



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

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## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

Mr. Glen Hart, Chair  
Last Mountain-Touchwood

Ms. Judy Junor, Deputy Chair  
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Mr. Denis Allchurch  
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Mr. Cam Broten  
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Ms. Doreen Eagles  
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Mr. Serge LeClerc  
Saskatoon Northwest

Mr. Greg Ottenbreit  
Yorkton

[The committee met at 15:00.]

**The Chair:** — Good afternoon, everyone. I'll call the Standing Committee on Human Services to order. We have three items on our agenda this afternoon, committee members. We will conclude considering the estimates for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. We will then consider the supplementary estimates that have been referred to this committee, and the final item on our agenda this afternoon is consideration of Bill No. 53, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2008*.

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

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

**The Chair:** — We have Minister Hickie with his officials here. I'd like to welcome the minister and his officials. I would ask the minister one more time to introduce his officials, and then we will deal with the supplementary estimates for his ministry. Minister Hickie.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Welcome to all the committee members. It's good to be back here once again for the last hour of our three-hour session.

To my left is my deputy minister, Al Hilton. To my right is the acting assistant deputy minister in corporate services, Mae Boa. Following up to the far right is Murray Sawatsky, executive director of policing services. In the back row, I've got Tammy Kirkland, executive director of adult corrections; Bob Kary, executive director of young offender programs; Tom Young, executive director of protection and emergency services; Brian Krasiun, executive director of licensing and inspections; and my chief of staff as well, Mr. Rob Nicolay. That just about covers everybody off.

It's good to be back here today, like I've said. I believe today we're going to cover off policing, PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] and our administrative services. So I could go into a long-winded speech once again and talk to you what we're doing, what the ministry initiatives are going to be for this last year, what we funded. However I think we'll get right into the business of supplementary estimates if that's okay with the committee members.

**The Chair:** — Minister, we'll open the floor for questions. However prior to recognizing the member, I should inform the committee that we have a substitution this afternoon. Mr. McMillan is substituting for Mr. LeClerc. With that I will open the floor for questions from committee members, and I recognize Mr. Yates.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'd like to start this afternoon with policing services. I notice in the supplementary estimates, we have an additional \$425,000 for policing services. Could you outline briefly what that expenditure is for?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Certainly. I start off by saying that right now, we have an outstanding staff grievance which went to arbitration recently, and we're looking at \$100,000 award for that arbitration case.

We also have the 325,000 for increased funding for protective services which provides assistance to individuals and property. A portion of that will be allocated to some protective services that were ad hoc applied to the Regina Provincial Correctional Centre escapees. Some people were in fear for their lives as a result of testifying against these individuals, so we had a request from the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] to put forth some protective services, again completely ad hoc. Out of that cost, that bill still hasn't fully arrived yet.

And we also have some ongoing costs, I understand, for some ad hoc services provided through the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] that we're going to be funding as part of the 325 as well. My executive director of policing services can answer additional questions on that if you like, or add more information.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Protection services that were supplied as a result of the fear over the escape, who provided those services?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — We had a — thanks for the question by the way — we had a multi-agency approach on that one. Some of the protective services involved the RCMP. We utilized the actual federal witness protection program, had the assessments done. And if I'm not mistaken, there were two individuals that fell into that program. There were also resources from the Regina Police Service that assisted and augmented the RCMP for the short term on those particular witness protection initiatives.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. So the province pays additionally for those services provided by those departments?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Yes, those services are provided through the local detachment commanders and the chiefs of police. What they do is they submit a bill in for their services rendered in this fashion. And we made an agreement prior to that that we would cover those costs moving forward because we weren't sure how long that was going to be in place, and public safety was the most important thing at that time to us.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. I guess my question is, in light of the fact we didn't know at the time we went for supplementary estimates what those costs would be, how did you estimate those costs at being \$425,000?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — The detailed breakdown of that, I'll let my executive director give you the final answer. But when we looked at the initial costs of those services, we took a figure of a short term knowing full well we already had some costs already submitted by the RCMP for some protective services in this province. We looked at outstanding costs that could be associated to this on a long-term estimate. So I'll let the executive director of policing services follow-up on that.

**Mr. Sawatsky:** — Thank you. Mr. Yates, the only thing I can

add to that is we looked at the number of people potentially that would require some degree of assistance and then the potential as to how long that assistance could possibly be.

As the minister mentioned, the RCMP had their witness protection person do an assessment, and through that assessment, it was determined that only two of those potential witnesses actually qualified for some assistance under the federal program. Those people were then sort of taken out. But it still left a large number of others who needed some assistance, and that assistance was provided. And although we have received some invoices for that, we have not received everything to date yet.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, my next question would be, now that we have some experience what the costs may well be in this program, is \$425,000 enough or too much as a result of what you projected?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Well if we're looking at the issue of *The Witness Protection Act*, which we'll be looking at passing in the spring session, it provides the framework that was never there before under legislation to ensure a multitude of things. There is a three-person panel, committee, that will decide as to the cases directed from the director of the operations. That was never there before.

We're looking at the Manitoba model as a best cost estimate. The 100,000 of this 425 for supplementary estimates, though, was not for witness protection or any kind of services that involves an arbitration case. So we are actually looking at the Manitoba model of up to 425,000 — we thought would be an adequate number.

We had a meeting last week, and as a team we decided we're going to be putting forth a number of half a million for the first year of the operation of *The Witness Protection Act*. We believe that there could be some uptake initially on that. We want to make sure we can adequately fund it. It'll be in next year's budget though. It won't be part of any kind of supplementary estimates moving forward.

And I mean to give some credit where it's due. The previous Justice minister had made the announcement in September 2007 that there was going to be a high-risk witness protection program put in place. I advocated for that as a member of the Saskatchewan Federation of Police Officers. I thought that initially was a good program; the announcement was good.

However after assuming office, I was shocked to find that except for a small line budget item, \$80,000, which would have given support staff the cost to manage a program, there was no policy, no framework in place to actually do what we've seen — the ad hoc programs that have been happening for a number of years even before the announcement was made.

So I directed the officials, and with the executive director, placing services specifically to have a legislative framework that would tie in resources to a very defined program base that we will see managed in such a fashion that we'll have levels of accountability, protective services to staff involved, witnesses along with their associate family members as well. It's more encompassing than was ever announced in September. So

we've taken that to the next level.

And again the minister of Justice at the time recognized the need for the program, but the framework wasn't adequate to make sure this program was going to be in place long enough and have it sustainable.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. So in future you believe \$500,000 will be adequate. On what basis are you projecting that \$500,000?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Using the Manitoba model specifically for that projected cost, plus having contingency built in for situations like the escape. We do have that contingency built in right now. Of course being the first year of a fully-funded program under the legislative framework, we will also go year by year and review that program.

It is hoped — as I said in the press conference that I held — it is hoped truly that this program is not going to be required as time moves on. We will see less of a need for it. But as we go into the first year, we want to make sure we're funded adequately for this. And I think I'll let my executive director of policing services follow up on that if there's any more to follow up on.

**Mr. Sawatsky:** — I think the minister has covered it very well. We did look at other models and, you know, were able to get some figures from other programs that are running nationally and sort of projected that, and the minister was very supportive of that, and so we were able to move forward with the figure he mentioned.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Could the minister indicate to me what other provinces have similar provincial programs?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Yes I can. We know right now that Alberta's working on a program similar to ours, Manitoba has a program in place, and that BC [British Columbia], Ontario, and Quebec has a program in place that may or may not be exactly along the same lines we're on.

This program actually ties us into a bigger picture, especially in the western part of this country, that we're now allowed to share some resources, use all of our provincial counterparts to take these high profile witnesses and move them to different jurisdictions and actually work as an integrated team effort much like we see our police agencies doing now in our province to tackle organized crime and gangs. So it's an exciting time. And the legislative framework also provides for that, whereas before there was nothing in place.

**Mr. Yates:** — Okay thank you very much. That concludes my questions around policing. I'd like to move to the disaster assistance program. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My first question is, what are the number of outstanding claims today already put forward to the program?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — We do know right now that in summer 2008, we had 50 municipalities that had some sort of experience — you know, flooding or tornadoes — and we know right now that they've been designated for approximately up to \$2 million we could see. We have the actual claims being submitted for

2006, and 2007 events are expected to exceed the original estimates of 1.5 million and 6 million respectively. So right now, I'll just pass it over to my executive director of emergency services and protective services for his detailed answer on that for you.

**Mr. Young:** — Thank you for the question. We've got approximately 676 claims still pending from the three years, from the previous three years, and that represents quite a small number in terms of the overall claims that have been processed. We've processed almost 5,000 claims, and that's the remainder that are still in the process of being looked at. The claims for 2008-09 haven't come in yet. They're just coming in now. Some of the claims . . . we estimate there to be about 15 for communities and several hundred at least for private individuals and businesses.

[15:15]

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. How many claims are over one year, that are still outstanding, and greater than one year?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I'll have my executive director of emergency services answer that.

**Mr. Young:** — It would be that 676 that I mentioned.

**Mr. Yates:** — How many claims would be greater than two years?

**Mr. Young:** — We have 17 municipal claims and 78 private claims.

**Mr. Yates:** — When can individuals or communities expect the payment for those claims that are greater than two years?

**Mr. Young:** — The process is that we get information from the claimant and then adjusters go out and do the adjustments. And then we start the processing. We review the adjuster reports.

We've got most of the adjuster reports in for '05-06, '06-07. Pretty well most of the stuff is there. There's very few claims outstanding from those years, and the remainder of the claims for last year and the previous year, we'll be working on those. We're processing roughly about 150 claims a month, and so we would hope that most of the claims for one year and two years plus would be looked at probably over the next four to five months, I would think.

It depends though quite a bit in terms of the information that we do have available. Claims sometimes can take several years because information may not be available to us, or damage from a flood or another event may not show up precisely as immediately known. We experienced that in the Vanguard flood several years ago where movement of basement walls and things like that were some time after the event.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — If I could also add to that, there's also the indication that there was \$31.378 million in claims for the '07-08 year. So \$31.378 million, so it's a substantial amount of money. We had some very big disasters occur in this province, especially more in the last 3 than the last 30 before.

So we've seen a very big draw on that. Of course some of that money comes back to us in the federal cost-recovery programs that are going on.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Of those claims that are put in each year, what percentage would be found not to be eligible for compensation?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Not to be eligible? I'll let my executive director answer that.

**Mr. Young:** — I'm sorry could you repeat that?

**Mr. Yates:** — Of the claims put in each year, what percentage would be found to be ineligible for the program or compensation?

**Mr. Young:** — For the three years, there's about 10 per cent that aren't eligible.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. What period of time do individuals have to go back and place claims before the province with this program?

**Mr. Young:** — Individuals have six months. And what we do is we can extend that time frame depending upon the circumstances. In a lot of cases, the damages as I'd mentioned earlier may not show up until sometime after. So we try to take a common sense approach in terms of allowing people sufficient time to put their claims forward.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Do claims that go beyond the six months — like you used an example, down where the flood was and basement walls moving — are they still covered under the federal program so there's cost recovery?

**Mr. Young:** — What we try to do is work with individuals and communities to ensure that they have sufficient evidence that this did occur during a flood. And if they could not determine that, when the adjusters go out, they will assess the situation and determine whether it was related to the flood specifically or whether it was perhaps something else that might have caused the damage.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you. My next question has to do with proactive or preventative measures taken under the program. I know that there has been some desire, for a number of years, to have those types of activities covered off in the program. Can you tell me the status of those discussions with the federal government and where we're at today?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Certainly. I welcome the question. Well in January I had meetings in Halifax, and this was an issue on the table for all ministers across the country, as I'm sure it was when the previous government was in place. We had asked at the time for a separate mitigation fund because we recognized there was a need for this. And we had asked Minister Day at the time to bring it back to his colleagues in cabinet in the federal level.

And we had an election. So now there's a new minister involved. And actually two of them will be responsible. It'll be Minister Baird and Minister Van Loan will be the two that we'll

be talking to on infrastructure needs and mitigation money. Right now that file is on hold, I would think, pending the outcome of what happens this week. So the ongoing discussions, no matter who's in government, will still be at that level.

The burden upon the Government of Canada, we believe, is higher than it should be on the provinces for mitigation. Injection of mitigation infrastructure funding will alleviate the long-term needs that we're seeing over the last number of years by the records that I've reviewed. And there are definitely the needs to take a proactive approach on that, versus using the Building Canada fund. We want a stand-alone fund for mitigation. So that's a bit of a long-winded answer to say that nothing's really happened since before we took power actually.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. There are some provinces that provide some forms of assistance to communities in the forms of temporary dykes, and there is today more and more, you know, portable or temporary equipment that's being developed to deal with things like flooding, rather than just the standard sandbagging that has been used in the past. Is there any thoughts of the province investing some money into other forms of flood controls or diking that may be available out there on the market?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — We haven't had those kind of discussions yet at our level really. We've talked a lot about the emergency planning division, working with municipalities to ensure they have a plan, a proactive approach, and recognizing based on some previous history whether or not there'll still be a need to work an actual plan for a flood, a disaster plan.

Those kind of cases, they'd come forth and discuss it with the executive director of emergency services and protective services, so I'll bring them in the conversation at this time to discuss if any of those kind of conversations have taken place.

**Mr. Young:** — Yes, we are aware of a few products that are available. They have been tested in certain situations. They may or may not work in our particular situation. We've linked those, the proponents of those products to some of the communities — as an example at Fishing Lake and other areas — to see if they would be interested in such products as part of their emergency plans and moving forward on those. Those discussions are at a very preliminary stage at this point in time.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. My understanding of some of these products — and I actually had the opportunity to attend a show where they put some of these products out for people to see and look at what they were capable of doing — is the costing of them would be quite significant, but they could be reused many, many times, far more than what likely a municipality would be able to put out. But perhaps that's something that, you know, the provincial government would be able to fund.

Again it's really going to mitigation funding though and the federal government supporting moving ahead in that type of preventative measures.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I agree. I think that goes back to my issue with looking at the federal government for supporting that,

especially if we even had to look at in the out years moving forward some sort of a major cost-sharing initiative.

Of course we also have the interprovincial kind of committees working now too, talking about emergency planning and emergency services. So there could be a way to look at some sort of an interprovincial deployment strategy for those kind of resources. The deputy ministers will be meeting to discuss this of course, as will executive directors of emergency planning.

So those kind of things will be brought forward as well as we move forward with the federal government. And like I said before, we're not sure who we'll be talking to, but we'll be talking to somebody about it for sure.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. So we're asking today for 10.45 million additional dollars. It's indicated that it's largely to pay out an increased number of claims. What's the projection of the needed dollars to finalize the outstanding claims, the 676 outstanding claims?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I'll let my executive director answer that one.

**Mr. Young:** — I don't have a precise number on the 676. It would be very close to the \$10.4 million that we'd be talking about. I think we've estimated there's 2 million for the 2008, and it's 1.5 million for the 2006, and 6 million for the 2007. That should take care of most of the claims.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Is that the full payment, or is that the province's share of the payment? Do we expect to get the federal funding back on the majority of that?

**Mr. Young:** — Yes. We would hope to get at least 6 million of that back from the federal government, but we would have to submit the claims in advance to the federal government. And then they would do an audit, and we'd go through a process there of determining what exactly the amount would be.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. I think that will conclude my questions on the disaster assistance program.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Yates, you've concluded your questions then for the minister?

**Mr. Yates:** — Just on that section, Mr. Chair. I'd like to ask some questions on central management and services. Thank you very much. In central management and services, I see we have 1.92 million. Can I get a brief outline what the 1.92 million's for?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Absolutely. One point eight million is required for the additional costs for the technology and service partnership with the ITO, Information and Technology Office. This is a co-operating cost for the ministry which supports over 1,300 computers, printers, and BlackBerrys.

We have \$50,000 as required for staff training and program implementation of the government-wide privacy framework. And \$70,000 is required for staff recruitment and attendance at federal-provincial meetings.

**Mr. Yates:** — The last number was?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — 70,000.

**Mr. Yates:** — For interprovincial meetings?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — A combination of staff recruitment and attendance at federal-provincial meetings. So it's a combination of those two.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Mr. Minister, could you explain a little bit more about the 1.8 million that's transferred to the ITO and why that cost is over and above what was anticipated in the spring budget.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I'll get back to you in one second on that one. Thank you. To answer the question, it's a core business expense. For the last number of years, it is an expense that has not been budgeted through the cycle process as it should be. Moving into this year's budget cycle, we are anticipating, because of the estimates — this has been around this number for the last number of years — that we're going to try to get it incorporated as core business practice expense versus having to come back to supplementary estimates every year for this.

Year after year we seem to see the same kind of number to maintain our current supports of computers, printers, and BlackBerrys. So I don't know why it was never asked for before in the base budget, but we're going to try to put it in the base budget if it's possible this year.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. That begs the question, though, what was the original money that you had allotted for to pay this sum utilized for?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I'll get that information for you. Thank you for the question. Actually 1.2 million is the cost of our core business practice. Now the total of three is the additional cost to service what we have through ITO. So that's an unfunded issue we have right now for a total of only 1.2 in the budget year to year.

[15:30]

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. Could you give me a bit of breakdown on the utilization of the \$70,000 for recruitment and fed-prov meetings?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Certainly. Well I'll just let my executive — my acting assistant deputy minister — talk about this in corporate services. She'll have a better breakdown for the analysis. We do have a requirement though for deputies. As I'm sure the member's aware, back in his day, that there is a requirement for certain attendees to come to meetings and go to meetings, deputies and executive directors and ministers as well, so we'll let the acting assistant deputy minister answer that question for you.

**Ms. Boa:** — Thank you. The additional cost for the attendance of senior staff as well as minister, deputy minister, to attend federal-provincial types of meetings is about \$8,000 above the budget, and the balance of it would be for additional costs with respect to recruitment.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much.

**Ms. Boa:** — That would be a separate cost that we group as an HR [human resources] expense. So it's for the ministry.

**Mr. Yates:** — So \$62,000 is for recruitment. Could you give me some indication what areas we're having difficulty recruiting? What's hard to recruit today in the ministry?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Just give me one second. I want to make sure I've got the right information. Thanks for that question. Well it's licensing and inspections branch is one of the major initiatives we need to recruit at.

In the great economy that we're seeing to the west of us for years, we've lost a lot of our people to that. And we also see now over the last year with the increase in activity in this province, more so than ever before, we see private sector taking the inspectors that were currently in the branch and moving them into private sector — higher remuneration and benefit package than is currently allowed for. So we've lost people in those ones. We also look at the recruiting to the North for our corrections branch. We talked about that in, I believe, it was the first evening we did our estimates. Hard to find people who want to work up North, so we have to do different ideas and different concepts to try to get our staffing numbers up in those levels.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. The license and inspection area, are we having to pay additional salary supplements in that as well, due to the pressures in the industry?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Yes, in regards to the question. The Public Service Commission does a review year by year as I'm sure you are aware. And for the last number of years, there's been an increase in supplements to the market.

What we haven't seen, probably more so, was that we've seen the direct recruiting of our people from our branch to go to the private sector in this province. Some had left to go to Alberta for sure, but more so in the last little while, we've lost . . . recently in the last couple of months just two people I'm aware of that went to the private sector. We have to look at that, Public Service Commission provides that advice to us, moving forward.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. For retention in the North or hiring retention in the North, what strategies are you looking to utilize in those hard-to-recruit communities?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you for that question. Overall it involves a thinking outside the box where we have to move forward and do a lot more innovative ways than just realizing that this is a job that people are going to be coming to now with our economic prosperity we see this in this province like never before.

It's tough to find people, so we have to think outside that box where we have to try innovative ways to attract them to this industry, and for some people it isn't a first choice, but we have to show them that there's actually a not just a demand or a need but there's a rewarding career that's attached to it. It isn't just a salary. It's more than that.

To give you specifics, I'll let the acting assistant deputy minister give you some details as to what's been done from corporate services HR on that.

**Ms. Boa:** — Thank you. We have been investing in having our staff members, human resource consultants as well as front-line staff members, attending more career fairs, getting out into the field and actually visiting educational institutions, and putting more time and effort into that. And of course there's a human resource cost when we're doing that.

We feel it's important with respect to advancing what we call our ambassador program. So we have some folks that have volunteered to go out and attend some of these events on behalf of the ministry, and as I say, that is an investment in time for us.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. I'm aware that, in a number of northern communities, housing is a significant issue. And it's difficult to find housing or suitable housing for government employees in a number of communities, not just in this department but in all government departments. You know, the problem is significantly different in some communities than others. Is there any thoughts of looking at the possibility of some form of enhanced or provided housing in hard-to-hire northern communities?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I think I'll just . . .

**Mr. Yates:** — Question is broader than the department, but if there's any discussions going on, you'd be aware of it, I guess.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Just one second, I'll check on that to see if any discussions.

Yes. It actually falls under the Public Service Commission more so because if you're talking about across government, this isn't just applicable to us; it's going to be applicable to other ministries as well, like you stated. So we're working with the Public Service Commission to see what kind of enhanced packages or offerings can be made to people who wish to work up north and their staff otherwise.

So right now, the answer for that is it's an ongoing process for sure, and we have to look at all kinds of options. Public Service Commission are the ones that will be able to answer that question for the committee members more so than us.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I will just like to note that in La Loche, as an example, the Department of Health has provided housing for individuals working in the hospital. And it's rare, but there are occasions. SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] provides some housing in some remote communities. So it was done a number of years ago. It seems to have been not done over the past, you know, maybe half a dozen years, you know, as the climate and market sort of changes. But if it's becoming a more aggressive market, it may be something we have to look moving forward in order to recruit in difficult and hard to hire communities.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Yes. I have to agree with your assessment of that, Mr. Yates, that I mean I know that in the past . . . I know about SERM and some friends of mine were actually

working up north, even the Far North.

But we have to look at an interdepartmental kind of committee and to administrative committees and this one moving forward, the Public Service Commission. The interesting aspect here is that in some cases there are a lot of value, there's lots of value to having that.

We also want to look at . . . We'd like to preferably ask people who live in the community to work for us there. They understand the concepts, the dynamics versus dropping in a member who might be — a probation officer, community resource person — from outside, maybe from another community. That's where we'd look at that as a supplement maybe for northern allowance, possibly through Public Service Commission. But in cases where we have to provide housing — that's something that's on the radar right now — we'd have to consider that. Though I think hiring from the community where you are going to work is much more advantageous, especially in the far North.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. That would conclude my questions on the estimates, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Do other committee members have any questions with regards to the supplementary estimates? Ms. Junor.

**Ms. Junor:** — I just have one about the outstanding claims. If someone is waiting since '06 or even '07, would they be right to assume that their claim will proceed? Or will they at some time be told that this wasn't useful, wasn't filled out? Are the ones that are . . . The 676 that are sitting there, have they been reviewed to at least that extent so the people that are still waiting know that they will eventually get their claim?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — I can just talk about the high level of that. We found that there was a need for additional adjusters in the communities to come and actually verify claims, which is one additional cost for us, and a backlog from that. Plus within our office we . . . And it actually was before we took government that that actually was the case as well, that there was an additional backlog and trying to find staff to come in and process those claims.

If you're talking about specific claims to a specific area, possibly. Saskatoon, I can understand it from your area, probably. I'll let the executive director answer that one though if you want to talk about Saskatoon specifically.

**Mr. Young:** — Maybe I'll refer to the claims in general terms.

Our staff keep very good record in terms of the processing of the claims. Some of those claims would be claims where we've just got adjuster reports in, and there's a lot of discussions and calls and correspondence that goes to claimants back and forth that indicate if there's any further information required from the claimants, or whether we just got the adjuster report, when they might be able to see us in terms of the time going through that adjustment report, and getting back to the claimant in terms of just an indication of how long it would be before the claimant could expect to receive some payment. So the staff do keep in touch with those claimants, generally speaking.



With that many of claimants, it may not be able to get back immediately to a claimant in terms of exactly where they're at. But generally speaking, the files are kept pretty well up to date, and we keep pretty good tabs on exactly where the claims are.

We introduced a new process in terms of providing payments to claimants, one that includes advance payments so that if a claim comes in and an adjuster report is in, we can provide up to 40 per cent immediately. And we've also indicated that if the claimant prefers to go on the adjuster report numbers, we can give them the full amount back.

So there's a number of things that we have done to expedite some of the claims.

**Ms. Junor:** — If somebody is sitting waiting for the money that's been in and the adjuster has done the work and has told the people the work has been done and they've been waiting for months, that would be okay? I mean, they can still expect to get the money eventually; it's just in the process of going through all the steps?

**Mr. Young:** — Yes, that would be the case. Now I can't say for sure until . . . Like some of the adjuster reports, they haven't gotten through all of the adjuster reports at this point in time. So if they haven't looked at the specifics of the adjuster report, they can't say for sure whether all of the stuff is in there that is required. When it does come up and they do go through a specific claim and an adjuster report, they would then be in touch with the claimant, for the most part sorting out what the issues are.

The first step though would be to talk to the adjuster. And if there were any questions with regard to the report, and then they would speak to the claimant.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — As well, if I could just add, Mr. Hart, if you have anyone in this province, any MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] have claimants and they're finding that they haven't got maybe some answers they thought they'd see sooner, there's a toll free number I believe they can contact. And if not, my ministerial assistants will be of help as well there.

I know that there's been a lot of people phoning the office here in Regina asking for the status of their claims. So if it's more specific to an MLA's constituency, please contact the office, and we'll look it up for them, absolutely.

**Ms. Junor:** — Well just then to be clear, my first question was, of the 776 claims, they have not all been vetted yet? So there's still people that . . . How many of those claims have had their first tranche of a look and will definitely get money; it's just in the works? And how many have not been seen by anybody to see if they need more work or whatever?

**Mr. Young:** — Pretty well all of the 676 are waiting for a review of the adjuster report. So they're at a stage where they haven't been looked at in any great detail. As I mentioned, we process about 150 claims a month, so we're hoping most of those will be looked at over the next few months.

**Ms. Junor:** — So okay, one more question I think. The 676

claims are waiting for a review of their adjuster report. Then there must still be others who have had the adjuster's report reviewed and are now just waiting for the money. How many of those are outstanding?

[15:45]

**Mr. Young:** — We have 335 over the last three years that have received some payment, and we are looking at 70 additional ones where we're looking for information from the actual claimant.

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you. And a toll-free number can be found how?

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — If I'm not mistaken . . . I'll check with my chief of staff. One second. Hang on. We'll get that for you, Ms. Junor. Absolutely, yes.

**The Chair:** — Are there any other questions for the minister and his officials? Seeing none, I'd like to thank the minister and his officials for appearing before the committee. The minister and his officials are free to leave, and we will proceed with voting the supplementary estimates, committee members.

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

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

**The Chair:** — Okay, committee members, we have a number of ministries' supplementary estimates to vote. We will start with the Advanced Education, Employment and Labour found on page 11 of the Supplementary Estimates book. That's vote 37. We'll start with subvote (AE03), student support programs, (AE03) in the amount of 27,000. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Post-secondary education (AE02) in the amount of 105,656,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Immigration (AE06) in the amount of 73,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Career and employment services, (AE04) in the amount of 355,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Major capital asset acquisitions in the amount of 200,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. I'll now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2009, the following sums: for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour in the amount of 106,311,000.

Ms. Eagles so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried.

[Vote 37 agreed to.]

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

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

**The Chair:** — The next ministry that we need to deal with is found on page 13 of the Supplementary Estimates, Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, vote 73.

Central management and services, subvote (CP01) in the amount of 1,920,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Adult corrections, subvote (CP04) in the amount of 3,914,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Young offenders programs, subvote (CP07) in the amount of 1,478,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Public safety, subvote (CP06) in the amount of 10,450,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Policing services, subvote (CP10) in the amount of 425,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Major capital projects, subvote (CP09) in the amount of 2,659,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. I would now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2009, the following sums: for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing in the amount of 20,846,000.

Mr. Ottenbreit so moved. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried.

[Vote 73 agreed to.]

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

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

**The Chair:** — We now have Supplementary Estimates for the Ministry of Education found on page 14, vote 5. Pre-K-12 education (ED03) in the amount of 1,255,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Early learning and child care subvote (ED08) in the amount of 2,055,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Curriculum and e-learning subvote (ED10) in the amount of 3,050,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Provincial library subvote (ED15) in the amount of 3,045,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Teachers' pensions and benefits (ED04), statutory amount 931,000, this does not need a vote. That is for the public record. Would a member move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2009, the following sums for Education in the amount of 9,405,000.

**Mr. McMillan:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. McMillan so moved. Is that agreed? That's carried.

[Vote 5 agreed to.]

**General Revenue Fund  
Supplementary Estimates — November  
Health  
Vote 32**

**Subvotes (HE04), (HE03), and (HE08)**

**The Chair:** — The next set of Supplementary Estimates that we need to deal with is Supplementary Estimates for the Ministry of Health found on page 16, vote 32. The first item is provincial health services subvote (HE04) in the amount of

1,300,000. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Regional health services (HE03) in the amount of 78,000,000. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Drug plan and extended benefits subvote (HE08) in the amount of 700,000. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. I would ask a member now to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2009, the following sums for Health in the amount of \$80,000,000.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Allchurch moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried.

[Vote 32 agreed to.]

**General Revenue Fund  
Supplementary Estimates — November  
Social Services  
Vote 36**

**Subvotes (SS03), (SS06), and (SS04)**

**The Chair:** — The final Supplementary Estimates that we need to vote this afternoon, committee members, is found on page 17 of the Estimate book for the Ministry of Social Services, vote 36, employment support and income assistance (SS03) in the amount of 6,880,000. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Is carried. Community inclusion (SS06) in the amount of 3,000,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Child and family services (SS04) in the amount of 2,000,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. I would ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2009, the following sums for Social Services in the amount of \$11,880,000.

Ms. Eagles so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried.

[Vote 36 agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — That concludes the voting of the supplementary estimates, committee members.

The next item on our agenda is consideration of Bill No. 53, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act*. The committee will recess until 4:15, at which time the minister and his officials . . . if we can get them here sooner, we certainly will attempt to do so. However at the latest it will be 4:15, and we will deal with that Bill. So this committee stands recessed.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

[16:00]

**Bill No. 53 — *The Medical Profession  
Amendment Act, 2008***

**Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — Welcome back, everyone. The last item on our agenda is consideration of Bill No. 53, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2008*. We have Minister Gantefoer who is substituting for Minister McMorris, and a number of officials from the Ministry of Health. I would ask the minister to introduce the officials he has here with them, and we will start the consideration of the Bill then.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I wish to apologize on behalf of Minister McMorris for his inability to attend. He experienced a death in his family, and that's the reason for his absence. As his deputy, I am trying to fill in, though inadequately. But I will do my very best so that the committee can receive the answers that they require for the matter before the committee.

Joining us today from the Ministry of Health, to my left is Max Hendricks, the assistant deputy minister — now this is sort of new for me — Ron Knaus, the executive director.

**A Member:** — He's not here.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — He's not here? Okay, new list. Sandra Cripps, the director of workforce planning branch; Kim Samoila, a senior policy analyst in the workforce planning branch; Allan Laird, the legislative analyst, policy and planning branch; and Lauren Black, the assistant to the deputy minister. And from my office, Krista Baker who is here as well, and Jacquie Messer-Lepage is here as well from the Ministry of Health.

I have a opening statement that was prepared for Minister McMorris, and if we can put that on the record, it would be appreciated before we open the floor for questions.

This Act was introduced to remove a restriction in the way the

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan is allowed to conduct routine investigations in the quality of care issues, including patient deaths. In particular this Bill will allow the College to release information about these investigations to external stakeholders. This would include health regions and other stakeholders who are investigating the same or a similar matter.

The amendment also allows the College to share this information with the Minister of Health where it believes that providing information is likely to improve health care delivery in Saskatchewan. This proposed amendment applies only to investigations and study issues related to patient care, including patient deaths.

It is important to note that this amendment does not apply to investigations connected to physician discipline or competence. We have discussed this amendment with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, the regulatory body which requested this amendment to the Act. We've also consulted with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists, representatives from the regional health authorities, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. All these groups support the change.

The amendment will be beneficial in a number of ways. First by permitting the College to share information about routine investigations with appropriate groups, this amendment will help to ensure optimal quality of care for Saskatchewan patients. It'll also help to encourage co-operation in investigations and reduce redundancies. Physicians are a vital part of health care in this province, so high quality care they provide must be supported.

Thank you. We stand ready to answer questions.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — When I asked the stakeholders, the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] and the college to explain to me how they interpreted the changes — I understand the college asked for them — I didn't get the same exact understanding as what I have heard. And your statement is pretty much what Minister McMorris's second reading was. And that's what I understood it to be, was that there was no ability in the changes in the Act to involve a doctor or his or her name if it was a disciplinary action. And yet I think some of the stakeholders understand that that is so, and that is allowed by this Act. Can you tell me if you've heard that?

**Mr. Hendricks:** — The provisions in the amendments in the Act actually do not apply to investigations related to competence or discipline as far as we understand.

**Ms. Junor:** — That's interesting because it's the SMA that thinks it does.

**Mr. Hendricks:** — According to the college and to our drafters, it doesn't apply to those situations. And the SMA was fully consulted on these changes and they supported them. So I'm not sure why that difference of opinion exists.

**Ms. Junor:** — I don't think they don't support it. I think they just, from the talk I had, they understand that it does apply and reach into the discipline area. And my reading of it had . . . that's what I thought too — that it did not.

So say in a patient's death, investigating a patient's death, is the doctor's name then never used? If a patient's death is due to some misconduct or some malpractice, is the doctor's name never used in that investigation of the patient's death?

**Mr. Hendricks:** — Not as far as I'm aware of. It's related to competence. But obviously if the issue came up as part of a malpractice or in the courts, then the physician's name would be released. But directly related to competence or discipline, the name wouldn't be released.

**Ms. Junor:** — So then explain to me why the college wanted the change — the words investigating and studying to be changed to reviewing. Why was their reasoning?

**Mr. Hendricks:** — I think that they just wanted the ability when reviewing a death or reviewing a situation, they wanted the ability to be able to advise health regions or other stakeholders that held an interest where public health might be at risk to, I guess, improve the safety to the public. So it's just a subtle word change in the Act.

**Ms. Junor:** — So you answered the question about . . . Does this apply then — because you consulted with the SRNA [Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association] and the College of Pharmacists — how do you think it applies to them? Why were they consulted?

**Mr. Hendricks:** — It's typical in these situations that we consult fairly broadly when we're making an amendment to an Act to make sure that any other stakeholders might not or don't have a concern that we might not have identified. So obviously the College of Physicians and Surgeons wouldn't be able to disclose the name of a nurse or somebody else that was involved, but we normally consult.

**Ms. Junor:** — So these changes to this Act, will they prompt changes to other professionals to have Acts that govern their practice?

**Mr. Hendricks:** — Not that I'm aware of. This change was requested by the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and we haven't had that same input from other regulatory agencies. So nothing that I'm aware of.

**Ms. Junor:** — Has anybody else made this change either in *The Registered Nurses Act*, the pharmacy, the new paramedics Act? How did it read?

**Mr. Hendricks:** — Just give us a second.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — I wonder if I could ask Ms. Cripps to answer that directly.

**Ms. Cripps:** — Sure. The legislation that we're making reference to with the College of Physicians and Surgeons isn't template legislation, and the other Act you made reference to is based on template legislation, and it wouldn't necessarily have

that level of detail with regards to investigations. That's how it would be different.

**Ms. Junor:** — So does this open up the ability of those other professions to ask for this same change to share their information, or do you see that they would want this?

**Ms. Cripps:** — With regards to your question, they wouldn't have the need to make the request of a similar nature.

**Ms. Junor:** — So if the SRNA is investigating an incident that a nurse is involved in, can they share that information with the district who is also doing the same kind of investigation to maybe the same incidents? Can they do that now under existing legislation . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . How does the identity and how does the privacy and confidentiality of a nurse get protected then with that, like with HIPA [*The Health Information Protection Act*] applying?

**Ms. Cripps:** — It would still supersede the investigation. HIPA would still have to be followed for sure.

**Ms. Junor:** — And what would the interest be of . . . I gather the college regulating midwives still?

**Ms. Cripps:** — Yes. No, the ministry has a College of Midwives now.

**Ms. Junor:** — So it's a transition thing still in place, right? The College of Physicians and Surgeons no longer has to regulate paramedics though because their Act was proclaimed?

**Ms. Cripps:** — The ministry regulated the paramedics.

**Ms. Junor:** — What role did the college have in the paramedics? What were they doing? They seemed to feel when they talked to me that they had a role.

**Mr. Hendricks:** — The Act only talks to podiatric surgery and to physicians, which are the two that it sort of oversees.

**Ms. Junor:** — I'm talking about the paramedics.

**Mr. Hendricks:** — It didn't mention the paramedics.

**Ms. Junor:** — So until the Act was proclaimed for *The Paramedics Act*, then the department was regulating them, not the college?

**Ms. Cripps:** — That's correct.

**Ms. Junor:** — Okay. I don't have any more questions.

**The Chair:** — Are there any other questions for the minister and his officials? Seeing none, we will proceed with voting the Bill. We have before us Bill No. 53, *An Act to Amend the Medical Professions Act, 1981*. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 53, *The Medical Professions Amendment Act, 2008*. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — I would ask a member to move that we report the Bill without amendment. Mr. Allchurch so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. I'd like to thank the minister and the officials for appearing before the committee, and we can excuse the minister and his officials. If the minister has a few comments before he leaves, he's certainly welcome to make those comments now.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of Minister McMorris, I'd like to thank the committee for their questions and for your indulgence in allowing me to sit in, in his stead so that this important Bill can be considered and move forward. So thank you very much. And to the officials for their very knowledgeable and competent answers, thank you very much, it makes it easy.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Ms. Junor.

**Ms. Junor:** — I too would like to thank the minister and the officials for coming and presenting and answering the questions that I had. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — Committee members, I believe we're at the stage where we have a draft report for your consideration. It is a duty of the committee to report our work to the Assembly. I believe the Clerk has distributed the report. Are there any questions or comments regarding our report? Seeing none, I would ask a member to move the following motion:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

Ms. Eagles so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried.

This is the last committee meeting of the Human Services for this fall session. I'd like to thank the committee members for their co-operation. I believe the citizens of the province were once again well served by this committee. And we'd like to wish all committee members a joyful holiday season. The committee stands . . . Oh we need a . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, I'm advised by our Clerk that we need a motion to . . . Ms. Junor moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 16:16.]