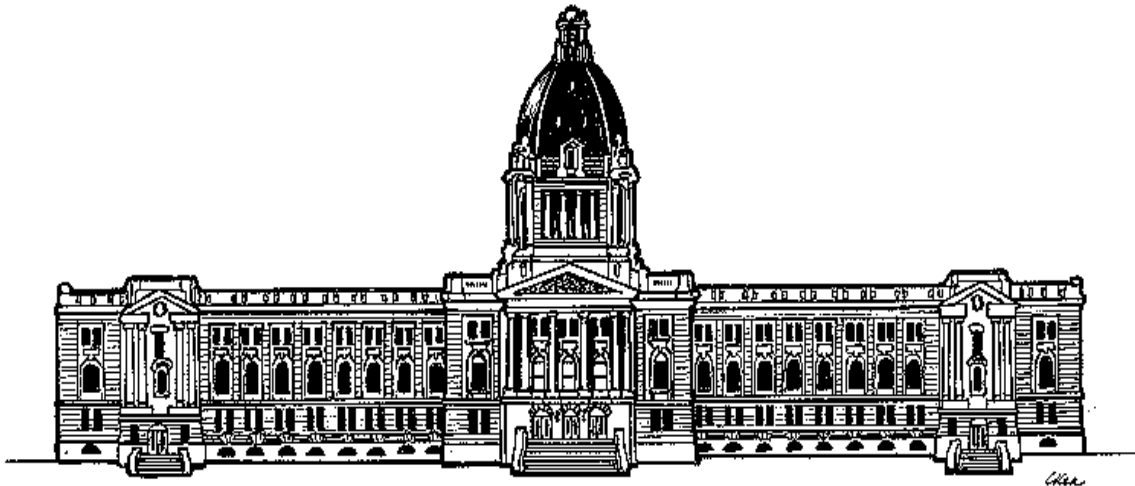




STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE**

Mr. Warren Michelson, Chair
Moose Jaw North

Mr. Frank Quennell, Deputy Chair
Saskatoon Meewasin

Mr. Greg Brkich
Arm River-Watrous

Mr. Michael Chisholm
Cut Knife-Turtleford

Mr. Wayne Elhard
Cypress Hills

Ms. Deb Higgins
Moose Jaw Wakamow

Hon. Laura Ross
Regina Qu'Appelle Valley

[The committee met at 18:59.]

The Chair: — Well thank you and good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Warren Michelson. I am the Chair of this committee, the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. And also on this committee is the members, Greg Brkich, Michael Chisholm, Wayne Elhard, and Laura Ross, Frank Quennell, and Deb Higgins.

So welcome, committee members. We're here tonight to discuss, to consider three Bills — Bill No. 153, 154, and 165. The Hon. Don Morgan is the minister for these Bills. And, Mr. Minister, we'd welcome you here and your officials, and if you'd like to introduce your officials and have any opening statements, you can make them then. Mr. Minister.

Bill No. 153 — *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010*

Clause 1

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. For purposes of discussion of the first two Bills, I'm proposing to just have the question-and-answer deal with both of them at the same time, if that's acceptable to the committee members.

I'm joined at the table tonight by Ken Acton, assistant deputy minister from the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, and Catherine Benning, senior Crown counsel, legislative services branch.

I'm pleased to present to the committee *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010* and *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act, 2010*. This Act will accomplish the following. It will repeal section 8.1 of the Act that established the civil division of the Provincial Court. It will allow Provincial Court judges from other provinces to be appointed as temporary judges in Saskatchewan when required to deal with a file where all Saskatchewan provincial judges are in a conflict or appear to be in a conflict position.

It will also reduce the waiting period for disability benefits for judges from one year to three months. This brings it so it is consistent with what happens with the rest of the civil service. It will also require the Judicial Council hearing committee to disclose their report following an investigation into a complaint concerning the conduct or capacity of a judge with some certain exceptions. It will also clarify how the Law Society of Saskatchewan appoints a replacement representative to the Provincial Court Judicial Council if the president of the Law Society is unable to attend. And it will consequently amend *The Small Claims Act, 1997* to allow justices of the peace to hear small claims matters.

Our government is committed to providing an efficient and effective justice system for the people of Saskatchewan. This Bill and the consequential amendments to *The Small Claims Act, 1997* focus on providing the court, through the powers granted to the chief judge, with flexibility to address the demands of the court as they change over time. We welcome your questions.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. We'll go into

questions. Mr. Quennell.

Mr. Quennell: — I think all my questions or my only question — whether I can keep it to one question or not, I don't know — surrounds the repeal of the section establishing the civil division. In my experience with the Provincial Court, I don't immediately jump to the conclusion that this came from the court unless there's been a real change in philosophy at the Provincial Court. And I'm wondering from where this initiative did come from and what's the motivation.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — It was with discussions with the officials and with the court. The court is accepting of the recommendation. I met with the chief judge earlier today. And the simple rationale is that it may be more cost-effective to have a Justice of the Peace hear a small claims matter. I mean ultimately the chief judge has the ability to schedule courts as she or he sees fit, and there are pretrial matters and a variety of other things that may effectively be heard by somebody other than a fully qualified small claims . . . or a Provincial Court judge.

Mr. Quennell: — In a matter of organization of the court, it would surprise me the chief judge wouldn't accept the decision of the legislature. But it doesn't sound like she initiated it. Now in response to the minister's answer, I understand the flexibility that's been given in the Bill for the chief judge to schedule a Justice of the Peace to hear small claims matters, and I understand the motivation behind that. But that doesn't require the repeal of the civil division, does it? That flexibility?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — It may be that you would not be required to. But the rationale by the draftspeople was that it was appropriate to not necessarily have . . . The rationale to have it was not strong in the first place. I mean not taking away anything from it.

Mr. Quennell: — So without requiring small claims matters to be heard by a Justice of the Peace, the government certainly would want to encourage that option to be exercised. And the civil division, the existence of the civil division, would send a different message than that.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I think the goal was to give the courts an option to make effective use of their resources.

Mr. Quennell: — I don't think I'm going to get very much further with that, Mr. Chair, than I already have. I guess the only other question I would have is in respect to the changes around revealing the report or making public the report of the Judicial Council following an investigation. Now it's previously legislation of this government to allow for that. This is an amendment of a recent change, is it not?

Ms. Benning: — This amendment was triggered by viewing the similar legislation from other provinces, and we had somewhat more restrictive release requirements as compared to other provinces in Canada. So what we took a look at was the amendments that were fairly recently made in BC [British Columbia], Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland which allowed the release of these reports in a greater spectrum of circumstances, and we made similar amendments.

Mr. Quennell: — And in those provinces they would have similar exceptions as set out in section 9 of the Bill?

Ms. Benning: — That's correct. Either that or else they left it entirely to the discretion of the Judicial Council. We enumerated some specific items which seemed appropriate, and then of course allowed the Judicial Council the discretion to accept it in other circumstances where it was deemed appropriate.

Mr. Quennell: — And just for greater clarity on my part, the provisions around the Law Society's representation on Judicial Council that foresees a benchers sitting on the Judicial Council for a year or two years or three years or more. Is that right?

Ms. Benning: — The amendment was requested by the Law Society, and they were concerned that with the current wording of the legislation that there would be, in most cases, a one-year term and that that was not consistent with the role and mandate of the Judicial Council. And they wanted to be able to have a more effective representation and to have a representative that was able to sit for more than one year.

Mr. Quennell: — I think those are all my questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Quennell. Is there any more questions or comments from any of the committee members? Seeing none, we will proceed to vote on the clauses. Clause 1, the short title. On Bill No. 153, clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 10 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts the following: Bill No. 153, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 153, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010* without amendment. Mr. Chisholm. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

Bill No. 154 — *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act, 2010/Loi de 2010 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010*

Clause 1

The Chair: — Next is Bill No. 154. Is there any other comments? Seeing none, we will proceed with the voting on

Bill No. 154. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[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 the following: Bill No. 154, *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act, 2010* along with the French title, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 154, *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act, 2010, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010* without amendment.

Mr. Elhard: — So moved.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you.

Bill No. 165 — *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011*

Clause 1

The Chair: — Next on the agenda tonight is Bill No. 165, *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011*. We will now consider clause 1, short title. Mr. Minister, as we change officials, Mr. Minister, if you have any opening remarks, you can introduce the officials and we will proceed. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm joined tonight by Ron Kruzeniski, Q.C. [Queen's Counsel], Public Guardian and Trustee for the province of Saskatchewan, and Maria Markatos, Crown counsel, legislative services branch.

I'm please to present to the committee *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act*. This Act sets out procedures and criteria for the appointment of a personal or property decision maker to assist adults who are unable to manage, who require assistance in managing their personal or financial affairs. The Act sets out the powers and duties of an individual appointed to act on behalf of vulnerable adults, to provide the most protection for those vulnerable adults.

The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011 will enhance the operation of the Act while continuing to ensure that vulnerable adults and their property are protected. The amendment Act adds a provision that will allow the court on application to recognize guardianship orders

made in other jurisdictions across Canada. The amendments will also protect adults by clarifying the inventory and accounting provisions to make it clear when and what a property decision maker is required to provide.

The timeline for filing an inventory will be reduced from six months to three months, as substantial damage can be caused in six months. The amendments specify that the annual accounting required by the Act must be in the prescribed form and be filed within three months of the anniversary of the appointment order. Finally, the amendments will require a final accounting within six months of the adult's death or the discharge or removal of the decision maker.

These amendments will grant the court the discretion to require that a temporary property guardian file a bond if the value of the estate exceeds a prescribed amount.

The amendments will also provide that a fee schedule may be established in the regulations. Once a fee schedule is established, it will act as a guide for the maximum amount of fees a decision maker can charge. If a decision maker would like to charge more than the amount set out in the fee schedule, he or she may still apply to the court to set the amount of fees.

A new provision will be added to the Act to allow the court to appoint an alternate decision maker at the time the original application is made. The alternate will be in a position to step in as a decision maker where the first decision maker is unable to act by notifying the court and the Public Guardian and Trustee but without a further court application.

The amendments will also specify that a property guardian can make payments for the maintenance, education, or benefit of the adult spouse or dependent children, including the property guardian if he or she is the adult spouse.

Finally the amendments will add a new provision that authorizes property decision makers to make gifts out of the adult's estate if the requirements set out in the Act and the regulations are met and the value of the gift does not exceed the amount prescribed. The Act is currently silent on the issue of gifts, and many property decision makers make gifts from the adult estate without any guidance on what is appropriate.

We welcome the committee's questions. Thank you.

[19:15]

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Questions? Mr. Quennell.

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again on the motivation or the initiation of the legislation, I'm assuming, because the Bill seems to address issues that would have arisen in the practice of guardianship and trusteeship in the province, that a lot of the initiatives sit on the Bill, the changes to the law, and the additions to the law come from the office of the public trustee and Public Guardian. Is that correct? Is that a valid assumption?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Well I will let both officials answer the question. I will start with Mr. Kruzeniski.

Mr. Kruzeniski: — Certainly a number of the provisions were requested or suggested by our office because over time we found that there would be something, you know, questionable or uncertain or maybe the time was too long or, for example, the Act was silent on requiring a final accounting when the property guardian was finished his or her job. Similarly people are required to file annual accountings, and we found, with no deadline in there, that it could go on a long time. And the problem is, as it goes on longer, you unfortunately become more suspicious that something is wrong.

So it was those types of examples where, as the opportunity arose to amend this Act, certainly our office made some suggestions and requests to the Ministry of Justice that they be considered.

Ms. Markatos: — And then around the same time that Ron made those requests, Alberta amended their Act. They enacted a new *Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act*. So we did review that extensively in considering provisions that we didn't have that Alberta had included in their new Act that might be beneficial for our province.

Mr. Quennell: — So there would be some similarities, I take it, between the Alberta legislation and this Bill.

Ms. Markatos: — There are several similarities between the new provisions that were added to the Bill. So the gifts provision, the foreign guardianship order recognition provision, those are included in Alberta's new Act.

Mr. Quennell: — There used to be, relatively recently I think, a rather active section of the Saskatchewan branch of the Canadian Bar Association in respect to this area of law, trust law. Were they consulted, or is the Law Society generally consulted on this Bill?

Ms. Markatos: — The Law Society was consulted, but the Canadian Bar Association was also consulted, generally through their legislative review group, and also the real property and wills south section was consulted. The real property wills and south section north doesn't exist anymore.

Mr. Quennell: — Okay, thank you for that. On the question of gifts, and the section sets out a number of conditions. The third of which is "the value of the gift not exceed the prescribed amount." Now that'll be an amount set out in regulations, and I appreciate the regulations probably aren't drafted. I know the minister has a different view of that now than he used to have. But what kind of a range would the government be looking at?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm waiting for you to offer me a gift, and I will consider that as a starting point. I think there'd probably be the need for some further appropriate consultation on that. I think what's contemplated would be the usual type of gifts where it would be a birthday or a special occasion type of gift and, you know, it would be ideally where it would vary depending on the size and the type of relationship, but it probably will end up with a fixed amount. I don't know whether the officials are able to give a more particular answer other than we want to make a careful choice.

Mr. Quennell: — You won't be waiting so long as for me to

give you a gift, Minister, I hope. The cut-off for different treatment of gifts to members of the Legislative Assembly I think is \$200. Would that be in the range, or would that be outside the ballpark? I guess is all I'm looking for a ballpark right now.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — What was your suggestion?

Mr. Quennell: — Two hundred dollars, just because that's something that members of the Legislative Assembly, I think, are familiar with out of the conflict of interest, yes, conflict of interest legislation and rules. Would that be in the ballpark or outside the ballpark? Is that in excess of kind of the numbers that you'd be thinking?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We haven't done the consultation, but my initial reaction, it would be probably be in the ballpark or exceed it. But I don't think using the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's ... the guidelines or the provisions there would be something that should a guiding source here. I mean those are different circumstances. I think what should sort of be the test might be, what does your aunt or your parent often give you as a Christmas gift or a birthday gift? That would be sort of the initial reaction you should have.

Mr. Quennell: — Two hundred dollars would be pretty much on the high end, I would think. So the ballpark may be something smaller than that.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Yes. And it may be that, you know, you would consider doing it as an aggregate or annual aggregate or, you know, something that you look at the total amount of gifts for a year or the total amount for a particular individual.

Mr. Quennell: — Well I think the clarification in the Bill and the tightening on the reporting and the accounting is very welcome. And I don't think I have any other questions, Mr. Chair, unless other members of the committee do.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Quennell. Any other questions or comments from the committee? Seeing none, we'll proceed to vote on the clauses. Clause 1, short title. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 20 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts the following: Bill No. 165, *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 165, *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011* without amendment. Ms. Ross. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officials, both for this Bill and the previous two Bills, for coming out and sharing their evening with us.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, thank you officials, and thank you to the committee. We have another Bill to consider. We will take a five-minute break just to change officials, and we will be right back.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

Bill No. 164 — *The Police Amendment Act, 2011*

Clause 1

The Chair: — Well thank you and welcome back, and we welcome Minister Huyghebaert. The last Bill that we have for tonight would be Bill No. 164, *The Police Amendment Act, 2011*. We will now consider Clause 1, the short title.

Mr. Minister, if you have any opening remarks and would like to introduce your officials, please proceed.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do have some opening remarks, but first I'd like to introduce the officials. On my left is Deputy Al Hilton. On my right is Rick Peach who's the director of strategic policy. On my far left is Darcy McGovern, director of legislative services for Justice. Murray Sawatsky is the executive director of policing at the back, and Jason Rumancik is the legislative officer, and I think you all know my chief of staff sitting at the back is Rob Nicolay.

It is my pleasure to be here this evening to discuss and answer any questions we may have on Bill 164, *The Police Amendment Act, 2011*. In the spring of 2007, the Ministry of Justice, which was the ministry responsible for policing services at the time, invited members of the police community to consult on amendments to *The Police Act, 1990*. The proposed amendments to the Act were either fully supported by the stakeholders or were considered a reasonable compromise that served the public interest.

The proposed amendments are largely procedural changes to improve fairness, efficiency, and transparency among Saskatchewan municipal police services — something that I'm sure that we all fully support. They apply to the discipline process, public complaint process, police boards, and the role of independent observers to internal investigations of police actions.

Although I'm sure there's questions about most of the amendments, there's one particular clause that I would like to address and that's clause 4. This particular clause amends section 23 of the Act, the clause that has caused some confusion. Some of our municipalities are approaching a population of 20,000. Under the existing Act, those municipalities would be forced to terminate their contract with

the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], should they already have one. The intent of clause 4 was to allow those municipalities to continue to contract with the RCMP rather than force them to develop their own municipal police service. As the existing clause was somewhat vague in this regard, we will be introducing an amendment to this clause this evening. I would ask that you vote against existing clause 4 and support the amendment which will be read after all the clauses have been considered.

As I mentioned in my second reading speech, there are some financial implications with this Bill. These arise out of changes to the appointment of an investigation observer and the costs of police discipline and oversight. Costs related to these processes will be absorbed by CPSP [Corrections, Public Safety and Policing] and are estimated to be in the range of \$55,000 to \$85,000. And of course that depends on the number of cases there are on an annual basis. But in perspective, this represents less than 1 per cent of the current \$150 million investment that the province makes in policing every year.

These amendments to *The Police Act* serve to strengthen the support that our government provides to police services. The partnership between municipal police services and the province is tangible evidence of our commitment to public safety. Those are my opening remarks, Mr. Chair, and we're prepared to answer any questions.

[19:30]

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister Huyghebaert. I would just remind the officials, should they answer, would they please state their name for the records. We'll go into discussions on Bill No. 164, *The Police Amendment Act*. Are there questions? Mr. Quennell.

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Before we get to clause 4 in its old and new state, a bit of the Bill deals with changes to how public complaints are dealt with. And I know that the minister has, and his ministry have, conferred and consulted with the chiefs of police, I assume the municipal governments' police commissions, as well as the associations and the Federation of Police Officers that represent rank-and-file police officers, municipal police officers. Was there consultation or discussion with the Public Complaints Commission about the changes that would affect the procedures with that commission?

Mr. McGovern: — Darcy McGovern, legislative services. Yes, there were. The Public Complaints Commission wasn't a member of the broader consultation because of course they have a separate, independent function. The consultation that occurred with them, given that it was that they remain a Justice mandate, was quite simply to go to them, indicate that the Act was coming forward, ask them if they had identified any issues that they thought might be worthy of address in the amendments, and these are reflected. They had indicated that they felt that there weren't any particular problems, but there was an optic issue that they would ask that be addressed, and that's reflected in the sections 5, 6, and 7 of the Bill.

And you'll be aware, Mr. Quennell, that the shuffle that's occurred there is simply that rather than having the chief of

police conduct the communications with a complainant to say, here's where your complaint's at or here's the process, it was felt more appropriate that the Public Complaints Commission conduct that communications themselves so that the member who's made the complaint is dealing with the independent oversight body rather than, even for that formal purpose, the, potentially the police service that they were complaining against. And so that was the substance of the changes that they requested.

Mr. Quennell: — Okay. So that was the only concern that they had, and it's addressed as Mr. McGovern outlined.

So now on clause 4, which I guess, not to put anybody on the spot, but may just be a spot of bad drafting, I take it it was the intent of the government, and it's more closely reflected in the amendment that hasn't been made yet, that the municipalities that currently have municipal police services would continue to have municipal police services, but communities, municipalities approaching the 20,000 mark which have contracts to the RCMP would not be required to establish municipal police services, but could continue on with the RCMP. That's the intent of the government?

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — That's correct.

Mr. Quennell: — Yes. And which communities would they be, and how close are they?

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Yorkton is one that's very, very close. Swift Current's a little behind and North Battleford also. But North Battleford . . . All three of those currently have RCMP contracts.

Mr. Quennell: — And when you say Yorkton's close, how close is Yorkton?

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — I don't know the exact population of Yorkton. It's the closest. It's 19,000-something, I do believe.

Mr. Quennell: — Almost could call this the Yorkton amendment then. That's kind of an American thing to do. I don't think I'll do that. And I don't know if we'll have . . . Well, Mr. Chair, we'll have the opportunity for discussion of the amendment after it's been, after it's been moved?

The Chair: — Yes, we can.

Mr. Quennell: — We can? Okay. Then I don't believe I have any other questions about the unamended Bill.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Quennell. Is there any other comments or questions on Bill No. 164? Seeing none, we will proceed to vote on the clauses. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.]

The Chair: — Clause 4, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — Clause 4 is not carried.

[Clauses 5 to 23 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — I recognize Mr. Chisholm.

Clause 4

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to move the following amendment:

“Section 23 amended

4(1) The following subsection is added after subsection 23(1.2):

“(1.3) If, on the day on which it is determined that a municipality reaches or exceeds the maximum population mentioned in subsection (1), the municipality has an agreement with the Government of Canada to employ and pay for members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to provide policing services within the municipality:

(a) the agreement continues to be in effect pursuant to the terms and conditions of the agreement; and

(b) notwithstanding subsection (1), but subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the municipality may renew or amend the agreement mentioned in clause (a) or enter into a new agreement described in subsection (1) with the Government of Canada”.

(2) Subsection 23(2) is amended by striking out ‘subsection (1) or amended pursuant to subsection (1.1)’ and substituting ‘subsection (1) or (1.3) or renewed or amended pursuant to subsection (1.1) or (1.3)’”.

Or the Yorkton amendment, if that’s . . .

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Chisholm. You’ve heard the amendment presented by Mr. Chisholm. Is there any questions on the amendment? I recognize Mr. Quennell.

Mr. Quennell: — Okay. So as previously discussed, the amendment more closely articulates the government’s intention that cities, municipalities that have not yet reached 20,000 but will reach 20,000 sometime in the future will have the option of continuing with an RCMP contract or establishing a municipal police force. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — That’s correct.

Mr. Quennell: — So this will put a Moose Jaw and a Yorkton of the future on a different legal footing as to their options in respect to police services. That’s correct? A Yorkton can either establish a municipal police service or continue with an RCMP contract; a Moose Jaw doesn’t have that option, being grandfathered in.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — No, because they’re over the 20,000 when that was in force. So that’s why the amendment came in. There was some worries that places like Moose Jaw could say in negotiations, well we want to go back to an RCMP contract. That is not allowed under the amendment, which . . . The intent of the one before was not that, but it was interpreted by a few that that could in fact happen from the legal aspects of the Bill before the amendment. I personally didn’t see it that way at all or read it that way, but just to clarify it, that’s why the amendment is there.

And the amendment is if you have a municipal police force and you are over, you’re grandfathered in, if you have a municipal police force, you’re going to maintain the municipal police force. Where it becomes more of a thought process of what happens to a town that’s 10,000 now and they decide at 15,000 they want to go to a municipal police force. And then at what point can they, if they wanted to, revert back? And personally I can’t see that happening. But the way it is now, you’re grandfathered to what you had when you hit the 20,000. That’s where you’re . . . If you’re RCMP, you can stay there.

Mr. Quennell: — Well I understand the government’s intent. And unlike the minister, I did see pretty sweeping change in the original clause 4, or at least the potential for that interpretation. And I think we can all agree that the amendment has far better wording. So the prospect of a Moose Jaw, for example, deciding that they would dissolve the municipal police service and go to the RCMP is now of course removed by the amendment.

But the existence of this differentiation between cities that reach 20,000 in the future, and Yorkton being on the cusp of doing that, and a Moose Jaw that reached 20,000 sometime in the past, is there not some concern that there will be pressure put on the government — and apparently it’s not an overriding concern, but some concern on the part of the government — that pressure will be put on the government to put a Moose Jaw and a Yorkton on the same footing as to its options? That is, if now Yorkton upon reaching 20,000 can choose, why shouldn’t Moose Jaw be able to choose except for the historical accident of having reached 20,000 some time previous to Yorkton and previous to this legislation?

So I see potentially a political argument coming from some of the smaller cities in Saskatchewan that are now over 20,000 that, for the sake of equity, that they should have the same options that cities that reach 20,000 in the near future have.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — I don’t see it as an issue with the consultations that have been done. It never really addressed itself as an issue, and as you are aware that we have municipalities that are under 20,000 now that have municipal police services. So it was never an item that was brought up during consultations.

Mr. Quennell: — So we’re not concerned about current city councils, but I still have questions about future city councils. But I guess we’ll all cross that political bridge when we come to it. Those are all my questions on the amendment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Quennell. Is there any comments, other comments or questions on the amendment?

Seeing none, do committee members agree with the amendment as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Is the new clause 4 in amendment agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 4 as amended agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts the following: Bill No. 164, *The Police Amendment Act, 2011*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 164, *The Police Amendment Act, 2011* with amendment.

Mr. Brkich: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Brkich moved. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. That concludes this Bill, and the committee will recess. Mr. Minister, I'm sorry, do you have any closing comments? I recognize you now.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank my officials for being out here this evening. It was short notice, but I really appreciate their effort to get out here so we could address this Bill. And I'd like to thank the committee. It's a Bill we know that the policing community definitely wanted, the municipal policing community, and so I'm very pleased to see it go forward. So I'd like to thank the committee.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and thank you to the committee. We have one more business to contend with tonight, and that would be the consideration of estimates and supplementary estimates for the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission, vote no. 85. We will take a short intermission to get ready for that consideration.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**General Revenue Fund
Office of the Provincial Capital Commission
Vote 85**

Subvote (PC01)

The Chair: — Welcome back, ladies and gentlemen. This is the Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. We're here this evening to consider the estimates and supplementary estimates of the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission, vote 85. That is on page 121 of the Estimates and page number

7 of the Supplementary Estimates.

With us we have one substitution: Mr. Harper is sitting in for Ms. Higgins. And welcome Mr. Minister and your officials. If you'd like to introduce your officials and have some opening remarks, you may do them now.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of committee. It's a pleasure to join you this evening — and go Habs. I have with me Mr. Harley Olsen, CEO [chief executive officer], Provincial Capital Commission; Ms. Linda McIntyre, Provincial Archivist with Saskatchewan Archives; Ms. Wanda Lamberti, executive director, central management services; and Gwen Jacobson who's the director of operations for the Provincial Capital Commission. And we've just been joined into the Speaker's gallery by Ms. Donna Cuddington who is administrative assistant for the Provincial Capital Commission.

The commission's 2011-2012 budget enables a number of important initiatives and allows us to fulfill our mandate, and that is to promote, to preserve, and to strengthen our distinctive heritage and culture through the celebration and creation of opportunities for tourism and economic development within the capital with an emphasis on educating youth about the history of our great province.

We have a budget of just under \$10.6 million, and that includes an overall increase of \$513,000 this year. This is largely due to additional funding for the Wascana Centre Authority and to begin preparations for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of this building, the Legislative Building, the centrepiece of our provincial capital.

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes that Wascana Park is a jewel of Regina and vital to the province's capital. The commission has committed approximately \$3.3 million in statutory supplementary and maintenance funding to support important work of the Wascana Centre Authority this budget year. This includes \$350,000 in additional funding. Funding will be augmented by Wascana's other partners, the city of Regina and the University of Regina, and will assist with pressures related to operations and maintenance as a result of increased usage of the park.

We're also committed to working with the Wascana Centre Authority to develop a long-term strategic plan to take us on into the future. We look forward to working with the city of Regina, the University of Regina, and other contributing partners to ensure not only sustainability but the development of Wascana Park as a source of pride to all the people of Saskatchewan.

We've also begun working with the Saskatchewan Archives Board on a plan to ensure sustainability into the future. In particular we are embarking upon an enterprise-wide lean review of records management processes to address a very significant backlog of documents that have accumulated over the course of several decades.

Planning is also under way to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the legislative . . . Oh I'm sorry. Did I . . . Well we've already talked about that, so we'll skip that bit.

[20:00]

In 2011-2012 the commission will have an additional \$101,000 to begin preparations for the centennial celebration of one of the province's most historic properties. Now this anniversary is an opportunity to connect citizens — including those who live outside Regina — to their seat of government, engage in a shared celebration of our cultural heritage, and experience a feeling of pride and connection to the capital of their province, the seat of many of our institutions of democracy.

Government House is also celebrating an historic birthday. 2011 marks 120 years for the national historic site and provincial heritage property. Budget provides \$29,000 in one-time funding for Government House to celebrate this important anniversary year. Government House has also been allotted \$5,000 to make changes in the Wiebe Interpretive Centre upon the installation of a new Lieutenant Governor, which is expected to happen sometime next year in 2012.

Lastly I'd like to mention the tremendous success that we had in partnering with Cameco and the Government House Foundation, as well as the ministries of Education and First Nations and Métis Relations, to deliver the youth mentorship program. This program brings students from the North to our capital and provides them with a first-hand look at how their provincial government works and what a career with the Saskatchewan public service would be like. We launched the program last year, and we're pleased to announce that we will be hosting it again this spring.

The remainder of additional funds for the ministry will cover increases in the ministry's overall operations.

Closing, this is a responsible budget that will allow the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission to continue working with their partners to preserve and promote the history and culture of Saskatchewan and ensure that its capital continues to remain a source of pride for the people of this province. It will also help build awareness and educate students, residents, and visitors about Saskatchewan's history and how the province is governed. It will help promote Regina as a welcoming place and encourage tourism opportunities.

We would now be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister Hutchinson, and welcome to your officials. I would ask the officials, should they be called on to answer any questions, if they would please state their name at the beginning for the record. Is there any questions regarding the estimates? Mr. Harper.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Mr. Minister, and welcome to your officials here tonight. I was pleased to have you here. I do have a few questions and one of my, or both of my colleagues perhaps, one of my colleagues at least has some questions also.

Would you just please, for information's sake, outline your mandate again and perhaps give us some detail as to what your mandate all consists of.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well certainly. What we can talk about, perhaps to begin, is the genesis of the institution. How did the Provincial Capital Commission come to be? As I understand it, it was through a number of conversations between Premier Wall and Mayor Fiocco of the city of Regina, both of whom agreed that not only is Wascana a magnificent urban park of some 2,300 acres but also enjoys special status because it's the seat of government for the province of Saskatchewan. With that in mind, the idea of a Provincial Capital Commission evolved, and that's why we're here today, if you will.

I just got a copy of the Premier's mandate letter to myself. This is dated June 29, 2010. The pertinent parts are the following words: "celebrate Saskatchewan's heritage and promote the capital through operation of a Provincial Capital Commission." Obviously there's a mandate there then to get on with promoting and preserving the heritage assets of our area here.

And one of the ways that we've interpreted that, to Chair and members of the committee, is to celebrate important anniversaries as a way of acknowledging the importance of the institutions and their very important anniversary dates and using them as springboards to create programs and opportunities to engage and involve all the people of the province, but most particularly our young people. So for example, in our celebrations of the 100th anniversary of this building, the Legislative Assembly building, we will be involving young people from all over the province in a wide variety of programs, and discussions about exactly what kinds of programs would be most appropriate are ongoing as we speak.

Mr. Harper: — So what actions have you undertaken to promote the province to those very young people that you were talking about just a moment ago and to engage them in a meaningful way to cause them, you know, to want to come down to Regina, they want to view and be a part of the wonderful activity that we have here.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. We'll be back momentarily after we discuss this.

Well thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Mr. Olsen and I have discussed the answer, and he has some details that he thinks will be helpful in answering the member's question.

Mr. Olsen: — Harley Olsen. I'm the CEO of the Provincial Capital Commission. Minister mentioned the youth mentorship program where last year we did a pilot program to bring kids, probably in grade 11, 12, to the capital. And this was funded by the Government House Foundation, and we brought kids for three days down to the capital to visit the Legislative Building, Government House. We had them meet with ministers and the Speaker to learn about the government.

And we're working on again on . . . this year's program will take place in early May. And we're dealing with schools in places like Fond-du-Lac and Turnor Lake that may not have an opportunity to come to the provincial capital.

We've also been busy developing a website called Student Connects which is a guide to help teachers to organize excursions to the capital city to see the various venues here

including the legislature, Government House, the RCMP Heritage Centre, Wascana Centre, and numbers of others. And that we hope will be launched very soon.

In addition at Government House itself, we have really made some changes in how we operate to make the Government House more accessible and more interesting to kids. We've adopted technologies which interest them in terms of GPS [Global Positioning System] guidance systems which take them through the grounds to find various, you know, a tree planted by a particular Premier at COF [Council of the Federation] and so on. And the numbers are up quite a bit in terms of the kids actually coming to the Government House. And also we've developed teacher resource material. And so it's very interactive, and we found we've had very good feedback.

This year also we had we put on an event called the Old-Fashioned Victorian Christmas, and we had 800 people attend this first event. And a lot of young children were there, and it was very, very well received. So we're working hard to get kids to the capital and to understand all of the pieces of the Capital Commission.

Mr. Harper: — Very good. You say last year you started the pilot project to have a certain number of high school students visit the capital here.

Mr. Olsen: — Right.

Mr. Harper: — How many students took part in that pilot project?

Mr. Olsen: — Last year we had 14 students, and this year we're hoping to have up to 20.

Mr. Harper: — Okay. You know, something that's been in the back of my mind for a number of years is that, when I've been out door knocking in my constituency and having the opportunity to do that between elections — it gives me the opportunity to spend a little more time at the doorstep and chat with people — and I was really surprised at the number of people, adults living here in the city of Regina, who have never been inside this great building of ours.

And then it came to me that if that was the case here in the city of Regina, can you imagine what it would be for people across this province with some people living hundreds and hundreds of miles from Regina and perhaps only time they would ever come to the city is perhaps for a medical appointment or something like that, which of course visiting the legislature would not be high on their priority list. I've often wondered why we, as citizens, and when I say collectively, we as government of this province, wouldn't want to embark upon a program that would give the opportunity for every youngster in this great province of ours having the opportunity to visit and tour the legislature.

And I've often wondered myself why we wouldn't look at having some type of a program administered through the school system which would be the natural, that would provide the ability for teachers to have their entire classes come and tour the legislature. We often . . . You get groups coming down here and school classes coming down here, but it's at the desire of the teacher or the initiative of the teacher that we'll actually have

that happen.

But there's no system in place that makes it part of our educational process to have them experience the legislature because really it is so very much part of their history and their future. And have you given any thought to looking at developing a much larger scale that would encompass the entire province through our educational system to provide that opportunity for students to experience this great place of ours?

Mr. Olsen: — It's Harley Olsen again. Do I identify myself for each question?

The Chair: — Not necessarily.

Mr. Olsen: — Thank you. Thank you for the question. And yes, we have in fact, we have studied the programs of a number of the other jurisdictions across the country in terms of actually some of the capital cities and provinces actually have various levels of subsidization to assist the school boards and the schools to actually defer some of the expenses of bringing kids to the capital. We have not, we're not yet ready to embark on that particular program.

However, we are looking very closely at the 100th anniversary of the legislature to really garner interest of kids in terms of coming to their capital and seeing their provincial capital building. And we're working closely with the Department of Education to include within the school curriculum to better coordinate how a visit to the capital becomes a part of the curriculum of students who are studying the history of the province. So yes, we are in fact examining those possibilities.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — I would like to thank Mr. Olsen for his remarks. I've got one or two details that might help flesh out the answer a little bit. We think this is a very special year coming with the 100th anniversary of the Legislative Assembly, and we hope and believe that the youth of the province will recognize it as well. What we're imagining is that through our extra efforts directed at attracting youth from around the province to the building, to the capital, that we'll achieve some measure of success. And we'll use that to guide possible efforts into the future to keep building on that momentum. But we think this is a great way to start.

We agree that, if you think about it, perhaps none of us have really given sufficient, paid sufficient attention to this issue in the past. We've been busy with lots of other things and quite understandably so, but in this anniversary year that's coming, it's focused our attention on exactly the issue that you raise. And so that we're focusing our attention on it now and we're hoping to see some good results from it. Thank you so much.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. When you say you're focusing your attention on it, do you have any goals that you're willing to share with us at this time to be able to act as measuring sticks to your degree of success? You indicated that you had 14 students down here last year in your project and you're looking at 20-some this year. Would the anniversary not be an opportunity to launch a campaign province-wide, so you could not have only 21 students down here, but you could have maybe several thousand students? And have some initiatives to the school boards to be able to encourage that and to be able to,

I don't necessarily want to say make it mandatory, but certainly encourage students and teachers to take up the opportunity to have students, again, tour this great building and absorb some of the history that's here. I mean this is the province right here, and there's just so much that we offer here, and it's probably one of the better kept secrets, really.

[20:15]

Mr. Olsen: — Thank you for that. Yes, in fact we're leading an interdepartmental committee to look at all of the options with respect to the celebration of the 100th anniversary. And the Department of Education has been a key player on that. And we're looking at various ways with which we can connect to the youth through the education system.

Now we haven't set yet a definite goal in terms of numbers of students which we would like to see visit the capital, but it's something that we will be addressing. This will be our planning and beginning year in terms of the actual program which will ultimately get delivered in the 2012-13 fiscal year. But we certainly have got the Department of Education well represented and certainly we share the enthusiasm with respect to the youth of the province.

Mr. Harper: — So do you have a committee of individuals from the Department of Education and from your commission that meet on a regular basis to flesh this out, to lay the groundwork?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Actually that's an excellent question to follow the first one. Perhaps I can begin by explaining it in this way. While it would be ideal, I guess, to attract as many of the youth of the province to the capital during this very special anniversary year as possible, we recognize that it won't be achievable. We won't get everybody here. But you can engage them in other ways.

And we did get a working group of people, a broadly based group of people together for a series of meetings, a couple of which were led by somebody that used to be with the National Capital Commission. And they've had some very special anniversaries to celebrate in the last few years. This individual started off, if I understand correctly, by simply saying, we wouldn't presume to tell you what the right solutions for your celebration program would be, but we can certainly give you a couple of ideas of some of the things that we've tried with different measures of success.

And, for example, you might engage youth of the province and the various schools in essay contests or photo contests, some sort of way to invite them to consider the history. There can be web presences that they can become interactive with, so that they can learn and contribute some of their own new understandings, and representatives of these classes can then be brought here. That's the kind of thing that they've done in Ottawa and they've had a lot of kids to choose from, obviously, with 13 provincial and territorial jurisdictions to try to serve.

So what we're doing is learning from their experiences. And there is a group of people that's actively considering all of these options on an ongoing basis. And it is that group that has been tasked with coming up with the program ideas that are just in

the germination stage as we speak.

Mr. Harper: — And how often has that group met in the last year?

Mr. Olsen: — Well that group . . . The interdepartmental group has met in the last year probably six or seven times. I don't have the number. And it consists of representatives, it's chaired by the Office of the Provincial Capital Commission. We have Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport which . . . to consider the heritage pieces. We have Government Services. We have the Saskatchewan Archives for the historical content. The Office of the Provincial Secretary is involved. The Department of Education is involved and Government Services as well. So it's really a broad-ranging group of individuals and we've met about six or seven times, and have got the skeleton of some programs put together.

But now we're looking at sort of delivery, the delivery piece, and beginning work on some of the initiatives which we're considering.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — And also the Legislative Assembly Service is involved too, to provide some advice.

Mr. Olsen: — Yes. The . . .

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — As people that actually inhabit the building, of course. Yes.

Mr. Olsen: — The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly is the Co-Chair actually of the committee and will be, I think, dealing with the board, the Speaker's office, and the Board of Internal Economy with respect to initiatives that have to do with this building.

Mr. Harper: — And the group's main focus would be to develop programs that would attract the youth to this building primarily?

Mr. Olsen: — Certainly, certainly the youth. Focus on youth is a big part of it. But there will be other kinds of celebrations as well for the rest of the citizens of the province. And I mean educating the youth is not the sole objective. And so I think that it's a critical piece of Saskatchewan's history, and we want to ensure that all of the citizens of the province can become engaged and celebrate this with us.

For example just, I mean it's not to pre-empt what we may be doing, but the cornerstone of the Legislative Building contains a time capsule. And so we're working on, both from an engineering perspective and archival perspective, in determining exactly what is in the time capsule which was put here 100 years ago. And we think that'll be a great venue, not only to remove and display the contents of the time capsule, but also engage the people of the province, and particularly youth, in terms of what kinds of things we wish to put back into the time capsule for the next 100 years of the building. So those kinds of initiatives I think we can build really exciting programs around.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — This is actually pretty exciting from our perspective. We think this is one of the better ways to

engage, not just youth, but a large cross-section of people in the province.

We do now know some of the contents of the original time capsule. We found a handwritten list that outlines some of them. There's newspapers. I think there's a copy of a bible. There are articles from magazines. There's coins, yes, and I believe there's an article from the *Leader* that talks about, I think, it's the Montreal Canadiens winning one of their first Stanley Cup championships, if I remember correctly. It's something of that sort anyway.

And what we would like to do is to engage people in the schools and say, okay so here's some of the ideas that people 100 years ago thought were important to include for future generations. And with that in mind, what would you like to include? And the ideas, I'm sure, will be fantastic. We certainly expect a vigorous response to that one. We think that's something that will really get people's imagination going.

Mr. Harper: — So what efforts are you doing to be able to develop programs or develop a mechanism to be able to attract adults from within the province of Saskatchewan who perhaps have never toured the Legislative Building to be able to do so under the umbrella of the 100-year anniversary?

Mr. Olsen: — We certainly are looking at activities that will garner interest from across the province. We're working on a communications strategy to . . . We're also working with various arts and cultural organizations to see if there are maybe ways which we can engage the artistic and cultural communities and historic societies in terms of how they may participate in the celebration. And we're also working with Wascana Centre in terms of perhaps looking at some legacy pieces in terms of leaving a mark that will celebrate this celebration as a legacy to the 100th anniversary.

Mr. Harper: — When say you're working on a communication strategy, would that communication strategy include advertising of . . . doing some type of advertising, whether it be through print or through electronic media, to let the good folks across Saskatchewan know that this is a 100th anniversary, and that these options are available to them to come down and tour the . . . Would you be developing an advertising strategy to go with that?

Mr. Olsen: — Yes. To the extent that we will, once the program is finalized, we will certainly . . . That's going to be part of what we'll be doing. It's also . . .

2012 is not only the 100th anniversary of the provincial Legislative Building. There are a number of significant events other than that which we'll be looking at interacting with and coordinating with. 2012 will also mark the history of the Regina cyclone, and so we're working with a group to look at how we may be able to interact there.

2012 is also the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty, and so there'll be various events and celebrations and recognitions in terms of events that have to do with the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty's coronation. It'll be the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812. And we're also working with . . . Heritage Canada also is looking at various and sundry activities, and so we're trying

to coordinate with the federal government as well, relative to programming.

Mr. Harper: — So you say you're developing a communications strategy, an advertising strategy. Do you have a budget to go with that?

Mr. Olsen: — We haven't got a detailed budget as of yet. The detailed budget will be for the most part contained in next year's budget. This year we're planning, and the events will kind of dictate what that communications strategy will be for the actual year of the celebration. So I mean I don't have a budget number for you yet.

Mr. Harper: — So then there wouldn't be any expenditures from the amount in the Estimates book here that would be used for communications purposes or advertising purposes?

Mr. Olsen: — I won't say that there won't be any. Again we have to . . . We're coordinating with some of the other events in terms of timing, but announcement that this is the year of the 100th anniversary may be something, but it'll be very minor in terms of this particular fiscal year.

Mr. Harper: — We have many Saskatchewan people who, you know, live in other provinces. Would there be any type of interprovincial advertising done to let the former Saskatchewan residents know that this is happening and perhaps an opportunity for them to come back and use that as an excuse to come back, I guess you would say, and visit family but also take in the opportunities that present themselves in light of the 100th year anniversary?

Mr. Olsen: — We could certainly do that. And I know that the 100th anniversary of the Alberta legislature also happens in 2012, and we have had consultations with the Government of Alberta in terms of their celebration. So we're looking at any opportunity we can to dovetail what we may be doing. I believe, I'm not sure of the exact date, but I believe their official opening was in September, and ours is on October the 12th where the governor general — was Lord Connaught I believe at the time — came and officially opened the building.

Mr. Harper: — So you say there's been discussions with representatives from the Alberta government as far as identifying perhaps ways and means to dovetail and to share some celebrations and maybe jointly host some particular celebrations?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Those discussions have been quite preliminary at this early date, but what we are aware of is that they have an equally important and imminent anniversary, and there's potentially some opportunities to work together with them. And if we can find ways to do that in ways that will be satisfactory to both provinces and especially to do it a little bit more cost effectively than might otherwise be the case, those are the kinds of opportunities that we're having a look at right now.

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Wotherspoon, do you have some questions?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Sure, just a couple of questions.

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Chair, I'll turn the microphone over to my colleague, Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, just a couple of questions for the minister. Certainly Wascana Park is a provincial gem and a point of pride, not only for our city but for our province. And there was a lot of concern as it related to the reduction of funding in the budget last year, 2010-11, a \$600,000 reduction to the Wascana Centre Authority and then the subsequent impact on the park and its services and care. And just a lot of people of course through our city and across our province look to this park with great respect, and many had a lot of comments through that period of time.

[20:30]

Just from an interview that you provided, Mr. Minister, on July 9th, 2010, last summer, you made the comment that there was not a decrease in funding for the Wascana Centre Authority, that the dollars were simply intended, the 600,000 that was previously in place was for special projects only or some nature of that statement. Could the minister clarify if that's a fair representation?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Well I'll begin by saying that to suggest that the budget was reduced tends to allow people, perhaps even to encourage them, to think that the core funding was somehow cut back. That's actually never happened.

We do know that in some previous years — I have the record here — between 1998-99 and the years 2005-2006, during those years the previous administration actually had a five-year funding freeze and an increase of only \$78,000 to the operating budget in that very, very long period.

In the short time that this government has been in office, we've increased that funding by \$495,000. That's an 18 per cent increase. And that's not all of the money; that's just the increase for operating money.

We've all always recognized that the needs for operating dollars will increase. That's certainly apparent. Everything goes up. They have salaries that are negotiated. Salaries and benefits have to be addressed. The cost for diesel and gasoline fuels for trucks and lawnmowers and things like that, the cost of repairs, and certainly utilities — they are major utility users — and so those are some of the costs that they have to address.

The \$600,000 that we're talking about is money that was originally intended for the use by the Provincial Capital Commission. Right out of the gate, as soon as we conceived of the idea, we decided that it would be appropriate to allocate budget. As it turned out, it took longer to get the Provincial Capital Commission properly organized and up and running, and so during the first year it wasn't able to use its budget.

The \$600,000 then, it was decided — and we think quite appropriately — we would reallocate that for use by the Wascana Centre Authority. And that was repeated during the second year. The money was not given to the Wascana Centre Authority in the third year, this last budget year, because finally the Provincial Capital Commission was up and running, had a

staff, had office rent to pay and all these sorts of things, and they were able to use that budget. That budget was . . . So the core funding was never reduced. It's only been increased by our government in the last three years. There has never been a reduction to core funding.

There's also been millions of dollars in infrastructure, and we can talk about that at the member's pleasure. But the \$600,000 which was given in two years, our first budget year and our second budget year, those were dollars that were originally meant for the Capital Commission but not usable by that Capital Commission while it was in the process of becoming established.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Now those \$600,000, Mr. Minister, when the Wascana Centre Authority received those for two consecutive years, was there specific controls placed on those dollars or caveats placed on those dollars of their intended purpose? I believe you stated here tonight that those were non-operational dollars. However it's my understanding that they were utilized in an operational fashion. My question to you, Mr. Minister, is what were the controls when those dollars flowed?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well there is a letter of agreement signed by the provincial government and also by the Wascana Centre Authority which sets out the terms. And the terms are the number of dollars. And it also, I believe, makes it clear that these dollars should not be considered as permanent. Simply reflecting the nature of the money, it's temporary while the Capital Commission is becoming established and that it was to be used for improvements to the legislative district, if I remember the wording. I'm not sure if that's a precise quote, but I think it's a reasonable paraphrase.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — But that wasn't the case. In the end those dollars were utilized for an operational aspect of Wascana Centre Authority's program.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — That's my understanding that decisions were made to reallocate some of those dollars internally for purposes other than the specific purpose mentioned in the agreement.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — There's certainly some confusion on this matter. I know that what the minister's suggesting is that there was no reduction in operational dollars. But then what we've recognized is that there was cuts in services that have been long held within that park. Within that authority, I think, there was nine field workers that were reduced — or these are maybe estimates, but anecdotally what I've understood — nine field workers, a sergeant, a few special constables, so numerous positions that certainly weren't added the increase of the \$600,000 and then cut from, as resulting from the budget from last year and as a result, direct result, and attributed by Wascana Centre Authority, to the budget cut of your government, Mr. Minister. And so mind the confusion of the public on this matter.

And I'm just going to share two quotes with you here, Mr. Minister. One of the, I guess, one of the . . . in the letter that was received by employees that were going to be let go as a result of the cut, I state from that letter from Wascana Centre

Authority:

As you may be aware, the recent provincial budget released on March 24th, 2010, resulted in a reduction of 10 per cent of Wascana Centre Authority's annual operating budget. This reduction has necessitated a reduction in staffing levels and other expenses across the authority's operations.

And one more other, one other quote from another article here that was in the *Leader-Post* was, this was from the CEO of Wascana Centre Authority on July 7th, 2010. And I quote, "... provincial funding [was] slashed by 10 per cent ...". And I continue on with that same article. I quote:

This year, McIntyre said [that] the province cut back about 10 per cent of its funding — more than \$600,000 — forcing Wascana Centre to scale back on seasonal and security staff.

So my question to the minister. These are statements from Wascana Centre Authority — one that comes from the CEO, one that comes from its direct management. They're in direct conflict to what you share here tonight, Mr. Minister. How do we square this circle?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Well perhaps it's a matter of interpretation, but I certainly stand by our earlier remarks. The \$600,000 as allocated from the provincial government to Wascana Centre Authority in those particular budget years — that's '08-09 and '09-10 — were temporary dollars. And when they were reallocated back to the Provincial Capital Commission when it was able to use those dollars, that's not a reduction in funding; that's simply a reallocation of temporary dollars. And the conditions of all of that were made abundantly clear in the original agreement that was presented to the Wascana Centre Authority. Some might interpret it a little differently. That's certainly the way that we look at it.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — There's two very distinct interpretations — the minister's and then those of Wascana Centre Authority senior management — that have been relayed to the public. And so certainly you can understand where some of the confusion lies with the public and where some of their concerns lie as they walk around the jewel that is Wascana and they perceive concern as it relates to those cuts in care in something that's pretty vital to our city and to our province.

But I would go specifically to a question. It was referenced by the minister that there was conditions in a letter stating for these to not be used in an operational fashion when these dollars were provided to Wascana Centre Authority. My question to the minister is, who was on the board of directors for the two years that administered those dollars? In the end those dollars did become a part, as I understand, part of the operational budget. My question is just what was the membership of the board of directors of Wascana Centre Authority for the two years for which those dollars were utilized?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — We'll check our records, Mr. Chair, and we'll be back with you in just a moment or two.

Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Well we have come equipped with a list of current board members and the expiration dates for their terms, but we don't actually have all of the records going back several years. So that's information that we would have to undertake to make available to the committee.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Minister, thank you for ... Would you endeavour to provide that back by way of the Chair to committee members? Just for the last five years would be sufficient. It's really the last three years that are in question.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Certainly. That's information that we would work to try to provide to the committee Chair, yes indeed.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — A question to the minister is: at what time was he sitting as a board of director on the Wascana Centre Authority?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well it would have been ... I've been on the board for two times, two numbers of years, first of all as a city councillor back a number of years ago but subsequently as an MLA. So that would be after November 7, 2007. And my term expired. I stepped down about a year or so after, I think. I don't have a recollection of the exact dates, but those are dates that we can certainly find in the records as well, and we'll undertake to do so for the committee Chair.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, to get those details. But just so we understand then, this would have been 2008 and a bit of ... Was it into 2009 then that you sat on the board of directors of Wascana Centre Authority?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Somewhere in there, Mr. Chair, but I don't have exactly the dates. I can certainly find out for the member.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — You see, one of the problems in question here or one that arises, Mr. Minister, is you've stated here tonight that there was a letter that came with direct instructions to that board of directors, to that management team, senior management team of Wascana Centre Authority on how to utilize those dollars. Now you're no longer on that board but you were there while those dollars were being utilized in a fashion which, as you characterized today, wasn't appropriate, wasn't as they were intended to be utilized.

So my question gets to one of direct responsibility at this point in time, is you were a member on that board at that point in time. And it makes this rather important because what's being alleged by the minister is that the letter was clear that these were for special projects and for non-core, non-operational projects, non-operational funding. But, Mr. Minister, you were sitting on the board of directors and were authorizing that spending in an inappropriate fashion, as you describe, to make it part of core funding. I'm looking for an answer, Mr. Minister, from yourself.

[20:45]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Without a copy of the agreement and a clear

understanding of all of the dates involved, it would be difficult to give a proper answer to the member's question. So we'll have to consult with the documents first and then we'll be able to provide a clearer understanding of what actually happened.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The copy of the agreement as it relates to the conditions placed on those dollars?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — That would be one of the pieces of documentation that we would like to refer to, yes.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — You see, the thing is, Mr. Minister, that your statement was rather straightforward and direct, was that they were not intended for operational funding. And that's certainly your statement on July 9th of last year, and it was your statement here tonight as well. And at the end of the day you have seen your management over at Wascana Centre Authority with directly different statements, that you were very willing to have a very distinct difference between their statements, and you were willing to do that just five minutes ago. But you didn't reference at the same period of time that you were sitting on that same board of directors and part of setting those structures, those budgets, those plans, and the utilization of those dollars at that exact period of time, the time that, in the end, the way you lay it out with the two different stories, could impugn an individual, impugn the management of individuals in the sense that if dollars are being utilized as described by yourself, Mr. Minister, in an inappropriate fashion not to . . . public dollars not being utilized for their intended purpose, and that that's been the consequence for these individuals, these senior managers for quite some time. Because your statements were on the record July of last year.

Now when, Mr. Minister, it's identified that you were on the board at that same very time, now you become much more cautious with your willingness to make that same sort of statement. Now my question would be, Mr. Minister, was that when you became the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and . . . It's a long title, acronym. Was it at that point that you stepped down or that you removed yourself from the board?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. It would have been somewhere around that time, but we'll need the dates to be 100 per cent sure so that we can offer some real clarity.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Minister. What other MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] or members of cabinet from government or the Sask Party are sitting right now on that board and have sat since your, since the Sask Party won government in November 2007?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do have a current list of the board of directors and obviously Ms. Christine Tell, who's the MLA for Regina Wascana Plains, is a current member of the board, and she's also a government MLA as all will know here. And for some time previous to that, Ms. Laura Ross, who's also a government MLA, was on the board.

But we don't actually have all the records of the dates and, you know, that's something that records can show.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well it isn't a great circumstance we

have here, Mr. Minister. What we have is two, at one point the minister said, competing interpretations. But then he was quite direct in his statements about the intended purpose of those dollars, and he speaks now of needing a bit of an investigation to understand what constraints and controls were placed on those dollars within the agreement.

But for quite a period of time, the better part of a year, your statements, Mr. Minister, have been in direct conflict with those of the senior administration of Wascana Centre Authority and as such have impugned those individuals without the opportunity to have any recourse or any explanation of the circumstance.

But beyond that, Mr. Minister, what we're talking about, as you describe it, is potential misuse, abuse, misappropriation of dollars. And we have boards of directors that are responsible to oversee those dollars to make sure they're being utilized properly. You were sitting on that board at that period in time, Mr. Minister, as were potentially one or two other members of your government caucus. This is a concern to Saskatchewan people. This is almost \$1 million a year that could have been used, as you suggest, inappropriately, or actually, as you suggest, inappropriately.

So my question to you, Mr. Minister, is how are you going to get to the bottom to this, and is it even appropriate that you be the person to get to the bottom of it when the fact is that you were there as a board of director with the alleged misappropriation that you highlight?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. We would caution the member not to put words in our mouth. We have not said misappropriation or anything even remotely comparable to that. That is clearly and solely in the mind of the member of the committee. We're not attempting in any way to impugn anyone's reputation. There may in fact be a difference of interpretation as to the precise wording and intent of the letter of agreement, and certainly that is a possibility. We acknowledge that that can and often will occur.

What we had always intended for these dollars to be used for is improvements for the legislative precinct. But there is a wide variety of interpretations that could be applied to those words. That could, for example, mean landscape materials. It could also be interpreted to mean labour to install landscape materials, labour to maintain them, irrigation systems to water them. There's a wide variety of interpretations which could be applied to that particular description.

And while our interpretation of that wording, our precise interpretation may vary from someone else's, in no way are we suggesting that something has happened which ought to impugn anyone's reputation. It's not our intention. It's not in our minds, Mr. Speaker. It may in fact be in the member's mind, but only in the member's mind.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No, it's not just in the member's mind. It's in the individuals that have contacted both my office and your office, and an individual that you've met with as well, but also other individuals who have had questions resulting from these conflicting statements.

And as it relates to any sort of other circumstance, what we're talking about is public dollars. And if the minister says that these dollars had intended purpose which were non-operational and were specific and had controls, then that should have been fulfilled. Now if those dollars flowed, they didn't have those sorts of controls that the minister suggests and they were simply allowed to flow into operational funding and that wasn't a problem with their intended use, then that's more than appropriate.

But we can't have it each way, Mr. Minister. You can't suggest to me that those dollars were flowed directly and with purpose and explicitly by way of letter for non-operational purposes. And then for them to get utilized otherwise, this is something that we then have to understand from a public accounts perspective, from a public dollar perspective, protecting the public dollars.

And, Mr. Minister, you were there on the board as that letter would have been received and as those programs would have been administered. And you would have had the opportunity to provide the oversight to ensure that those conditions, those caveats, those controls were fulfilled.

So I guess my question just to the minister is, it is near \$1 million a year. There is conflicting statements — significant conflicting statements, Mr. Minister — yours that said there was no decrease, then those of senior administration that state the 10 per cent cut and specifically highlight operational funds. And then we know that those dollars were utilized in an operational fashion. We know that 12, 13 individuals have lost employment that had been maintained for many years before that increase in \$600,000, which would suggest that this was a operational cut in nature.

So my question is, or my statement is, there's many questions that remain, Mr. Minister, and that's it. And we have distinctly different statements. Certainly the information that would be important is what controls were placed on those dollars by way of the letter? What responsibilities were there for the ministry to make sure that those dollars were utilized properly? What responsibilities were there of the board of directors? And were they used properly? Was there a breach in responsibility, and whose was it? And then it's just a matter of accountability and responsibility.

So my question, simple question to the minister is will he refer this matter immediately to the Provincial Auditor? And will he request an expedited process to analyze this circumstance that's lingered for some period of time — almost a year, Mr. Minister — with distinctly different statements and provide clarity, transparency, accountability, responsibility if needed, but do that immediately? My question is will the minister undertake that referral and fully co-operate with the Provincial Auditor of our province?

[21:00]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. As the member and other members of the committee may be aware, Wascana Centre Authority's financial statements are audited on an annual basis, as is the ministry's. And I'm not aware of any internal issues of the kind that he might be

thinking of have been uncovered. No suggestions of that have ever been made.

To go further than that, I think I would have to be convinced as minister that in fact the intentions of this extra funding — physical improvements, landscaping improvements, things of those sorts — in the legislative precinct in fact never happened, that none of this money was used for that purpose. And best of my understanding, that is in fact not the case.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Minister, what's clear tonight is that you've expressed from your perspective that the agreement that flowed dollars wasn't followed. Funding agreements are critical to the integrity of public dollars and the organizations that are administering those dollars.

Mr. Minister, you were sitting on the board of directors for that period of time for which you're suggesting that those dollars were being utilized in a way that, in a manner that wasn't consistent with the agreement. What we're not alleging here is, at this point in time, is some massive breach or misuse of dollars, but the question remains. And there's no answers that can be provided to us in a timely fashion here tonight, or by way of annual reports.

What we have to get to the bottom of is that contract and the responsibility, whether that's been followed appropriately, whether the conditions that the minister believes were placed on that letter existed. If they did, then it seems to me that there was a broken agreement as it relates to the administration of those dollars which raises an interesting question because the minister was there administering those dollars and setting the allocations of those budgets, providing the oversight of those programs of the Wascana Centre Authority at that period and time. Now if the ministry never had controls on those dollars that they flowed, well then the matter is just that the minister's been inconsistent in suggesting that they have, that there was controls in place to ensure that that wasn't operational funding.

But at the very least, Saskatchewan taxpayers just deserve to have an answer. And certainly an institution or an authority, Wascana Centre Authority, that's been such a proud authority and continues to be a proud authority in this province and serve such a wonderful role in our capital city . . . It's important to the integrity of that authority to have these answers simply clarified. That's the role of an auditor.

I look to the minister at this point in time, and I request again that he refer this immediately to the auditor. With the questions at hand, we could work together making sure we've captured the concern. The concern is that there was, the minister suggests there was an agreement in place that wasn't followed. We need to establish whether or not that in fact was the case, and then make sure that taxpayers are protected as we move forward, get to the bottom as far as the decisions around those dollars in the past as well.

But as I've said before, Mr. Minister, you can't have it two ways. You can't have it that the agreement had all these controls in place and that the board used them with their own discretion and in a fashion that wasn't consistent with the agreement. Well you can have it that way, but you were on the board as well, so then there's going to be some questions there,

Mr. Minister. Now if the agreement in place, which we all need to see at this point in time as well, now if the agreement in place didn't have those controls, well then the minister just simply has to be clear that the statements he's been providing to date have been less than straightforward as to the funding that was there because then that would suggest that it was operational funding that was authorized by this government.

So, Mr. Minister, I simply ask you — it's a straightforward question — just to refer this to the Provincial Auditor, provide full co-operation, and to ensure that we mandate that auditor to make sure that it's expedited in a timely fashion. It's important to Saskatchewan people. It's important to those individuals who frequent this park. It's important to those individuals that lost their jobs. It's important to the individuals who simply look for good governance in making sure that taxes are being utilized in a proper fashion, and it's important to the integrity of Wascana Centre Authority. So, Mr. Minister, I ask you to fulfill that request.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Well as we reminded the member and all members in attendance this evening a moment ago, the financial statements of Wascana Centre Authority are reviewed and audited on a regular basis annually as required, and we would certainly expect that if any significant irregularities had occurred, that those would be identified in that audit. We are not aware of any such significant irregularities.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The minister has stated that, by way of your statement, that an agreement has not been fulfilled, has not been followed, that includes \$600,000 annually for two budget years, I believe. So we're close to \$1 million annually, Mr. Minister. And the question at hand, the audit would be focused around that agreement and the fulfillment of that agreement. It's a straightforward question and it's the role of why we have a Provincial Auditor — to build trust with Saskatchewan people and ensure appropriate, efficient, and effective delivery of services and utilization of dollars.

Mr. Minister, I simply look . . . It's not a matter of casting any great questions at this point in time, but what we do need to do is get to the bottom of the questions at hand. And Saskatchewan people don't need to wait for some sort of audit at a year-end. What they should have is the confidence that their minister is willing to get to the bottom of this now, at this point in time, and authorize the auditor or request the services of the auditor to take a look at that agreement and the appropriate use of those dollars.

Is the minister suggesting tonight that he's not willing to refer this matter to the auditor?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Well I certainly agree with the member on one count, and that is that the people of Saskatchewan shouldn't have to wait for another audit at some future date, perhaps another fiscal year-end. In fact we can rely on the audits that have already been completed and filed.

What we know for sure is that audits of the financial years in which the \$600,000 was allocated from the provincial capital budget, Capital Commission budget, to the Wascana Centre

Authority budget have already been concluded. The financial years have been concluded, and the audits for those financial years have been concluded as well.

And we can certainly rely on the auditors having looked at agreements that would be in place, and statutory funding and other sources of funding. And if any significant irregularities came to their attention in the course of their good work, no doubt they would have felt compelled to let us know. I am aware of no such significant irregularities.

And as I said, the financial years were wound up a while ago and so have the audits for those financial years with respect to the activities of the Wascana Centre Authority.

[21:15]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — That's good that that information is there. We will have opportunities by way of Public Accounts as well in a different forum and a different committee to engage the auditor and certainly your ministry on this, Mr. Minister. And I'm sure we'll look forward to doing so in the near future.

So just as a matter of the information that's been provided here tonight, the minister stated at the start of the evening that there was certain controls, conditions placed within this letter to ensure that they were not utilized for operational purposes. Could the minister endeavour to provide that letter, by way of the Chair, with all conditions and terms placed in it or the funding letter to all committee members of this committee here tonight?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. We'll be happy to undertake that matter on behalf of the member.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm disappointed that we can't have just a direct referral from your ministry, as well from yourself as minister, to just take a look at the matter of the agreement, the funding agreement, and making sure that it's fulfilled and referring that to the auditor who's in the best position to assess the utilization of that or fulfillment of that contract.

I know just in working out of Public Accounts and working with auditors, they . . . And they often say, Mr. Minister, that when they're going out to conduct their audits that organizations are always more, usually more than willing to open up their books and share their information and have that scrutiny. And that in fact when an organization or an individual is apprehensive or protective of that occurring, that's a time for an auditor to probe deeper and ensure that that occurs because that can often . . . is a telltale sign that there's some questions and some concerns that should be brought to light.

It's just a matter of transparency and accountability. It's a lot of public money. And it's an authority and a park for which we're all proud of, Mr. Minister. And there's distinct conflicting statements right now as it relates to your leadership, the leadership of Wascana Centre Authority, and we should understand what the circumstance is.

So I would put the question back, and I hope I'm being

reasonable, Mr. Minister, in my tone and my request because that's my purpose here, is to simply have some transparency on a matter that right now needs some clarity and that answers aren't there. The information we have in financial audits, year-end audits to date, isn't what we're asking for here tonight. We're talking about a specific agreement in ensuring that that's been fulfilled, and then ensuring and understanding, I guess, these dollars. Were they operational? Were they a special project? Have they been utilized properly?

And, Mr. Minister, just quite frankly, the statements that you put forward can't all hold water. So we need to get to the bottom of what's gone on here, Mr. Minister, and just it's a matter of transparency. So I would ask the minister to refer it to the auditor.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Is that a statement or a question, Mr. Chair?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I would ask . . . Sorry, Mr. Chair. My question to the minister is: will he please refer this matter, with respect to public dollars and conflicting statements, to the auditor to make sure that our public resources have been utilized properly and to make sure that this agreement has been fulfilled in a proper fashion? That's the question to the minister: will he refer this to the auditor?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question. Mr. Chair, we believe that we have answered the member's question in our previous answers.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — That's unfortunate, Mr. Minister. It's inadequate. We're talking about a park for which we're proud of in this city, a park that Saskatchewan people care very deeply about. And they're asking questions. Individuals have lost their jobs over this matter. In the letter stating why they lost their jobs, it states that it was because there was a cut to operational funding. I've stated that. The minister says there was no cut to operational funding.

Now the minister can't have it either way. And what we recognize the minister said here tonight . . . that there was conditions on the agreement to flow dollars, the \$600,000, to Wascana Centre Authority, conditions that, from his perspective weren't fulfilled. Those are public dollars. Agreements need to be upheld. So if that agreement was in place . . . And it's going to help for us to see it. I wish the minister had that information before us here tonight. He's been dealing with this matter for the last year, is a Regina cabinet minister, this is in the heart of our city. I'd hope he'd have some answers here right now.

Now he's unwilling to answer the question. He feels that he's answered the question of whether he'll refer it to the auditor. Well I guess his answer to that is no. He won't allow the auditor to put a spotlight and . . . And this is done privately. This isn't done before the public. The auditor, his work isn't . . . He reports back to the public.

I find it wrong. I find it unfortunate, and I find it disappointing that this minister wouldn't provide greater accountability to Saskatchewan people. But he's willing to go on the air with Wayne Mantyka on July 9th of last year and be very clear in his statements. And he's very willing to send off emails and hold

meetings and be very clear in his statements. And then he comes before the committee here this evening, and he's clear in his statements at the start of the evening again.

And then where this has gone has been rather interesting. But if, as the minister suggests, that there was specific controls on these dollars to ensure they were non-operational, well, Mr. Minister, you were sitting on that board. You had full responsibility to ensure proper oversight and utilization of those dollars. So you're questioning yourself, Mr. Minister. Can you not understand, Mr. Minister, why it's appropriate to have the Provincial Auditor, independent of our Legislative Assembly, to take a look at this matter?

And I request one more time, stating my disappointment with answers to date and expecting a different one, because not providing that sort of forthright information and that sort of scrutiny to Saskatchewan people is simply wrong, that sort of transparency. Mr. Minister, will you refer this to the auditor immediately?

[21:30]

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. What we were able to state earlier on we are certainly pleased to repeat in answer to the member's latest question. And that is that full audits were done of the financial affairs, the transactions, the revenues, expenditures — all activities related to the operations of Wascana Centre Authority in those two particular fiscal years that we're talking about, which are fiscal years '08-09 and '09-10. Those audits have been completed, and we are not aware of any significant irregularities. We are satisfied that if any occurred, the auditor's report would have identified them.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Minister, you've stated here tonight and you just stated right now that you're not aware of any significant irregularities. We'd feel more comfortable with not having any irregularities. By way of what you've provided us here tonight, you've stated that it seems that an agreement has been breached. If the agreement exists in the fashion that you provided to us or expressed to the public here today and also on other occasions, that's a concern to Saskatchewan people.

Answers haven't been provided here tonight. They've been inconsistent. Your transparency that you provide Saskatchewan people, both tonight and in your endeavours of what you'll provide as far as actions moving forward, is entirely inadequate. And significant questions emerge, Mr. Minister — I'm sorry to be frank — but about your competency on this file and your competency in general. These answers are very inconsistent. The answers are incomplete, and there's required accountability and responsibilities that haven't occurred here tonight, accountabilities and transparency that hasn't been provided. So to make sure it's clear, Mr. Minister, I'm very dissatisfied with your responses here tonight. I have many concerns about your management of this file.

I believe the Provincial Auditor would be able to provide a reliable spotlight on this circumstance; however you said no to that multiple times here tonight. You have no willingness to allow the Provincial Auditor, who's independent of our Assembly, to take a look at that funding agreement and make

sure that the utilization of those dollars while you were on the board was consistent with that agreement, to make sure the statements that you've made about operational dollars are consistent.

That's disappointing, Mr. Minister, disappointing for a cabinet minister, and I'll say disappointing for a Regina cabinet minister when we're talking about Wascana Park, something that's a treasure in our city and something that's in great question under your leadership. To not provide answers only creates more questions, more speculation.

So we're disappointed here, Mr. Minister. We're at a stalemate here at this committee tonight. I can only ask you so many times to refer this to the auditor, which I've done — I believe now — five times tonight, for which you've responded each time that that wouldn't occur. We're disappointed, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Elhard: — Point of order.

The Chair: — Yes, Mr. Elhard.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Chair, we have listened to the line of questioning now for in excess of an hour. And while the member has belaboured this point, the minister has provided answers as best he could. The files have been audited by a third party auditor, which is reviewed by the Provincial Auditor at some point. The reports are available. If the member has concerns about the audit, he should refer his questions to that audit.

But more importantly, Mr. Chair, this hearing tonight, this committee work tonight is dealing with the estimates of this budget. Technically we are to be dealing with the estimates for this fiscal year. We are not to be going back to years previous, one and two and three. Those years have already been covered. The minister has already undertaken to provide the letter that he sent to the Wascana Centre Authority as part of the funding arrangement. I don't know what else he can be asked to present tonight.

The figures have been audited. The letter's been agreed for presentation to the committee, and we need to stick with the rules of conduct for this committee and deal with this year's estimates. We're at a stalemate, but we need to move on.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Elhard. Mr. Quennell.

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Chair, I say in response to that, if by moving on, the member means that we might be more productive when we have a copy of the letter that the minister has endeavoured to provide to committee members, and the membership of the board of directors of Wascana Park authority and the dates of the membership, then I agree that that would be useful to have that information.

In respect to the ambit of estimates, I understand Mr. Elhard's argument when it comes to supplementary estimates, and I know the government has made it. But in the case of estimates themselves, we need to be able to have a broader discussion about the role and the purpose and the actions and the context in which government departments and agencies have acted. That's

certainly been the case this year in a number of estimates I've been present for in this committee, and it was certainly the case tonight. I mean if Mr. Elhard had this objection or any member of the committee had this objection, it could have been well made 40 minutes ago, so I think the objection may be more to the question being repeated than the nature of the question because I think the questioning is in order within what's done in estimates.

My suggestion would be that we return to these questions briefly upon the minister being able to provide the letter and the other information as to membership and dates of membership that he's endeavoured to provide.

The Chair: — Thank you. I've heard the point of order, and I've heard the rebuttal. On listening to both and listening to the questioning, I find that the point of order is in order. I think the question has been answered. And, Mr. Wotherspoon, I would question you. You're bordering on the integrity of the minister, and I would caution you on that. Do you have any other questions? Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Just as a final statement there, we certainly asked that question in a repetitious fashion, I believe five times, to refer this to the auditor. I think that provides the appropriate security and scrutiny for Saskatchewan people that's been denied by the minister here tonight. That's his prerogative. But I do look forward, Mr. Chair, to . . . And I certainly don't intend to attack one's integrity, but there's questions that remain, and big questions. And there's a lot of dollars that exist here.

So I would simply look forward to the opportunity in a further committee meeting, hopefully very soon, to review the letter that the minister has endeavoured to provide, the dates of service and membership on the board, and then just provide the accountability and transparency back to Saskatchewan people. And I certainly look for the minister's co-operation on that front.

At this point in time in fact just before the point of order, I was just closing my statements as well, but at this point in time I would close my questions. I don't know if my colleagues have further questions tonight. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Mr. Wotherspoon, you had stated one time that this may go to another committee, and I'm wondering if that wouldn't be a better place to bring up the past facts, the past points that you were trying to make rather than going on the estimates that we are discussing at this point. Yes, Mr. Quennell.

Mr. Quennell: — I didn't mean to interrupt you, Mr. Chair, but if the minister has, as he has, endeavoured to provide this committee with documents and information, then it's appropriate that this committee, with those documents and information, be able to answer some, ask some follow-up questions in respect to particularly the letter that the minister's endeavoured to provide. And without precise, precise understanding of the detail of the wording on these conditions the minister's referred to, it's hard to say that there aren't any follow-up questions. And I mean the Chair has certainly permitted questioning about the letter. It would be useful to

have some questions asked with the letter in hand.

The Chair: — The minister has indicated he'll supply the letter, so we will wait for that. Mr. Minister, is there anything you wanted to say at this point?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well I certainly appreciate the member from Cypress's comments. Every moment we spend considering the past, as worthy an exploit as that might be, is a moment that's lost in considering the present budget and the future of this particular province.

I'd like, with that mind, to read the following letter into the record. This is a letter sent to me as Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport from Mayor Pat Fiacco, city of Regina:

The recent provincial budget brought some good news for Wascana Centre Authority with an increase in funding. I want to thank you and your government for the improved budget allocation.

Wascana Centre is an integral part of the strong quality of life residents from every corner of Regina and across Saskatchewan enjoy. Your funding increase is an acknowledgement of that importance.

As the seat of government in Saskatchewan, Wascana Centre is a very unique place in this province. The co-operation of all three partners is essential to its future sustainability in providing visitors a memorable experience every time they visit the park.

Again, my sincere thanks for the increase in funding to Wascana Centre.

Sincerely, Pat Fiacco, Mayor

So the mayor is going where we're going and that is into the current budget and, through that, into the coming years and a better future for everybody in this province.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is there any other comments or questions at this time? Yes, Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Just to thank the officials that are here with the minister this evening to supply information. We appreciate your time here this evening. Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Wotherspoon. If no further questions or comments, I would ask for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Elhard: — So moved.

The Chair: — Mr. Elhard. This committee is now adjourned. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

[The committee adjourned at 21:45.]