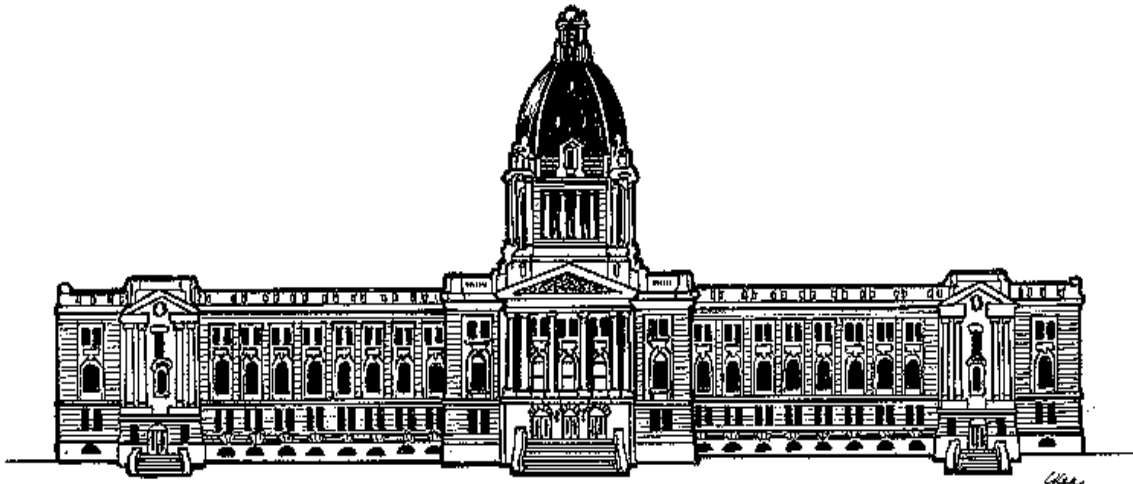




STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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Saskatoon Sutherland

Ms. Laura Ross
Regina Qu'Appelle Valley

[The committee met at 18:48.]

The Chair: — Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Human Services. My name is Delbert Kirsch, and I'm Chair of this committee. With us tonight is Mr. Mark Docherty, Mr. Herb Cox, Mr. Paul Merriman, Ms. Laura Ross, and also, from the opposition side, is Mr. David Forbes.

We have one item to table. It's HUS 7/27, Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, responses to questions raised at the May 7th, 2012 meeting of the committee regarding updated guidelines on the management of asbestos, dated May 16th, 2012, distributed to committee members on May 23rd, 2012.

I would like to advise the committee that, pursuant to rule 146(1), the following supplementary estimate was deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services on November 27th, 2012: vote 20, Labour Relations and Workplace Safety. This evening we will be considering the supplementary estimates for Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — November
Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Vote 20**

Subvote (LR01)

The Chair: — We now begin our considerations of vote 20, Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, central management and services (LR01).

Minister Morgan is here with his officials. Mr. Minister, please introduce your officials and if you have any opening comments.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and members of the committee, for the opportunity to participate in this discussion of supplementary spending estimates.

Before I provide details about this investment in *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, I would like to introduce officials from the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety. They include, to my left, Mike Carr, deputy minister; and to my right, Laurier Donais, executive director, central services. In the back is Glennis Bihun, executive director of occupational health and safety; Daniel Parrott, director of labour standards; and also sitting to my left is Pat Parenteau, director of policy.

Mr. Chair, this is a request for committee approval for an additional \$525,000 as a result of the labour legislation review and consultations which we anticipate will cost approximately \$700,000. These costs were partially offset by expense management initiatives within the ministry, including vacancy management and IT [information technology] funding that will not be spent this year which totals \$175,000.

Saskatchewan's labour legislation has a significant impact on most people in the province but our legislation was outdated

and needed to be fixed. We decided to undertake this important comprehensive review of the labour legislation, knowing that modernized labour legislation would help protect workers and promote growth in Saskatchewan.

The last comprehensive review was in the early 1990s. Our laws need to be responsive and relevant to Saskatchewan citizens so that they are easy to use and understand and meet the evolving needs of workplaces. We needed to modernize our legislation to reflect best practices and ensure that we balance the needs of workers and employers in our province.

Saskatchewan workers deserve to be treated fairly and respectfully in relationships with employers and the unions that may represent them. We started out this spring with a timeline that we knew was ambitious. We wanted to make sure that we completed a comprehensive consultation process because we felt it was important to ensure that all interested stakeholders had the opportunity to provide input. Our goal was to get input from stakeholders within a 90-day consultation period. The ministry in fact received in excess of 3,800 submissions by July 31st which we believe indicates that the time period was both appropriate and sufficient. The cost for advertising *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* consultation process was just over \$90,000 and we believe that this is money well spent.

We know that stakeholder feedback and the input of the ministry's advisory committee was invaluable in determining the scope and content of the legislation. We also incurred some costs for three additional policy analysts, a communications person, and a consultant for development of the legislation. We felt that it was important to have enough resources available to do the best work possible in drafting this legislation. I know our ministry staff spent many hours this fall to ensure the resulting legislation is comprehensive, fair, balanced, and informed by feedback from stakeholders and subject matter experts on the ministry's advisory committee. I would like to thank everyone for their hard work.

I would like to conclude by saying that this afternoon we were very pleased to introduce *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. We believe that this is an important piece of legislation that will help to attract new investment and encourage skilled workers to make Saskatchewan home, ensuring that we can sustain growth and prosperity in the province.

The Saskatchewan Employment Act will also clarify rights and responsibilities of Saskatchewan employers, employees, and the unions that represent them. We anticipate some further costs in promoting this new legislation which clarifies the rights and responsibilities of Saskatchewan employers, employees, and their unions. We feel it is imperative that we put the safety and interests of working people first. That is why we are asking you to support this sound investment in Saskatchewan's labour laws and the hard-working people of Saskatchewan.

On that note I welcome questions from committee members on this item.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would ask that when your people first speak on answering questions that they use their name so that Hansard has an accurate record. Mr. Forbes,

the floor is yours.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, and I appreciate the opportunity to ask some questions about the budget and the supplementary estimates that are before us. And there's quite a few questions because we do obviously have some questions and we've had many around the consultation process, and so . . . But we'll start. I appreciate . . . So the total global budget for this initiative, 700,000 from the beginning until March 31st. Or is that going into the next budget cycle? Are you setting money aside from that or will we see an additional amount in the next 2013-14 budget year?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I think that maybe some additional money spent prior to the end of this fiscal year that we're not certain of because we had indicated earlier today that we wanted to do a further round of consultations, which means sending out letters and asking for submissions. So depending on what work is generated from that, there may be some additional expenditure this year. But the bill is drafted and it's whether there's any significant number of House amendments to be made. So I can't speak to what that might be.

Following the end of this fiscal year, it's a possibility there may be some additional funds that would be spent in the next budget cycle, although I would expect that by March 31st we would know pretty much where we're going to be.

Now what's the unknown at this point in time is the impact of the Court of Appeal ruling and what happens with essential services. I think I'd indicated to people that we have a direction of where we might like to go, but the scope or the changes of that may well depend on what the Court of Appeal rules.

Mr. Forbes: — What I'm interested in is the fact that while the bill's before the House . . . And we know that in fact in many ways it's sort of like the tip of the iceberg. The previous bills all added up are like some 250-odd pages, but the related regulations I think were in excess of 500 pages. And so many of those will have to be reviewed I assume because of new directions within the bill. And so are you hoping to even have the regulations, any new changes to the regulations done by March 1st and in the House for the spring sitting?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Well as you're aware, the regulations don't have to be passed in the Chamber, but I think we would want to have a fairly rigorous consultation process. If it's a matter of transplanting a regulation from the existing legislation over and just changing fine amounts in the process for appeals, that won't be complex, but there may be some that would create some additional work.

We'd indicated to some of the small unions that we may want to do regulations that would change how they would file their audited financial statements. I think what we'd indicated to them was, for very small collective units with four, six, or eight members, that you may exempt them and then have the parent union file it. So I think that's the type of drafting of regulations.

But we want to make sure that we do a careful consultation on that. So if your question is regarding costs, I would expect that there would be some. Hopefully that will be done through the advisory committee meetings.

Mr. Forbes: — And I'm thinking, and I'm just going to use this as one example, from the briefing that we received this morning around prepaid cards. And the actual reference to that is by "specified means" — that's I think if I'm quoting the Act correctly. So it obviously is a regulation that needs to be developed. And I'm not sure if it's in the intention of the government to actually tie up that loose end fairly quickly or wait until it's actually an issue about seeing in the next year or two that there is a call for other means of paying.

[19:00]

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I think the term in the Act is "prescribed means" rather than "specified means." But the purpose for putting it in was so that we would have the flexibility to maintain best practices with how people are paid. It used to be, once upon a time, everybody received a pay packet with cash in it. Then it went so everybody received a cheque. Then it moved on to direct deposit. And I think as long as that is determined to be best practices, we wouldn't do anything with it.

But we are aware that there are situations in remote locations in the province where there may not be a bank that's readily available, or there may be workers that do not have a bank account, that they're not able to get a bank account or for whatever reason don't bank. So with those workers, we would like to have the option of giving them a prepaid debit card because what was happening is those people would get a cheque; they would go to a payday lender and pay 5, 10, or 15 per cent to get the cheque cashed. We think a cheaper option and better protection for them — less likely to lose it, less likely to have the other problems — would be to have the prepaid card. They would go and use it, and we would, you know, prescribe a regulation as to that it would have to be done through one of the chartered banks. The worker would have either no fees or negligible fees on it. And the purpose of it is to protect workers from other costs that they wouldn't have.

So it may take some time to do it, but I don't think the process for that would be terribly complex. Now there may be other technologies that, you know, may be considered at some point, but that's the one that we would think is worth consideration.

Mr. Forbes: — Let's get back to the supplementary estimates at hand. So I'm curious. You've said that advertising was 90. Of this \$700,000 budget, advertising was 90,000. How much was the consultant's fees?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'll let Mr. Donais answer the specifics of . . .

Mr. Donais: — Sure. Laurier Donais. We've spent about 180,000 for the consultant. Now I guess what we need to include in there yet will be some bills, some cleanup bills likely in November here. So that's to the end of November that is what we've spent, about 180,000.

Mr. Forbes: — And who is this consultant?

Mr. Donais: — Garry Moran.

Mr. Forbes: — And he is from where, or who is he?

Mr. Donais: — He's actually retired. He was a lawyer with the Ministry of Justice in their legislative area, and he's now retired. And so we brought him in to help with the development of the legislation.

Mr. Forbes: — And you had three policy analysts and a communications person internal. So what would be the total cost of their wages?

Mr. Donais: — We estimated about 180,000.

Mr. Forbes: — And were there any drafting charges? I don't know how you do this work with Justice. I know when we talked about this on May 7th, this was one thing that the minister alluded to that there may be costs involved in drafting from Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Moran's expenses would relate to drafting.

Mr. Forbes: — Yes. Okay, so there was no drafting . . . or nothing from Justice?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The officials within Justice reviewed all of the legislation, both through it from a constitutional perspective and how it fit with our other legislation. It was their recommendation to use Garry Moran because he was one of their workers. I've never met Mr. Moran, but they said that would be the best tie that they had.

But I know that the people within the Ministry of Justice would have spent a fair amount of time reviewing, working with, and either consulting with Mr. Moran or directly with the officials within the ministry. But there wouldn't have been any additional time or expenses; it would have been absorbed as part of their ordinary operations.

Mr. Forbes: — So that's zero then for Justice and the . . . [inaudible] . . . cost then.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — They certainly spent time, but it was a zero cost.

Mr. Forbes: — And what about the meeting? I mean, I appreciate the advisory committee that you had. I think that's a good point, but it does cost money. And I've been giving those guys the gears that their sandwiches must have been pretty expensive.

Mr. Donais: — Yes. Cost of the advisory committee to date were about \$13,700. And so there was four main areas. There was honorariums for about 1,650 and then travel and accommodations for the members was about 4,920. And then meals for the actual meetings was another \$4,000. And then there were some books that were purchased to provide to the committee members as background material and that was about \$3,100.

Mr. Forbes: — Any overtime? I mean, you did have a crunch time for putting this all together for the existing staff.

Mr. Donais: — Yes, there is a little bit of overtime, about 3,000 for our administrative staff. The managers and the

out-of-scope folks, although they have put in tons of hours, of course they don't get the overtime for that. So that's about what we've incurred in cost, is about 3,000 for our administrative staff.

Mr. Forbes: — Do they earn days in lieu or something? Will they get some recognition for this?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — No, they don't earn days in lieu. The admin staff would have put time in for overtime. The staff that worked at developing that, we will likely host something for them sometime between now and Christmas because a lot of them spent a lot of time on weekends working so they had uninterrupted blocks of time to do the writing and the comparisons and interprovincial things. I won't speak for Pat, but I know that I could phone at any time on the weekend and she was working.

Mr. Forbes: — It's a huge project, and so clearly they were and that's certainly appreciated. So it seems like so far we've probably spent about 500,000. Am I adding this up quickly and correct?

Mr. Donais: — 470,000.

Mr. Forbes: — Four hundred and seventy. So you're anticipating the next part will take about 230,000? And what would that be spent on?

Mr. Donais: — Primarily communications. So you know, it'll be the rollout of the bill, you know, preparing some information materials to go on the Internet. I think there's some information booklets or information pop-up materials, you know, that will go on the Internet. So that'll be about 100,000 of that. And then the remainder of course will be the continuation of the term policy analyst that we have to continue to do, you know, some of the detailed research work and work on some of the regulations.

Mr. Forbes: — In terms of the communications, I'm curious. You had put out a booklet, a consultation booklet in May that had 180-some questions. And are you going to have a final response to that booklet? Because I really do think that people have a lot of questions about here was this book with a lot of questions — right or wrong, not to debate any of those questions — but people want to know. So where does the minister or the government land in terms of that question?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — That's a good question. We had initially talked about doing a written response to the information we had received during the submissions and then going ahead with the drafting after that. The volume of the responses was gratifying, and it has made it so that it was impossible to try and put something that would have been meaningful, that would be able to identify all of the different types of responses. So we felt the best response that we could do would be the bill itself and the accompanying PowerPoint. You'd have that as well from the tech briefing earlier today. So that's what we've provided, is both the PowerPoint, which is a fairly good summary of the changes or the things that have taken place, as well as the bill.

We have also, you know, as I'd indicated, going forward we want to have a further round of consultations so people can

react or respond to the specifics that are in the bill. So those letters will likely go out within the next 24 hours, I'm expecting, because we're once again in a 90-day time period. The good thing is that it's not nearly as broad a thing so we're not looking for the detailed analysis. Some of the submissions were incredibly detailed, provided case law, and were really well done, so I commend everybody that provided each one. But in this case we're expecting it to be more succinct, and people will say, well I don't like this or this is a problem I have or there may be an unexpected consequence or what do you mean by this? So we'll have a few advisory committee meetings and then we'll go on from there.

My intention is as well, will be to continue the advisory committee past the finalizing of the bill in the spring session. The information that went back and forth I think was invaluable to the ministry and to me as well. There was always good and meaningful discussion, and it's a process I'd like to continue with the development of the regulations and any other labour relations issue that comes up. So it would be my intention to include that in our budget submission on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Forbes: — So you're sending out a letter fairly quickly. Are you including any kind of background material, or just referencing in the letter that the bill is on the website?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — It will direct people to the website so that they would be able to, on the website, download the PDFs [portable document format] of the PowerPoint and also the bill itself.

Mr. Forbes: — Now are you intending to provide any sort of side-by-side analysis? I'm thinking, for example, labour standards is now employment standards; what was in the old legislation, what's in the current bill so people can at least see what's missing.

I know for example when we today asked about, or we looked at the minimum wage aspect of the bill, it's different. And I know one of the parts of the legislation is it's supposed to be more clear, easier to read. But when I look at the minimum wage and I see the part — I think it's 16.2 or something — and then there's a reference later to the ability to make regulations regarding that, but there was nothing that I could see or find that actually referred to consumer price index or indexing.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — That portion of it will be in the regulation and maybe some explanatory notes provided at that point in time. But the existing legislation uses the same audit and doesn't specify what it is. It talks about the Minimum Wage Board, how the board is constituted, but doesn't talk about what it is or anything else. So that's something that will properly be in the regs.

Mr. Forbes: — That's what I'm thinking. If there was some way to easily analyze this without sort of tripping over and making a mistake accidentally because it's just in a different section and we don't know where to look for it. And I'm just using that as an example, but I think that . . . So there is a review, part two, and it's going to happen within the next 24 hours, and it's going to be another 90-day window and the close is March 1st. And it's about the specifics in the bill.

And I think, you know, on one hand, it was impressive to get 3,800 responses. But we know that more than one group actually knew how to send a lot of responses that were very similar, and more than one group did that. You know, I'm talking specifically about the fact sheets that essentially were the same, but they were signed, so legitimate responses. I don't know how you felt about that, and there was more than one group that did that, whether that's a legitimate way or you feel that's quite okay.

And if you're inviting more of that, maybe this time you might have 5 or 6,000. And of that you would have, you know, 4,500 faxes come in because people now say that's the way to get the attention of the minister, by having a large number of faxes. Are you thinking about how you might screen this in a different way than before?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Last time we'd indicated that we weren't going to say, this is a vote so that the most number of votes is going to carry anything. But we did certainly respect the fact the more people that fill out a card, it was a sign that they were interested, had concerns, expressed their concerns. And although they may have used a form note to do it, we respect and want to value that input. And so, you know, we were able to say, oh yes, we had several hundred of these or so many of these or that. So it was an indication where there was some support for the position that was expressed in it.

But I think it's hard to put a numerical valuation on it. And I'd indicated to some members of the union, if it becomes straight down to a battle of numbers, we appreciate you can mobilize your members and just flood the thing with that. And I didn't encourage them to do it. I said, you know, we would rather have whoever wants to write on whatever basis, feel free to. But you know, a meaningful submission that's got some detail, some depth to it is certainly something that is of greater value as far as understanding or putting forward a position. But on the other hand, a pile of postcard-type ones that advocate a position as well, well that has to be considered.

Mr. Forbes: — Now I am wondering, and we have talked about this because some of this gets to be very technical, have you considered at all some sort of symposium or some sort of in-depth workshop on this piece of legislation, that if people wanted to come, you know, like a two- or three-day workshop where you can actually go through it line by line? Or are we leaving this totally up to the stakeholders?

Because I think that it's a huge piece of legislation. And I know that while it's really important and you have, I think, a very good advisory committee — I have no problem with the folks that are on it; they represent a wide range of people, and I think it was chosen wisely — but it's critical that this is really, when you're putting it together in one piece like this that it's hard to pull it back again. And so we've got to get it right. And the unintended consequences, we'll be very careful.

So that's what I'm saying. You know, there may be academics who are interested in going through this line by line. There may be activists who don't belong to a large stakeholder group but obviously have been, you know, actively engaged in — I'm thinking labour standards particularly — who might say, this is what I'm really looking for. I want an opportunity to sink my

teeth into this. And they're not given it because it's just a simple write-in, and it could be hit and miss because they don't have the expertise in the room.

[19:15]

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I would not want to have a training session set up for legislation that might be changed. There may be opportunities or a need to do some kind of an informational process once the bill is passed or the regulations are further down. If there is people, if people have a desire to get more in-depth information or want to have some dialogue, they're certainly welcome to contact the ministry and we can put them in touch with one of the officials that would be able to explain or give them a direction of where to go on it.

One of the goals in producing this was that we would try and have everything in one piece of legislation. There is a fairly comprehensive index at the front of the piece, and that piece should be able to direct people where they need to go within the bill. And you were right. The information regarding how minimum wage wasn't there. And maybe when, you know, if there's at some point when everything is . . . [inaudible] . . . you know, we'd had something of reference made somewhere that where it's found in the regulations.

Mr. Forbes: — Now the other thing in terms of the consultations that we just found, and part of this is when you're dealing with specific groups and whether that's students, recent immigrants for sure. And the government has introduced new legislation about that. And actually I think there is a reference to labour standards in that bill. I don't think they reference employment standards, so I don't know if we'll have a House amendment to that shortly.

So there's groups like recent immigrants. There's groups like seniors, particularly now, that are coming back into the workforce more than ever. And in fact I know the Council on Aging in Saskatoon talks about employment as an issue. Students is another group. And I could think of several groups who don't have the capacity really to give feedback on legislation.

(a) They may not be aware of it. And even if they are aware of it, they go, I don't know what to make of this. I'm not a lawyer or anything like that. So I'm wondering how will you reach out to those groups. We know that many of the groups have been watching very close and involved to have a pretty good handle on how to make sense of this, but there's significant groups out there who aren't aware or are curious about what's going to happen.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The people, you know, they'll have access to the website. The information is on the website. And if it appears there is recurring questions or something, we'll try and address it through the website or by providing literature as we go along. The time to go through a public education process is after something is passed where you're trying to develop something for those that use it. This is a consultation process where we're looking at how the legislation should appear in its final stages. So the ones that will be looking at it now are going to be the people that are working with organized labour or people that are working within the labour standards or

employment standards as it now is. And those are the ones, they'll have a higher starting point for sophistication and likely will not, you know . . . will be able to phrase their questions or give us their input.

You'd referenced the retired person coming in back into the workforce. Well I think their concerns will likely be addressed by the final legislation. And if they choose to participate in the consultation process, well that would be wonderful as well. But I think by going to the website, looking at the legislation, looking at the PowerPoint, taking a bit of time with it, they'll be able to get their questions answered or alternatively be able to make a comment on that.

Mr. Forbes: — Now it is interesting, the whole issue around seniors and seniors coming back into the workplace. And I'm curious. One of the points that was made today is about specifically — and I don't have the PowerPoint in front of me — but referring to *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*, that you can no longer discriminate on any other grounds in that. And age is a very interesting part of that because we've removed some of the protections around age. I don't know if there's any intention. This may be a flag in terms of especially the consultations, the communications.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm not sure where you're indicating there was anything removed.

Mr. Forbes: — Well no, what was removed was . . . or actually added in. It was added in that now you cannot discriminate on other, on prohibited grounds. Before it was just on gender that you could discriminate.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I think that's a good example of how the legislation has become simplified and that people don't need to worry about it. Where the Act used to just say gender, there was other types of discrimination where an individual would have to go to the Human Rights Commission to try and seek redress there. But by reference incorporating everything that's prohibited in the Human Rights Code, and then if more things are added over time or through jurisprudence there, it's automatically included here. This legislation doesn't need to be updated and a person doesn't need to ask the question, well is that covered by human rights or is that covered by the employment Act? They're the same. They're consistent, and where one changes, it flows into the other. So the rationale is that that will or should make life easier for people.

Mr. Forbes: — Now I just have a few more questions, but this is one I think is important because it ties into a centre part of it. And you've added essentially what the \$700,000 is going to be used for in the budget for this. So the essential services, all the work that's being done around that, the court costs, all of those kind of costs are not being part of the labour review project. They're two separate issues.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — That's correct. If your question is legal costs regarding the appeal or the court challenge included as part of this, they're aren't. They're paid for through Justice.

Mr. Forbes: — But then the drafting of the essential services, when that comes forward, that will have to be part of this.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Yes. And depending on the timeline when that comes or the nature of that, it may be possible that it's within the capability for timeline of the officials at Justice, or it's possible we may have to use Mr. Moran or somebody's services outside. It's a straight matter of time involvement.

The officials at the Ministry of Justice are exceptionally competent, and I have a high level of comfort using them because they are aware of all the other pieces of legislation and how things interrelate. So that was one of the benefits of having a retired lawyer from there doing it, was that that individual had the same competencies or the same level of understanding. He didn't have to do the extra research. So hopefully we'd either have the same individual or possibly, depending on where we would go, people within the Ministry of Justice.

Mr. Forbes: — Now as part of the rollout of this, and the bill will come into force by proclamation I understand, and so that does it mean then that because we don't know when the essential services will be resolved, so parts of the bill will be proclaimed before other parts?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — It's a possibility to proclaim by parts or by sections. The section that deals with essential services in this bill is really essentially a placeholder. So you know, it's of no practical application at the present time. The current Bill 5 continues to be in force either until the date that the Court of Queen's Bench said it would expire by or until the Court of Appeal, if they choose to extend it further.

Mr. Forbes: — So then when you had Bill 23 before the House and was passed, there was a series of workshops or sessions that happened over the summer to explain what the implications were, and then it was proclaimed and came into force just a few weeks ago actually I think. Is that the same sort of plan with this, and then will there be additional costs with that?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I think there is with any new piece of legislation. We would try and include that in the budget cycle. But I think when you have a new piece of legislation, you need to do staff training and public awareness and public training. So I don't know what those costs would be. I don't know whether Laurier is able to speculate on what they would be, but there would certainly be some costs as there would with any new piece of significant legislation or updating.

Mr. Donais: — We haven't scoped any of that information out as yet.

Mr. Forbes: — You have scoped out the communications plan, that strategy?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Yes. That's because it takes place between now and the next 90 days, so we have an understanding of where we're at on that. But when the bill is passed and we're dealing with regulations and whatever, we're dealing with something that's somewhat further down the road and don't have a specific . . .

Mr. Forbes: — So what will the \$100,000 be doing in the next 90 days?

Mr. Donais: — It will be spent on things like an information

tool kit. You know, it will also be spent on some advertising, so print ads and radio ads, just I think making people aware of the new legislation and sort of what's contained in it, you know. So basically the rollout of the legislation. And then another piece will be just developing some of the pop-up information on the website or on the bill itself.

Mr. Forbes: — So we'll see a different type of thing on the website. We'll see the bill, an invitation probably to send in what your thoughts are, but then some specific things about . . . So when you say pop-ups, what do you mean by that?

Mr. Donais: — I think what we're anticipating there is some additional interpretation maybe of certain sections and certain pieces, just to provide, you know . . . I mean the bill is obviously in legal terms and maybe to provide some additional information sort of in layman's terms and that.

Mr. Forbes: — Well it's going to be an interesting next 90 days. And of course we go into the holiday month for the first part of it, and we'll see what happens with January and February. I think it will be . . . I am curious at the end. I guess this will be my concluding remarks, that when we were asking about this on May 7th, there was sort of, we didn't get the kind of answers we were looking for in terms of the costs. And I looked back to see what my quotes were of you and of the further . . . So I'm curious to know how did this, you know, in terms of the Throne Speech, the budget, how did this come about in terms of spending or making for it a plan of \$700,000? When was that budget, when did that come about?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — You know, I don't think we started with a specific budget as we went into it. We knew those were the things that we had to do. We were getting advice from the constitutional law section as to the things we needed to do by way of consultation. We knew we were receiving information from the advisory committee and what we needed to do by way of policy. So we were trying to sort of manage it as it came along. As I'd indicated, you know, we tried to absorb as much as we can. It was apparent we weren't, we weren't going to be in a . . . I'm certain, you know, the answer that I gave at the time was we hoped to absorb it but if we didn't, we would have additional expenses.

So you know, I can't say with certainty what it might be going forward, but I can say that the officials are conscientious and diligent with the use. They're aware it's taxpayer dollars. I think you quite rightly make the point that people should know about it, should understand it, so we need to do things to try and provide that. We agree with you on that. So we'll do that.

With regard to the submissions, we would encourage your caucus to make a submission. You did before. And I certainly welcome your comments and you may rest assured, I will read both of them and will be quoting them back. Pardon my humour. So we look forward to input from everybody that's there, and whether it comes from your caucus, your membership, we need to hear from people wherever they are, wherever they work, or wherever they fit within our labour environment in the province. We have good people in the province and we want their participation in this. It's significant and it's worthwhile and it's important, and we thank them.

[19:30]

Mr. Forbes: — Well and I have to say in advance, I don't think our submission made it up on the website. It did? Eventually? I was looking for it.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — You mentioned it once before. We checked and made sure it was up.

Mr. Forbes: — Great. I appreciate that. I do want to advocate, I do think that it's very important to get the public point of view. And not everyone can send in and so I think this is a weakness in the plan. I would hope that you might . . . Because you have, you know, you just talked about how you've changed a budget or, you know, thought about what you need to do. And if there's ways of getting out there and to talk to the public, I just think that it's so important. It's really important as well to develop that capacity. I don't agree with the minister about the fact that it's a training after the fact. I think that people want to be engaged and they can support what they understand, but if they don't understand it then they have a lot of questions. And sometimes their questions are almost missed questions because they are not on the mark and they feel kind of sheepish about asking the question that is easily understood, but they just were missing it by just a little bit because of . . . You know, we're not all experts in labour standards, and I find myself in that boat quite often where I have to refer back to the legislation.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Your point is well taken. We will try and do everything we can to ensure that we are careful stewards of the public money but we also realize that we have an obligation to provide information to the public. And we are aware there may be a cost to it, but your point's taken.

Mr. Forbes: — Well with that, Mr. Chair, thank you for the opportunity and thanks to the people who come out and share their information. I do appreciate the information, the frankness and fullness of the answers. Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you. If there are no further questions, we will go through with the vote.

Vote 20, Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, central management and services (LR01) in the amount of 525,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, vote 20, 525,000. I would now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2013, the following sums for Labour Relations and Workplace Safety in the amount of 525,000.

Mr. Merriman: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Merriman. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Committee members, you have before you a draft of the second report of the Standing Committee on Human Services. We require a member to move the following motion:

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

Mr. Docherty: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Docherty. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Before we adjourn I'd ask the minister if he has any closing remarks.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank all of the committee members and yourself and the staff that are here tonight from legislative services. But more specifically I'd like to thank all of the people that participated in the consultation process, the advisory committee, and all of the officials that gave up time on weekends. And I think it was well worthwhile. And a lot of them went way above and beyond, and we recognize it and we appreciate it. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. If there are no more comments, I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment.

Mr. Merriman: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Merriman has moved. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. This meeting is now adjourned. Thank you, one and all.

[The committee adjourned at 19:34.]