping secure accreditation for the College of Medicine, accommodating an increase in the number of seats to help train health professionals in the province thereby helping to meet more of the government's promises. As I mentioned, help provide greater health care for the people of this province, and further help to bolster our growing knowledge economy.

Regarding the apprenticeship investment, the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, we used the \$3.5 million to purchase an additional 900 technical training seats or 76 apprenticeship technical training classes, bringing the number of seats in the province to 4,700 in '08-09. This funding will be fully offset in '08-09 by the federal community development trust program, further evidence of co-operative relationships paying off between Ottawa and the province of Saskatchewan.

First Nations University. One-time funding to First Nations University of Canada will be used to assist with the costs of a collective agreement that was outstanding as well as providing additional funding for some of the operating costs. As well, \$400,000 has been set aside to help support the institution's long-term sustainability and accountability regarding planning.

Importantly I want to highlight increased investment in our community-based organizations. Cabinet has approved a 7 per cent annualized increase to CBOs, effective October 1 of this year, to support the recruitment and retention of CBO employees across the province. Providing this 7 per cent increase to community-based organizations will cost this ministry just under half a million dollars.

Regarding SIAST, the nursing project, phase 1 of the SIAST nursing project to renovate a portion of the Wascana Parkway property to provide increased infrastructure capacity for training health care professionals in the province is anticipated to cost \$5.3 million. This additional top-up of point one six million more than what had been provided is just to help to ensure that this is on track.

Mr. Chair, these investments are important steps that we make as we continue to work to ensure that the province's post-secondary education system meets the needs of the people of this province, and they are an essential part of our government's commitment to building a stronger Saskatchewan and to ensure that residents across the province are able to participate in and most especially benefit from the economic growth under way in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chair, I'm happy to take any questions.

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Yes. Thank you very much. I had some questions here that will do, if it would be possible as you answer to divide them between Labour and the Advanced Education and Employment, just to make note of that, if that's possible to do that, so we can just do the whole.

My first question being, do any of the increases here represent ongoing or structural increases, or are all they one-time expenditures?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Yes. I would make the — and thanks very much for the question — the distinction. The community-based organization, obviously that'll be ongoing. You know, that'll continue in the years to come.

The more project-specific investments, the \$2 million to First Nations University . . . And we can go back to the community-based organizations if I've understood your questions. We can break those down a little bit further because those have different roles and responsibilities.

But we can go through the academic health sciences. What we wanted to do is make sure the construction was able to start in a timely fashion. From then the investment in nursing, that's one-time; just finishing off that project. The apprenticeships, again that's going to help to ensure the sustainability of those numbers so we're not going to retreat from those numbers.

So I would offer the general, just general overview to a bit of both. And as I say, I'm happy to get down into the specific CBOs with reference to specific tasks that they're performing.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Well perhaps that would be helpful at this time.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — We can start, and again we can drill down for some detail. The three distinct categories of community-based organizations: we have those regarding employability assistance for people with disabilities. Again our government has come out with a very significant initiative led by our Minister of Social Services and this helps to reinforce the emphasis, and so that relates to \$27,000 for eight community-based organizations. That one.

Then from there as well, the second category would be immigration, and obviously increasingly community-based organizations are helping to ensure the successful settlement of newcomers within our community. That relates to a number of community-based organizations with \$73,000.

Then the final category relates to workforce development and this is very important for us. We really see this as a key element as far as helping to meet our talent challenge, and that relates to \$355,000 again for a number of community-based organizations. And I'm happy now, I can go through those if you'd like me to go through those on an individualized basis.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Sure.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Sure. Regarding the immigration branch, what we'll have is the Filipino-Canadian Association of Saskatoon, the German Canadian Concordia Club of Saskatoon Inc., Global International Community Help Association Inc., International Women of Saskatoon Inc., Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise, Moose Jaw Multicultural Council. Moose Jaw Multicultural Council receives five different components. Rather than going through those, I'll just leave that there.

We see a couple of different components to the Prince Albert Multicultural Council. We were happy to make that announcement in P.A. Again that was a good day to be had. We made the SIAST announcement and that announcement on the same day and received a lot of positive feedback.

Read Saskatoon, and I think the member from Massey Place will be familiar with the good work that that organization does — it's certainly been involved in literacy, has partnered with, I think it's Vecima, and that partnership has led to an award that has been given regarding literacy to Vecima. And it's based on that very, very helpful partnership and we've certainly made sure we were helping out with that. So I just want to highlight the good work being done there.

[20:45]

Regina Immigrant Women Centre, what we have there are three components. The Regina Open Door Society, we have seven components. Saskatchewan Abilities Council in Yorkton and I know my colleague from Yorkton is going to be appreciative of that. Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies, Saskatchewan Capacity of Internationally Trained Professionals Inc., Saskatchewan Intercultural Association has three categories there.

The Saskatoon Open Door Society has a number. I think that number is six. The Beth Jacob Synagogue right here, we have four different components there. The Global Gathering Place, three different components. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress— obviously of interest to yourself, sir — and two components on the provincial council, two additional components here in Regina, and three additional components in Saskatoon. That would be relating to the immigration piece.

The piece focusing on giving additional assistance to CBOs that are helping in the area of disabilities. The Canadian Mental Health Association, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the Canadian Paraplegic Association, Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Abilities Council, the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living, the Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Inc., the South Saskatchewan Independent Living Centre, are community-based organizations under that category.

And regarding career and employment services, and really that relates to workforce development: the Gary Tinker Federation for the Disabled, the Keewatin Career Development Corporation, and those are both based in La Ronge. Again, when we were up there not only did our Deputy Premier make an excellent announcement, we were able to engage a number of community stakeholders that day.

In Prince Albert, River Bank Development Corporation; Prince Albert and District Community Service Centre, and again there are multiple components there — we have four of those; the Prince Albert Métis Women's Association again doing very impressive work. We were up on another occasion and had a dialogue with some of the good folks there. KIN Enterprises, Jubilation Residential Centres, self-help and recreation education, Canadian Mental Health Association.

In Melfort, the Newsask Community Futures Development Corporation, the Plus Industries Incorporated, Métis Heritage Corporation. In Nipawin, the Nipawin Oasis Community Centre Co-operative Limited, and we had a nice opportunity to visit with those folks over the summer as well, congratulate them on their good work. In North Battleford, the prairie employment program; in Meadow Lake, Meadow Lake Outreach Ministries.

**The Chair:** — Minister, I believe Mr. Iwanchuk has a question about . . . while you're continuing on the list.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Yes, I was just wondering if it would be possible to table those.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — You know, I think probably we can send them, and we could have done this. We're through most of them. If I can just finish for the public and then we can provide you in the coming days with a copy.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Well just maybe that would be better because I notice our time is moving on and we have just a few questions.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Sure.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Now you mentioned, after the first question that I asked you on increases, and you went over a list there, and just to get back to that, if there are any ongoing costs and what are they in your original list there. What percentage increase do they represent?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — For the apprenticeships, as I highlighted, it's a \$3.5 million lift for those 900 new apprenticeship seats. And for the community-based organizations it would be just under half a million dollars for a total. I'll just give you an approximate of just under \$4 million.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Okay. Are they ongoing costs?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Yes, those are ongoing.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Okay. Now do any of these expenditures result in increases in staff or contract work?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Sorry, I just have to make a distinction, if I may. Are you speaking specifically within the ministry, or are you speaking within the community-based organizations that are receiving the money?

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Yes. Okay. Well I guess in the ministry but . . .

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Okay. We can confirm, but with one exception — I'll speak to that — these lifts were given and there are no implications for personnel within the ministry. Essentially a lot of them are just flow-through. The exception on the short term relates to First Nations University, and I'll just break down that \$2 million investment.

There's \$1.1 million that relates to an outstanding collective bargaining agreement; that was 2005 to 2008. And then what we did is we were able to have \$500,000, and that's meant to be conditional and incremental. It'll be paid out based on the



progress that's being made in the forthcoming weeks, and that's just to help the institution along. And then there are \$400,000 that have been set aside for investing in what I would call strategic or sustainable planning to help ensure that some of the challenges confronted by that institution, its stakeholders, and again mostly with the prospects of ensuring the success of its students.

And so there are some short-term contracts under way, and there may be a couple more anticipated as far as that strategic planning process. Those are not permanent employees; those would just be contracted out. There's an advisory committee with representatives from First Nations University. As well I'm delighted to add, and it took us . . . It was constructive time, but the University of Regina has engaged this fully and I applaud the very good work and sound leadership of President Vianne Timmons. We're delighted to have her here in our community. As well, the federal government is on that advisory committee, as well as a representative from the ministry I have the honour of serving in. So there are some short-term pieces, but those don't relate directly to any additions within our ministry. They're just doing work within that specific project.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for answering our questions, Minister Norris, and welcome to all of your officials as well.

I'd like to go through some of the supplementary estimates on page 11, starting from the top, asking some questions on these items, and then we'll see how far we get.

So the student support programs (AE03), employability assistance for people with disabilities for 27,000. Just to be clear, that 27,000, that's for increase in wages in the CBO sector?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — That's right.

**Mr. Broten:** — Exclusively?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Yes. That's with a special reference to those CBOs that are providing assistance to those with disabilities.

**Mr. Broten:** — Okay. Thank you. So moving on to post-secondary education (AE02). The first two lines, operational support and the second line, universities, federated, you started talking about these. It's the funding that went to First Nations University of Canada, the 1.6 for the collective agreement and the 400 for the review. So I have some questions about . . .

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — If I can . . .

**Mr. Broten:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Just to make sure. There's 1.1 million for the collective bargaining agreement that was outstanding. Then there were additional 500,000, and hence you get 1.6, the 400,000 for strategic planning, for a total of 2.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Great.

**Mr. Broten:** — Yes. Let's talk a bit about the \$400,000 for the planning. You were starting to go into that, providing helpful information on who is on the committee. Do you view this as a bit . . . Maybe a bit more explanation about the parameters. Do you view this as a one-time committee, or do you see it as something that is ongoing?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Well it's envisioned as a one-time committee. I'm assuming it will make a series of recommendations and steps for future action.

But this committee as envisioned . . . And I will just go into a little bit of detail. I'm very pleased with the stakeholders that have come together within the advisory committee. The opportunities that we have by having the federal government represented, by having the University of Regina engaged — which again I applaud and can't be understated — and then obviously to have direct representation from First Nations University on that advisory committee, as well as representation from our ministry, it's very important.

But to answer directly, we see this as being very project specific, and I wouldn't in any way discount or preclude any number of recommendations that the work may or may not point to in the future, but this was designed specifically with the task of helping to address sustainability, accountability, and success.

**Mr. Broten:** — So to recap, you said there were members from First Nations University, University of Regina, the federal government, and members from the ministry?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — One member of the ministry, yes.

**Mr. Broten:** — Okay. Who's the ministry representative on the committee?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — We have him present.

**Mr. Broten:** — All right. What are the expected timelines for this committee when recommendations and a report might be issued?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — I anticipate that we should be seeing work completed probably by the end of this year or early next. I think initially we said somewhere between 90 and 120 days, and I think we're still aiming for that.

**Mr. Broten:** — Out of the 1.6 million you mentioned, I think I heard you say some of it was conditional. It's conditional on following the recommendations coming from the committee, or what are those conditions?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — I'll just turn to those conditions. We wanted to ensure that . . . There are two components, and it's pretty significant to make that distinction. The 1.1 million related to this outstanding collective bargaining agreement, and that needed to be cleared up. I mean that was 2005-2008, and we wanted to, while other opportunities had obviously passed

for that to be settled, we wanted to make sure that was addressed.

And the 500,000, and I'll go through these. They're a little bit detailed, but it'd probably be worthwhile here. And I need to applaud the board at First Nations University. Obviously we respect the autonomy of the institution, and this was an offer that was made to the board. And the board then made the determination to go forward.

The first condition: to work in a coordinated fashion on a set timeline with both the federal and provincial governments, as well as the University of Regina. And that was accepted. In fact, President Timmons was in the room with us when we sat down, and it was nice to have her there. It was important to have her there.

Next, relating to the government's provision regarding the external planners that will perform comprehensive strategic and operational plan on long-term sustainability and accountability. So that is extra resources, external resources could be brought to the task of having a look at the strategic direction.

[21:00]

Next, that these external planners could be accommodated on campus. We thought it was important that they not be removed but actually have access to see the milieu and begin to gain an appreciation. Certainly opportunities that I've had to be on campus, and I'm sure it's the same for you, it's an opportunity to understand just how committed so many of these stakeholders are, again most especially the students and faculty members.

Next, to provide external planners with free and open access, subject to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, to all relevant sources of data and information and to enable them to develop the strategic and operational plan. We picked December 21. Again there's some flexibility there — late this year or early next. The element here that's most significant is any data that is going to be sought is going to be done so in aggregate. This in no way endangers personal information. We want to see obviously elements of recruitment, elements of retention, elements relating to success.

To provide the external planners and minister with the satisfaction of the actual amount, the financial liability arising from the ratification of the collective bargaining agreement, and we just wanted to make sure before that money went, we understood specifically what that outstanding amount was.

And the actual cash requirements to cover the operating needs of First Nations University from the period from April 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009.

So essentially five key components, but the last one having a couple of subcomponents. So what I would suggest being seven conditions. And again, we're very, very pleased that the board accepted those and that work is under way.

**Mr. Broten:** — So for the 1.1 million, that was for the collective agreement to do catch-up, and my understanding it was largely or the lion's share for faculty salaries and so on to

put them more on par with other universities. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Well it was an outstanding collective bargaining agreement without reference to others. It was there, and certainly reference was made to other institutions, but it was something that we don't even need to really do very much comparison on. It just needed to be addressed.

And there was an acute financial situation at that institution, and so we felt an imperative to ensure that . . . so that we could look to the future, that we could get on with the strategic planning. Certainly reference was made to other institutions, but mostly it was just to help take care of that outstanding collective bargaining agreement.

**Mr. Broten:** — So the collective agreement that that money went towards, what's the expiry date of that collective agreement?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — If I'm not mistaken . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, it was this year. And the collective bargaining agreement of three years, June 30 was the expiry date.

**Mr. Broten:** — So June 30 obviously there's the need for a new collective agreement. That's a segue into my next question and a tie-in to a previous question about who was on the board. Also with First Nations University of Canada, there's a role for the federal government in providing funding as well.

What actions is the ministry taking to ensure that the federal government is playing as active a role as they ought to on this to ensure that the 1.1 million that was put in from the province doesn't simply create expectations that can't be delivered in the next round but in fact now the federal government plays the role that it should?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Sure. No, fair comment and question. I would say probably on three different levels the question actually extends well beyond the collective agreement. The federal government, if I'm not mistaken, I think they're in for an investment of about \$7.2 million . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . \$7.2 million.

And, you know, from that certainly on the three levels of engagement, as I would categorize them, first and foremost, there's a minister-to-minister dialogue and not done in isolation. We've had an opportunity . . . It was prior to the last election. There was an opportunity for a number of my cabinet colleagues, and we sat down together with the Hon. Chuck Strahl and certainly brought up the significance of a number of interrelated issues regarding First Nations and Métis peoples within Saskatchewan. And rest assured that issues relating to First Nations University, programming at the University of Saskatchewan, programming at the University of Regina, SIAST, and other institutions that we have, those issues were brought up as well as some of the broader structural questions that we all share.

And those relate to levels of high school graduation within First Nation and Métis communities and the very close correlation of issues relating to literacy. And those numbers, again there's a high correlation. We have more than 60 per cent of First

Nations and Métis peoples in our province that would struggle with level 3 workplace literacy which of course is one of the indicators as far as empowerment and employment. The work from Dr. Eric Howe of the University of Saskatchewan in 2002 offered us an insight about the significance of education to individuals within our community, making specific reference to First Nation and Métis peoples.

In addition to that, we've made a point — that is, ministers from Saskatchewan — in any number of federal and provincial settings, and most recently I'm thinking of CMEC [Council of Ministers of Education, Canada]. We've made reference to the significance of what may be called Aboriginal education in Canada. And the significance of this is early in the new year we're going to be hosting the next CMEC meeting in Saskatoon with a special focus on Aboriginal education.

And so that would be level one. That's at the ministerial level, and we're seeing some progress though there is more to do, certainly more to do. The second being I would categorize it at the deputy ministers' level, and certainly our deputy minister has been engaged on a number of discussions. And then at the working level, and that is within our respective ministries. And I would like to specifically applaud the work of Mr. Riel Bellegarde. He helped us tremendously in ensuring that we not only understood, but we were able to engage the federal government on the initiative to help support First Nations University.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you very much. And I wish First Nations University and everyone involved on the commission all the best as they go forward, hopefully into a bright future.

So moving on in the Supplementary Estimates to the post-secondary capital transfer, some of the larger numbers down here on the page, \$1.156 million — the 100 million is for the academic health sciences building. What's the \$156,000 for?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — The \$156,000, that was over here to the Wascana Parkway on nursing programming. And again we just had that announcement today. It was a good news announcement; 30 psychiatric nurses are well under way in that new program.

**Mr. Broten:** — All right. Thank you. So for the 100 million, what was the projected cost for the project before this \$100 million add-on?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — I'm glad you asked that because I think probably the official opposition's in the best position to answer that. There were a number of announcements if I'm not mistaken. There were announcements in 2003, 2005, and 2007 — three announcements. And we have a number of media stories going back. There was only one cheque of significance. There were some small dollars put in. Three announcements, one cheque, and no construction.

And so I'll make a general comment to say the costs are considerably higher now than they would have been in 2003. And I think it's probably a lesson learned — without putting too fine a point on it — it's probably a lesson learned about ensuring that, especially our institutions that are focusing on the

training of health professionals, it would have been much better, much more prudent to go on the earlier level. I can get you those numbers, but I'm assuming you probably have those numbers in front of you as far as those initial estimates going back to 2003.

**Mr. Broten:** — So what is the projected cost of the health sciences building? Is there a final dollar figure in mind or identified?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Yes, I think the answer is revealed in the question. And in an important sense I think what we need to do is probably just make sure that the public tendering process is understood.

A responsible government wouldn't come forward with a final figure because of public tendering. That is, you want to encourage competition in the construction and in the bids that are going to be put in. And if one was to announce a final figure, then that would preclude competition, and it's that competition that we can try to ensure that we're maximizing the resources, that the people of Saskatchewan can count on this government to ensure that we're maximizing the resources. Again going back, the work could have been undertaken beginning in 2003 with that first announcement.

So there isn't a final number because the final number is going to be dictated by the competition. What we have is on a go-forward basis on the D wing. You see construction there on campus; people are delighted. A lot of people have come up to us and said, finally that work's underway. And you know, on the E wing, we'll wait to see what those bids come in on.

**Mr. Broten:** — So for the D wing with Graham Construction, is there a final cost on the D wing?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Sure, we can get you that. All in, it's 157 million.

**Mr. Broten:** — Okay. And all of that funding is in place with this additional 100 million? The 157 total, there's money earmarked, set aside for that?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Yes.

**Mr. Broten:** — Yes, okay.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — I noticed the member's comments in the media. The significance of the rollout in the summer is that we didn't want to repeat the lessons learned from the past. We didn't want three announcements, one cheque, and no construction. What we wanted was, here's the cheque, get going. The people of this province need it. We need more doctors. We need more nurses. We need to ensure that the people of this province have enhanced health care. And I know there were some questions that you raised during the summer about that rollout, and it was more important to ensure the work began than it was to offer, you know, a public comment. We wanted to make sure that it was rolling out, and we'll have plenty of time as a province to celebrate the good work that are under way on that campus.

[21:15]

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you. I think the minister is referring to in his answer, the news release on a Friday afternoon in the middle of summer and what that's usually an indicator of. On this project — this ties into the previous question as well — but what work is being done to secure federal funding for this project?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — There are some CFI [Canada Foundation for Innovation] funds that relate to this. I think the broader question, if we were to contextualize this question, it's about what efforts are being undertaken or being considered to attract external investment. And first of all, the question that I pose back to the member from Massey Place is, does this mark potential reversal of your certain and recent criticism of public-private partnerships? Because if we're going to begin to talk about federal funding, what you're really asking is, are there other sources of revenue that would be considered, and would that be an appropriate assumption?

**Mr. Broten:** — I'm asking the questions here, please. The question was concerning federal funding. Is this an avenue that you're pursuing for this project?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — And what I've responded to is within a broader context. There will be some federal funds, but we're looking much more broadly than just simply looking at government. We're open to any number of initiatives, and some of those are currently being explored. Any time that a jurisdiction makes this kind of significant investment as well as undertakes very fast actions to ensure that construction is under way, you can be assured that other stakeholders around the world are attentive to that kind of investment. Because the significance of this investment, the significance, if we just take ourselves back a few years, what was happening on campus regarding health sciences was we had the largest science project in Canada, the Canadian Light Source synchrotron — still do, still making solid progress there. And within the synchrotron, the BMIT [biomedical imaging and therapy], that is the biomedical imaging beamline. But just across campus we had a College of Medicine that was on probation. And so I think it's fair to say that that sent mixed messages both to internal stakeholders and external stakeholders.

The significance of the investment that's being made is that for the first time in a very long time, in decades, the signal that's being sent is that research is a vital interest to our community, our province, that institution, especially as it relates to that College of Medicine, which is completely consistent with having the broadest number of bioscience and life science courses and programs of any Canadian university. It was a missing foundational piece, further undermined by the fact that the College of Medicine was on probation.

So we want to make sure that we're never going back there, that this reflects and reinforces the strength of the biosciences on that campus and, most especially, that the people of this province are going to have increased access to increased medical care because we're going to be training increased numbers of health professionals.

So that is significant because the question speaks specifically about engaging Ottawa and the federal government. And you can be sure that stakeholders in Ottawa are certainly aware of

our investment, and you can be equally sure that people and institutions outside of Canada are being made aware of this because it represents a marked change, real progress from what has happened in the past as far as the mixed messages that were sent. So not just Ottawa.

And I will go back to my question, and it will remain rhetorical for tonight, and I'll let the member reflect on it for some time. Does this mark a change regarding most recent questions on public-private partnerships?

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Chair, I've been very polite. I've been trying to ask questions quickly to get answers, and I've been suffering through very long answers that often take a while to get to the point. So as time is marching on, I am going to be carrying on with my questioning. Thank you.

Just to be clear with the Supplementary Estimates that are listed here on the page, none of this funding is going to VIDO [Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization]. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — We certainly have made recent investments in VIDO. We've certainly — I'll just repeat — we certainly have made a recent investment in VIDO on the operating side, and that funding came out of the Innovation and Science Fund taken care of within the budget and so is not reflected with the material you have in front of you.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you. On the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, the 3.5 million for the 900 seats, that 3.5, that's an ongoing commitment?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Yes, it's ongoing. It goes back to your previous question, and we're able to offer a very real demonstration here of collaborative and co-operative federalism, \$3.5 million paid for through the community trust fund. And so with the assistance of Ottawa, we were able to offer these 900 additional apprenticeships.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you. The 3.5 million is obviously a large amount of money. Could you please give a bit more of a breakdown as to how that 3.5 is being spent, if it is for hiring increased instructors, is it facilities — a better idea of how that's broken down, please.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — There are 76 programs that this \$3.5 million goes to. We can highlight four key areas relating to the training of electricians, the training of plumbers, into welding and also carpentry. So what we want to do is in a very tangible fashion ensure that there were increased capacities within these four categories, just based on feedback that we've been receiving. We were able to invest those dollars. I don't know if that takes you into enough detail. We're happy to get into more.

**Mr. Broten:** — With the 3.5 million, obviously with increasing that number of seats, there needs to be increased capacity for instruction as well outside of the placement. So I guess the concern or the question I have, are enough additional instructors being brought on in order to accommodate this or is it simply trying to squeeze more people into tight rooms already?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Yes. The three core types of institution, the apprenticeship commission, certainly SIAST is involved,

regional colleges are involved. The significance here is the students aren't sitting continually just in the classroom. This is part of experiential learning and the professional development that is weaved into combining classroom work with real life experience.

So to answer your question, I think as I've understood it, do we have capacity to do this now? Yes, we do. Is that capacity tight? Yes, it is, certainly. In the opportunity that I've had to visit every SIAST campus and every regional college, I'll just make a general statement that a lot of these institutions have suffered from years of neglect.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you. Time is marching on so I will as well. Moving down the list, I'll perhaps leave immigration for . . . I believe we have some additional time set aside for the next round.

On the career and employment services (AE04), workforce development, 355,000, you likely mentioned it in your intro, but could you please just identify again what that \$355,000 is for?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — We were about halfway through the list on this specific one. That goes to the CBO lift. And again we'll get you that in the coming days. But I'm also happy, Mr. Chair, to continue. I don't want any of those institutions, for the record, to feel in any way snubbed that they weren't listed in this forum. But we can make sure you get those.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you. So 355 is exclusively for CBO sector for increased wages?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — The significance here is, and there are two other category . . . You highlighted that. The immigration piece we'll deal with, we've highlighted already. As well, community-based organizations working with those with disabilities, we've highlighted. This relates to the workforce development piece, and what's significant here is again the 7 per cent lift is, you know, it's intended for wages. It's intended to ensure that working people benefit from this additional investment.

**Mr. Broten:** — On the last line, major capital asset acquisitions (AE08). Could you please just once again please state what that is?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — This is the work that's under way for SIAST over on Ontario Avenue in Saskatoon. And I'll get into some very technical pieces just to . . .

**Mr. Broten:** — It's for the conversion of the . . .

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Yes, steel fabrication, some electrical work, masonry work, emergency medical technician needs to be included, a multi-purpose shop, some classrooms, and support services. So I would just call it enhancing the institutional setting.

**Mr. Broten:** — Okay. And we're close to the end, so I have a couple quick questions to just to get covered. Within the supplementary estimates, does it include any new funds for expenditures by Enterprise Saskatchewan that are paid for by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — You know, either you or your colleagues can certainly best address questions for my colleague, the Minister of Enterprise and Innovation, but the answer is no. There is a very solid working relationship though with that ministry among several others as I highlighted — Social Services. I've highlighted as well our meeting that we had with Minister Strahl, obviously. That was led by the Hon. June Draude, and I just want to say for the record what a remarkable job she's doing. As well the Ministry of Education, we're working very diligently there. So there are a number of strategic partnerships and working relationships that have been established, and it really reflects a cross-government commitment on a number of initiatives.

[21:30]

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you. And recently you've announced some changes to the graduate tax program. That's not anywhere in the supplementary estimates. That'll be in the next budget?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — What we were able to do is actually ensure that those were covered from existing dollars.

**Mr. Broten:** — Okay. We'll save that for estimates next time around.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Sure.

**Mr. Broten:** — And I think I have time for one more question. Backing up for a second to the ATC [apprenticeship and trade certification] Commission, will that mean any additional staff for the commission?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — No. We don't envision that, that any additional staff will be needed as a result of these dollars. These dollars, essentially it's a flow-through. We wanted to make sure that additional capacity was being put in place across the province with a special emphasis on the North to ensure that we were able to better train more apprentices and through the apprenticeship program. And I'm pleased to say the uptake is very solid — can I say historic? — it's very solid.

**Mr. Broten:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the minister for his time and answers.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — If I may, Mr. Chair, just to take a moment. It's getting a little bit late at night. Again, many of us, that's why we're here. We've signed up from both the opposition and the government, but for our officials and for those that help us to undertake the proceedings that we had tonight, I just wonder if we could ask for a hand in thanks to their very good work.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** — Mr. Iwanchuk.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Yes, I too would like to thank the minister and all the officials for being here and answering all questions. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Committee members, we'll take a short recess to allow for the change of ministers and officials. And the last

item on our agenda this evening is the consideration of supplementary estimates for the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. And as soon as Minister Hickie is in place, and his officials, we will resume.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**General Revenue Fund  
Supplementary Estimates — November  
Corrections, Public Safety and Policing  
Vote 73**

**Subvotes (CP01), (CP04), (CP07), (CP06), (CP10), and (CP09)**

**The Chair:** — I'll call the committee back to order. We have the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing with us, and his officials. And at this time I would ask the minister to introduce his officials, and if he has a short opening statement, I would invite him to make that statement.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well I appreciate the opportunity once again to be before the committee with my ministry officials. If I could just take a second and introduce them to you.

On my left is the acting deputy minister, Al Hilton. On my right is the acting assistant deputy minister of corporate services, Mae Boa. To my back and right, my executive director of adult corrections, Tammy Kirkland. Back to my left is Bob Kary, executive director of young offender programs. Murray Sawatsky, executive director of policing services is in the back as well, along with Tom Young, executive director of protection and emergency services. And I also have my chief of staff, Rob Nicolay, with me as well tonight.

Now just to begin, I know that we have an hour tonight so I don't want to make this lengthy in the preamble. I'll just go through the high points. The supplementary estimates we'll be going through I understand for over three hours, tonight for an hour, is for an increase to the budget appropriation of \$20.846 million. The increase over budget is primarily due to a higher than budgeted cost for the provincial disaster assistance program, more adult inmates in custody facilities, additional costs related to operations, and an adjustment to the cash flow for the Regina and Saskatoon Provincial Correctional Centre capital projects.

I've gone through this preamble before about what the mandate letter is, what we need to achieve in the four years as government, and as long as I'm the minister what my mandate states. I did that last year, so I'm not going to go into that in any detail except that we're making some progress, as I stated last year as well.

So I think we'll just stop and let the committee ask questions if you like.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. I recognize Mr. Yates.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'd like to start by one of the issues indicated. And all my questions this evening, Mr. Minister, will be concentrated on the adult

corrections area this evening.

I'd like to start with asking questions around inmate counts. It's indicated that one of the expenditures is to deal with those additional inmate counts. Could you please, for the record, indicate the total number of inmates at each of the correctional facilities and the total number that are on remand in those facilities.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I guess I can provide you year to date, or I can go just for the month of October. It's up to you. What would you like?

**Mr. Yates:** — Month of October would probably indicate for each of the institutions.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Okay, sure. So the officials have done a great job here in breaking these down for adult corrections. For the Pine Grove Correctional Centre, there were at the end of October were 79 sentenced female inmates, 39 were remands, so for a total of 118. Prince Albert Correctional Centre had 162 sentenced, 157 on remand, for a total of 319. Saskatoon Correctional Centre— now this excludes the urban camp — 164 sentenced, 183 on remand, for a total of 347. Regina Correctional Centre had 243 sentenced, 203 on remand, for 446. So the breakdown of total facilities, total secure facilities is 648 sentenced, 582 remand, for a total of 1,230.

Is that what you would like to know for numbers, Mr. Yates?

**Mr. Yates:** — Yes, thank you very much. Mr. Chair, my next question has to do with has there been any change in the trend since the last opportunity we had to talk about estimates some six months ago? As an example, the percentage of those on remand, has it gone up, down, or stayed about the same?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you. What we have here for year to date, at the end of . . . Average to October 2008 on remand, 580. The year-to-date average at the same time last year was 539. So there's a slight increase on remand totals.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Are there any specific indicators or reasons why there's an increase to those on remand?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — The trend that we're seeing to date is not much unlike it's been in the last number of years, where we're seeing the numbers continue to climb up. The number of remands is climbing across Canada as well, so we're very similar to other jurisdictions as well.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. How would the total number of inmates remand and sentence compare today to historical averages?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Historical averages? Thank you. What we're seeing is that historically the trend is a 4 to 5 per cent increase year to year. And right now that's a trend that we see as far back as the ministry officials were just talking about now.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. I'd like to spend a few minutes now talking about the new capacity that's been built in Regina and Saskatoon. The first question with the Regina

centre, I understand it's online and open. Currently how many individuals are housed in the new centre and what's its capacity?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you. We've got 200-and-some inmates in there right now. We don't have the exact figure available, going through the notes back there. We do have some double bunking going on, so we have a maximum capacity if it's totally maxed out of 216 single cell beds, double bunk, 432. And it's a replacement unit by the way; it's not a brand-new beds. Let's just make that very clear.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. What status are we at with the new dormitory addition in Saskatoon?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I can answer that question very quickly. In fact we're looking now at the spring of 2009 for operational status. Of course that's mainly due because of the amount of construction work that's involved with that and the difficulty in getting some trades to actually fulfil the obligations and get the job done, but we're looking at the spring of 2009, if I'm not mistaken — February, to be better off, I guess.

**Mr. Yates:** — How many additional beds will that add to the Saskatoon facility? Or is this strictly replacement beds?

[21:45]

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — No this will be brand new, 90 beds that we're going to look at using to help alleviate some of the overcrowding in the Saskatoon Correctional Centre. And it will be the lowest possible security ratings that we can put in there because it's more of a dormitory kind of style functional unit.

**Mr. Yates:** — Okay, thank you very much. With the number of remands in the Saskatoon facility exceeding those that are in the population, where are remand inmates currently being housed in the Saskatoon facility?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you. The Saskatoon Correctional Centre doesn't have specific numbers of remand beds. We do have secure beds that we utilize right now, and they're full, of course. Given the historical overcrowding situation, the under-capacity of remand beds, we have to put some of those offenders into the regular operational units due to the overcrowding.

**Mr. Yates:** — Okay, thank you very much. Mr. Minister, are there any plans in the future to add secure or remand beds in Saskatoon, P.A., or Pine Grove?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — That's a good question. I think we can wait for a few more sleeps before we come out with our budget for next year. We do know that the ministry officials have done a great job in rolling out a five-year capital plan. We also have some input from my Legislative Secretary that we look forward to entertaining.

The problem we're seeing right now is lack of foresight by the previous administration, which is alarming because the cost of construction has gone up astronomically. To give credit for the replacement unit of course, \$51 million roughly to build that. The same unit costs over \$90 million now. So the ministry

officials now have quite the task ahead of them to ensure the best value for the taxpayers' dollars moving forward.

Will we do some planning? Absolutely. When will we get the sod turned? It's debatable based on the allocation of funds at budget, but we'll be making some strong arguments, again turning to the Legislative Secretary's report for some advice and correction.

And pardon my throat, by the way. I've got a cold coming on so I'm trying to suck on a lozenge.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I now am going to ask a series of questions regarding supervisory responsibilities in the facilities. How many ADD [assistant deputy director] positions in the Regina facility are on an acting basis — not permanently staffed?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Not permanently staffed?

**Mr. Yates:** — Not permanently staffed.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I'll have to get the answer for you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't have that number available that you're asking, but we've taken note of the question and we'll get that for you, Mr. Yates.

**Mr. Yates:** — I have similar questions for the Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Pine Grove institutions.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — We can get those all for you, absolutely.

**Mr. Yates:** — All right. I have a number of serious questions about the new Regina centre and some of the operational issues of it. Was there an increase in staffing levels as a result of the opening of the new centre?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, no new FTEs [full-time equivalent] were added because of the opening of the new replacement unit.

**Mr. Yates:** — Okay. Thank you very much. With the opening of the new 90 beds in Saskatoon, do you expect additional full-time FTEs to be required?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, 33 FTEs because it's brand new bed space for the Saskatoon unit.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. With the opening of the new units in Regina, was there additional requirements for staff training and costs associated with the opening of the institution?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, there was in fact. We had initial staff orientation to the unit and some training on the use of the facility, of course. You yourself know, Mr. Yates, through your extensive experience in corrections, when you open new units you don't just drop inmates back into a unit without having staff who first of all wanted to work there and then trained in the functional capacity of the unit and the operations. We also have had ongoing training for the staff there along with the other staff at the Regina Correctional Centre all year long. So that does answer the question, I believe.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you. Is the staff training in transition completed?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. The permanent full-time staff who chose to work, they were fully trained. The permanent part-time staff who are working in the unit are ongoing training as we speak.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. What are the plans and time frame for the demolition of the 1913 portion of the correctional facility?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The answer to that is that Government Services is the ultimate ministry responsible for that demolition. They are also responsible for the mothballing right now and to ensure the site is secure and safe. So that's just about finished as I was informed, so the Ministry of Government Services will be doing the actual demolition.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. But we have no definite timetable when that would begin.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. It will be next fiscal year, we are told by Government Services.

**Mr. Yates:** — All right. Thank you very much. I now would like to ask some questions about where the costs associated with the incidents in the correctional facilities requiring increased security services. We currently have four reviews going on. What are the costs of those reviews? What's the scope of those reviews? And who is undertaking those reviews?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Give me one second. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well when it comes to the internal reviews, we have internal CPSP [Corrections, Public Safety and Policing] staff doing those, so their salaries and costs are already being paid by the taxpayer as to salary dollars. The external review, we don't have a dollar value on that right now because the investigators are still conducting their investigation and compiling their data in a further report. Once the report is done and turned into the deputy minister, then they'll be submitting their invoices for services rendered. The investigators are Mr. Bill Peet and Mr. Dan Wicks, with technical advice initially provided by Mr. Bob Vogelsang for the first three or four days or so.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. When can we expect the external review to be tabled and when will we see those final results?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — That's a good question. My acting deputy minister will be in receipt of that report, hopefully by the end of this session. And we'll be going through it to make certain that the information that can be released will be released to the public and to yourselves. The critical factor, as you can understand from your past experience, is to ensure that any security data is not leaked out to the public because of course the general inmate population will have access to that.

So I won't give a definitive date. We're hopeful that the draft copies will be submitted within the next few weeks to the acting deputy minister, and he'll be going through it to advise me. So when the final version of the report is in, we'll be tabling that.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, could you indicate for us what the scope of the review is? Is it simply about the one escape, or is it a more comprehensive review of operations?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you. The external investigators are looking at what the parameters were leading up to the day of the escape and the internal reviews as is standard operating procedure. We'll look at some of the operational matters that led up to the incidents that are under review right now and providing recommendations as such.

So if you're asking about overall operations, we do have an overall operational security audit taking place as well by the ministry officials, moving forward to see what kind of budgetary items we have to put into the request and call for estimates as well.

**Mr. Yates:** — So on top of the four reviews, the internal reviews and the external review, there is also an operational review going on within the department?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Yes. The ministry officials are conducting a security audit.

**Mr. Yates:** — Okay. Thank you very much. Could you give or indicate to us what the scope of that review is and who's undertaking it? And when we can expect the outcomes of that review?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The management team officials from CPSP and Government Services are currently conducting a security audit. That will be an internal document used and will not be disclosed. It will be used for capital planning.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. So the purpose is simply for capital planning, not other operational issues?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — That's correct. At this time it'll be for capital planning moving forward, so we'll understand what kind of security requirements we have to implement or phase in, given the age of the infrastructure we have in place right now.

**Mr. Yates:** — Okay. Thank you very much. In the investigations that are undergoing, that are internal, when can we expect outcomes and reports to be brought down on those issues?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The internal investigation conducted into the August escape is compiled by the CPSP management team right now. It will not be released. It's an internal document used for review as to what led up to the escape and what kind of factors have to be taken into consideration moving forward.

The reviews being done by the deputy minister of Justice, however, will be coming to a conclusion soon, and data from that particular document, some may be held back based on security concerns, some may be released. Right now the decision hasn't been tendered on that yet. So more likely for that one to be released in some way, shape, or form to the public. The internal review done by the CPSP officials for the



escape in August will not be released.

[22:00]

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Will the recommendations that are made as a result of the report be released?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — For the escape?

**Mr. Yates:** — For all of those.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — For all of them? Okay. Just hang on a second. Thank you. The recommendations that result from these reviews for the most part will be, from the escape for starters, will be involving security operations. I've stated that publicly, and I'll state it again tonight, that that kind of information will not be released to the public because we have to take into consideration the security within the operation of the institutions.

The deputy minister's report from Justice, again if that is going to be released, it will be at a very different level as to, we're going to remove the security operations from that as well just for staff safety and operational concerns.

I have said publicly and I will tell you again that the external report by the investigators will be gone through by the deputy minister, and that will be made public with recommendations going forward.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, will these reports and their conclusions be shared with front-line employees, and shared with those who are responsible for implementing the policies on a day-to-day basis?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The answer to that pretty simply is to say yes. It will be directed down to the front-line staff. Because they involve security operations and possible implications to the day-to-day operations, absolutely they'll be part of the communication strategy to ensure that they follow whatever is directed from the ministry officials.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Will the employees and their representatives be consulted prior to implementation of any changes as a result of these reviews?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — The consultation for the employees . . . Their obligation is to maintain security of the institutions. Having recommendations come forward that may impact operational security concerns however will be left at the local level for the directors to implement, and we'll let them do that. And I would imagine with the Internet, union-management committees, if situations arise that may become problematic, that those concerns can be raised at that level.

I would anticipate though that we shouldn't see that kind of a problem if the recommendations are to the betterment of the operational status of our facilities and security in general. I'm hopeful that none of the staff will have an issue with that.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My concerns are that individuals from the outside who may not know all the

nuances of and intricacies of a how particular institution works, and the recommendation may not fit with what you need to do in operational needs for other reasons in the institution. And those things need to be taken in consideration before implementation.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Well I guess if you look at the internal reviews being done, we have internal reviews conducted by staff who are aware of operational concerns. If you're directing your focus to the external review, I will have you know that the wealth of knowledge and expertise that Mr. Bill Peet brings to the table on this particular venue in this particular operation far exceeds what you and I have together combined. And his operational recommendations will be considered through the ministry officials.

Taking into consideration and recognizing he is from the federal Correctional Service of Canada, however, best practices cannot be ignored throughout the province or throughout Canada. So we would like to see an implementation of those kind of best practices if it makes the operational status of our prisons, in this case the Regina Provincial Correctional Centre, safer for staff, safer for the public, safer for the inmate population in general. So we will let the officials decide at that level what recommendations we can put into place quickly and what recommendations we have to discuss moving forward.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Will the recommendations as a result of the Regina, the external review, be utilized in other institutions outside of the Regina correctional facility?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — The answer for that would be, if the external review brings forth a standard operating procedure that the executive director of adult correctional operations sees as causing or has created part of the problem in the escape, it'll be up to that person, Ms. Kirkland, to review that and implement it down the line of chain of command to other operational reviews in other institutions.

If it's the same standard operating procedure policy that could've prevented the escape if it had been altered or looked at differently — absolutely. If it makes for better operation to increase staff security and public safety and staff safety, absolutely. That's the primary focus of this review — to get answers. And also the external team will also be able to provide some insight.

**Mr. Yates:** — Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'd like to spend a few minutes now talking about, we have an incident that's being reviewed of an individual who spent a significant period of time more incarcerated than what their sentence should have been. Has a legal settlement been brought forward in that issue? Or has that been resolved with the individual involved?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — One second, please. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The internal review involving that particular case is still ongoing at this point. Officials from CPSP have met with the individual and his family. That individual has contacted outside legal counsel and will be in touch with our officials moving forward. So there's no determinate value right now as to any kind of legal settlement or any pending settlement.

**Mr. Yates:** — Has there been any legal action initiated against the province as a result of that incident?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — We're not aware of any legal action at all that's been started against us or the province, no.

**Mr. Yates:** — Have there been any changes in policy and procedures in order to prevent a similar, further incident moving forward?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — And the answer to that is that we are conducting an audit on every file, on every sentenced offender right now in our facilities. Moving forward, the acting deputy minister will be provided with some information from those audits. Best practices and operating procedures will be at the discretion of the executive director of correctional operations for adult offenders and for young offenders as well. And if we have to review those practices to ensure that this doesn't happen again, it'll be done.

And we have to make sure that we have a fail-safe where there's extra checks in place to ensure these things don't happen again. And historically it has happened over the last number of years. So will it happen again? I surely hope not. Under this government there'll be a different focus, and under this team there'll be a different focus to ensure that we do the best possible to ensure this doesn't happen again.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, are you anticipating changing any computer systems or putting in place new computer systems as a result of some of the recent incidents?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Moving forward in next year's budget, we will be taking an action plan with the Ministry of Justice to upgrade computers and the software. Right now it's at a stage where it's part of next year's budget plan. So I'm not going to say it's specific to the incidents; it's more of an operational concern across both ministries, from the courts and from Corrections.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. The budget indicates that there were incidents that required increased security services. Could you tell me what those incidents were and what increased security services were provided?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Give me one second please. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just over \$100,000, about \$111,000 was the cost to do the institutional lockdowns of all the secure custody facilities in this province on the September long weekend to search for contraband and for infrastructure checking as well. Now we also have an ongoing cost every year where directors and staff lock down units, lock down prisons, do the institutional searches, and that's what the remainder of the costs is for, for a total of \$350,000.

The answer here is that we have an ongoing security, preventive security measures in place, with the additional cost of just over \$111,000 for the September long weekend to ensure that our staff safety and inmate safety and public safety is paramount.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I have a couple questions now about overall initiation training —

training where employees are brought into the system. What is the current practice for initial training for new employees in the department?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I will let my executive director of adult corrections handle that question. Are you asking for both adult and . . .

**Mr. Yates:** — Just adult.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Okay.

**Ms. Kirkland:** — Thank you. Anyone who begins working in an adult correctional facility receives what we call induction training, orientation training. It's approximately two weeks, I believe is the answer. I can clarify that for you, but it involves a number of what we call mandatory training elements. Orientation facility, restraint training, CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] and first aid need to be had before people start working in the facility. So there's that orientation, that general, to be safe and understand the building and the inmate population, suicide prevention training, that sort of thing. Ongoing training above and beyond that includes things like core correctional practice training, direct supervision training, and continues year round.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So every employee that is currently employed in an adult correctional facility would have CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] and first aid training today?

**Ms. Kirkland:** — Every person working at the facility has to have CPR and first aid when they start, and then there are mandatory refreshers for those trainings. So that is done on a rotational basis. Every year there are a certain number who receive their refresher training to keep them up to date in their certifications.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. The core correctional practices training, how long would an employee work in the institution prior to receiving that training?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Tammy, the executive director of adult corrections, will answer these technical questions.

**Ms. Kirkland:** — Thank you. That would depend on the training schedule. We have a team who specifically provides that sort of training in our facilities and in our community. And they have dates scheduled throughout the year, so it would depend on when a new person starts and gets into that training rotation.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. How long would an employee be expected to work in an adult correctional facility with simply their two-week induction training before they would receive additional supervision or core correctional practice training?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — The director of adult corrections will answer that technical question for you.

**Ms. Kirkland:** — Thank you. I'm not sure I can give you a standard answer for that because again it depends on when

training is scheduled. As you can appreciate, training in a secure custody facility is a costly and time demanding activity. We have to have backfill. So those things are scheduled at the beginning of the year. Each director develops a training plan. They identify the number of people who need certain training, the amount of time it's going to take, and the dollars it's going to cost, and they develop their training plans and people are slotted in as those events come up.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Is it possible — Mr. Chair, a question to the minister — is it possible that employees could work there more than a year before having any additional training other than their induction training?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — The director will answer that question.

**Ms. Kirkland:** — That would certainly not be our desire. I can't say today that it's never happened. I don't know that, but it would certainly not be our desire. There are a number of types of training, so I would find it very difficult that they would have no other training.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Is it possible somebody could work two years and not have that training?

**Ms. Kirkland:** — That would be unfortunate, and I'm not aware of it.

[22:15]

**Mr. Yates:** — Yes. Thank you very much.

Currently we have a training model that is dependent upon the various components being carried out. At times in the past, we had an in-house training component that new employees went away for four months and — much like the police colleges — and had in-depth, comprehensive training. Is there any review going on in changing how we provide training within the adult correctional facilities?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I'll answer that question. I'll let Tammy answer that after part, as well a little more now operationally how we do things.

The ministry is in discussions or in a very comprehensive package of possibly looking at a facility much like the police college model we have right now, where we'd be able to train police and in the off times train corrections workers, train highway traffic safety officers, train SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] officers. The discussions are at a very high level right now. It's nothing firm yet. But we do recognize that a comprehensive kind of a program where we can make sure that we have a system where everyone's trained at a certain level based on different requirements would be very much the test for a public safety model kind of a college. I think it also shows some continuity moving forward to ensure that we have those things addressed.

I'll let the executive director of adult corrections talk about what happens today however.

**Ms. Kirkland:** — I'll just add a couple comments. As far as training in adult facilities in '08-09 to date, 4,000 days of

training — so that's staff times number of hours — has been provided to facility staff.

And the core correctional practice training I mentioned earlier was initiated originally in our young offender program areas and showed great results as far as increased effective correctional practice, interaction between staff and offenders, and decrease in incidents in facilities — so inmate-to-inmate violence, inmate-to-staff incidents. So it was very successful and is being rolled out in the much larger adult facilities now.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Just to put in some context, 4,000 days training in a fiscal year, how many employees are currently employed in the adult corrections system?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I'll let the executive director of adult corrections answer that because it's a very technical question that I would have no clue about.

**Ms. Kirkland:** — Approximately 800 FTEs in the adult correctional system.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Eight hundred FTEs could be as high as 1,300 people though. Do we have any idea how many actual individuals that would be?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. For that answer, we can give you no definitive hard number now. We have to check the payroll system to give you the actual number. The approximate numbers are not part of the supplementary estimates I might add either. But we could get that final number for you if you would like to wait for that.

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Chair, I don't need an exact number. I'm just looking for a relatively, you know, round ballpark number.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — We'd rather not provide you a relative number. We'd like to get you a little more factual number if you wouldn't mind.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. I'll wait to get that number.

Mr. Chair, the reason for asking the questions is I'm trying to get some sense as to whether or not, why there may be issues where . . . why individuals are raising concerns with me that they aren't getting trained and they're not being trained in a timely manner. And as I'm sure you would know, working in a correctional facility is not a normal environment. It's a very difficult environment to work in and one where there is not really other jobs that are close to the types of situations that you will encounter working in that environment. And the concerns about training have been raised significantly with me in the last number of months.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Well I can respect your inquiry about training for staff. I however see no relevance to supplementary estimates. And you should know very well as a former minister that if you're getting inquiries from staff, you always have the option as an opposition MLA to bring those forward to my ministry officials, my ministerial assistants, my chief of staff, if you like my office if you so choose.

If you care to carry that information and hold it to your chest, so to speak, so that we don't know what the inquiries are, then wait for a decision, a committee time like this to bring it up. I think the way to do business might be a little different going forward, I would hope, Mr. Yates. And if people are contacting you as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], maybe a former SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] president, former corrections worker, we look more than forward to taking those concerns and providing answers from the ministry level.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. This has been the first opportunity to raise it in a public forum. I appreciate your concerns. And we will hopefully hear at a later date some answers to some of the numbers and looking at the issue of training and whether it's appropriate today.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Oh I think the . . . You're asking some very broad questions in regards to training. If you have specific staff that have brought forth concerns to you as an MLA in the opposition side, feel free to pass those on to myself. And through my ministry officials, we'll get answers for them through the appropriate channels to ensure the answers are correct.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'd like to for a few minutes talk about the new policy on informing the public. For the last number of years, it's been the responsibility of the police to inform the public when they thought it was necessary in an escape situation. Over the last two or three months, we've had the opportunity to have a new policy in place. And on reflection, do you think the new process meets the needs of the department, the public, the police, and the system in general?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you for the question. In fact I want to start off by saying that since 1996 there's a procedural policy in place to have staff notify supervisors about security incidents inside our correctional facilities. That's a very sound policy for the front-line workers.

And this new implementation of this new policy statement and procedural requirements now takes it to the next level, where we feel that there was a situation in notifying the public back in August of the Regina Provincial Correctional Centre escape. For whatever reason, it happened. The RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] didn't report to the public for 15 hours.

That caused me grave concerns for my background, and we have now made it an operational policy. And the executive director of adult corrections has informed her subordinates and through down to the directors of institutions now as to what the policy is.

And I do feel that as long as the level of communication goes up the chain of command and gets to that level — and I believe it will because we have staff who are very professional — I believe the directors now have a very strong sense as to what's required, as do the central office staff. The most important thing here is that we have an obligation to ensure that we don't have a situation that happened back in August occur again.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have four or

five questions I want to end on here. But before I get to these, I had asked earlier for the number of ADDs and that, that were in acting capacities versus full-time employees. Could you tell me the number of supervisors or managers in each of the institutions as it is today?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I'll need a definition from you what you want because I see supervisors, managers as out-of-scope, in-scope splits. Is that what you want — the out-of-scope, in-scope kind of split?

**Mr. Yates:** — In any way you want to inform me as to what the . . .

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — What I can do is I can ask the officials to provide that. If they haven't got it with them today, is that . . . I would consider with my background, and I think what the officials and I, what we talked about, true supervisors and managers in any capacity of any kind of ministry truly would have to be the out-of-scope staff who have the line authority to act upon a direction provided from an upper level in the chain of command, with very clear foresight that this involves operational concerns and public safety with no involvement with the union whatsoever at the first level. So we'll look at that. That's the definition we'll provide to you, Mr. Yates, if that's okay with you.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. My final questions have to do with, do any of the increases indicate in the adult corrections area represent ongoing or structural increases, or are they one-time expenditures? Any portion of the \$3.914 million, is any of it ongoing structural increases?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — If you could just . . . The question was about structural?

**Mr. Yates:** — Well do they represent ongoing structural increases? Costs that would be ongoing to further years — right? — would be part of the base budget.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We look at the inmate count management of the \$3.44 million. That would be the baseline moving forward to offset costs for higher adult counts in the correctional facilities and addressing safety and security for inmates and staff. We also have a \$64,000 increase to the CBOs that was announced this year, the Minister of Social Services. We have a few CBOs that require the increase, the lift — the 2.3 per cent effective April of this year, and then the 7 per cent effective October. So that would be the baseline costs.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. What percentage increase does this represent to the adult corrections budget?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The break is 3 million to 85 million, so it's a very small percentage if you were to break those numbers down.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. I had asked earlier if any of the changes at the Regina Correctional Centre had resulted in permanent increased staff or staffing increases. Do any of the costs affected in the adult correction system result in increased staffing?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — You're talking general adult corrections now or just specific to Regina?

**Mr. Yates:** — Just adult corrections.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Adult corrections. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The lion's share of the \$3.44 million that we see to manage adult counts would be the result of bringing in permanent staff to backfill and offset costs for overtime, if I'm correct. Permanent part-time staff. That's where the cost would be for that.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, that would conclude my comments tonight. But before giving over my rights, I'd like to thank the minister and his officials for coming this evening and answering the questions that we put forward. So thank you very much.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — You're very welcome. Thanks to the committee tonight. I know the hour is late, so I look forward to meeting again.

**The Chair:** — Seeing that we have reached the hour of 10:30, this committee stands adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 22:29.]