



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE**

**Hansard Verbatim Report**

**No. 33 – April 29, 2014**



**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

**Twenty-Seventh Legislature**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE**

Mr. Warren Michelson, Chair  
Moose Jaw North

Mr. Doyle Vermette, Deputy Chair  
Cumberland

Mr. D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert  
Wood River

Mr. Russ Marchuk  
Regina Douglas Park

Mr. Kevin Phillips  
Melfort

Mr. Warren Steinley  
Regina Walsh Acres

Mr. Corey Tochor  
Saskatoon Eastview

[The committee met at 19:00.]

**The Chair:** — Well good evening and welcome to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. My name is Warren Michelson. I am the Chair of this committee. Along with me is . . . Other members of the committee are Doyle Vermette, Yogi Huyghebaert, Russ Marchuk, Kevin Phillips, Warren Steinley, and Corey Tochor. Tonight we have two substitutions. Paul Merriman is sitting in for Warren Steinley, and John Nilson is sitting in for Doyle Vermette.

We have a document that needs to be tabled: IAJ 22/27, Minister of Justice and Attorney General response to questions raised at the April 9th, 2014 meeting of committee regarding Bill 113 and Bill 120, dated April 29th, 2014. That being tabled, we'll welcome you all here.

We'll begin the consideration of the estimates tonight. This evening the committee will be considering the estimates and supplementary estimates of the Ministry of Justice. Before I begin, I would like to remind the officials to introduce themselves when they're speaking for the purpose of Hansard.

We will now begin our consideration of vote no. 3, Justice, central management and services, subvote (JU01).

**General Revenue Fund  
Justice  
Vote 3**

**Subvote (JU01)**

**The Chair:** — I'd like to welcome Minister Wyant and Minister Tell and their officials. And, Minister Wyant, if you've got some opening remarks, please do them now.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm here with Minister Tell to present the budget on behalf of the Ministry of Justice and on behalf of Policing and Corrections. And perhaps, if it's all right with the Chair, I'll ask Minister Tell if she'll make her opening comments, and I'll make my opening comments after that.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Tell.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good evening. I'm pleased to be here tonight to provide highlights of Corrections and Policing's 2014-15 financial plan, and to answer the questions that will be forthcoming.

I am joined by a number of officials from the ministry tonight. With me at this table are my deputy minister, Dale McFee, to my left; and of course the Hon. Gordon Wyant, Minister of Justice Attorney General, and his deputy minister, Kevin Fenwick. All our other officials are seated at the back. As there is a combination, there's two ministries combined into one here. It wouldn't serve us well for us to name all of the officials. But I can assure the Chair that everybody's here that will be needed to answer any question that will be forthcoming.

Our plan and budget aligns with the government's direction and budget for 2014-15, building on the principle of steady growth,

and supporting an ongoing focus on sound economic growth and shared prosperity. In partnership with the Attorney General, we will continue to build safer communities by reducing crime with programs and initiatives that recognize the needs of the communities and individuals and that serve as a model for leadership and innovation across government. Corrections and policing's budget supports justice programs through an investment of 413 million in 2014-15. This is an increase of \$6 million and is 1.4 per cent higher than the previous appropriation.

As part of the Saskatchewan child and family agenda, the 2014-15 budget contains funding for an expansion of the building partnerships to reduce crime or the BPRC initiative. BPRC is Saskatchewan's commitment to address the root causes of crime and victimization through an evidence-based approach which involves human services, police, and local authorities and communities. By working collaboratively on prevention, intervention, and suppression, we are working to increase community safety and wellness. I would note that BPRC model is gaining national attention as other jurisdictions look to Saskatchewan for ways to address community safety and crime prevention efforts. In 2014-15 budget, \$860,000 of funding will provide a grant to BPRC to help advance communities' mobilization efforts related to reducing crime and increasing community wellness and safety.

To date we've had significant success with the expansion of this initiative. As of March 2014, 10 communities have developed and implemented Hubs, a multi-disciplinary group of front-line workers who provide immediate intervention and short-term solutions. These communities include Prince Albert, Yorkton, La Ronge, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Estevan, Weyburn, Nipawin, Lloydminster, and Swift Current. And we know that there are several other communities interested in this collaborative and evidence-based approach.

As part of this budget, two additional centres of responsibilities, or the CORs [centre of responsibility] as they're more commonly known, will be implemented in 2014. The CORs include human service professionals who collaborate on longer term solutions to crime reduction and victimization. This funding will provide for the implementation of a long-term policing strategy, which is consistent with my mandate. It will also provide for the implementation of the police college's strategic plan, the review of the Police Commission, and further strategic work on BPRC.

The ministry received over \$100,000 to support mental health assessments in custody facilities. This funding will provide resources that assist offenders to manage the risks associated with mental health challenges while in custody. It will also ensure a strong reintegration plan with appropriate connections to their communities.

RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] funding will increase by \$2.8 million for 2014-15 to honour the 20-year agreement with the federal government for provision of RCMP services for Saskatchewan. An increase in funding of \$625,000 will support provincially funded municipal police officers. This money provides each of the 125 provincially funded municipal police officers in the province with an additional \$5,000 per. The

south Saskatchewan women's remand centre, or White Birch, is now operational. The ministry received \$1.2 million to support the operation of this facility.

We are also continuing to make investments in both physical and IT [information technology] infrastructure. Capital funding of \$15 million is provided to complete construction of the new living units at the Prince Albert Provincial Correctional Centre. This will add 72 cells or 144 beds to this facility. A further \$7 million will be allocated to continuing the implementation of an IT system for the ministry, expanding video court availability, and maintaining custody facilities.

We are also taking steps to ensure that adequate funding is directed toward core programming to improve the effectiveness of the ministry. This budget and the ministry plan will enable us to continue to work collaboratively with other ministries, other levels of government, police, and community-based organizations to achieve our shared objectives on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens.

Those are the highlights, Mr. Chair, and I would be pleased to answer your questions or turn the presentation over to Minister Wyant. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well again good evening, Mr. Chair, members of the committee. I'm pleased to be here on behalf of the Ministry of Justice to provide highlights of the Attorney General's 2014-2015 financial plan and of course to answer any questions.

I'm joined by a number of officials from the ministry. With me at the table are Kevin Fenwick, deputy minister of Justice and deputy attorney general. And as Minister Tell has noted, Minister Tell is with me as well as Deputy Minister Dale McFee. There are other officials from the ministry that are here today and they will introduce themselves when required.

Mr. Chair, our plan and budget will support the government's priority of sustaining steady growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people. We are meeting the challenges of growth and securing a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people through the delivery of a responsive and responsible justice system. In partnership with Corrections and Policing, we will grow neighbourhoods by promoting safe communities. We will also reduce crime and improve public confidence in the justice system through prevention, intervention, and suppression.

The Attorney General's budget supports justice programs through an investment of \$182 million in 2014-15. This is an increase of \$3 million and is 1.8 per cent higher than the previous appropriation. There is a lot of important work that continues to support the government goal of promoting safe communities and the Saskatchewan child and family agenda.

The reallocation of \$240,000 will support the creation of the council for children office in the 2014-15 fiscal year. This will provide children with legal representation to ensure their voice is heard in child protection matters before the courts. This is particularly important when apprehended children disagree with parental or ministerial perspectives.

We are further supporting children in our province by providing

\$140,000 of funding towards school-based restorative justice programs. The expansion of school peer mediation programs complements Saskatchewan action plan to address bullying and cyberbullying.

Our ministry is also working to improve access to services and supports for victims of crime through a major expansion of victims services programming in Saskatchewan.

The province-wide expansion of police-based victims services will ensure every community and resident has access to these important services. Work is well under way for expanding the remaining 24 police jurisdictions which will begin receiving services in 2014 and '15.

In addition to improving services for victims of crime, we are supporting adults and children in vulnerable circumstances. More resources are being provided to the Public Guardian and Trustee to address increasing responsibility and complexity in its protection of the financial affairs of vulnerable adults and children. This is a fundamental aspect of securing a high quality of life for these Saskatchewan residents.

The ministry also received funding to support the continued operation of core service of the court system and core justice programs. *The Justices of the Peace Act* authorized the establishment of the Saskatchewan Justice of the Peace Compensation Commission. The commission focused on the constitutional imperative of protecting a JP's [Justice of the Peace] judicial independence through financial security. The commission's required recommendations resulted in increased ministry funding of \$2.5 million for JPs' salaries.

We are also continuing to make investments in both physical and IT infrastructure. Capital funding of \$8.8 million is provided to complete construction of an addition to the Saskatoon Court of Queen's Bench to allow relocation of the family law division. Funding of \$600,000 will support tenant improvements to the Saskatoon Provincial Court House. A further \$6.3 million will be allocated to either continuing or completing the implementation of two IT systems for the ministry, expanding video court availability and maintaining circuit points.

This budget and ministry plan will enable us to continue to work collaboratively with other ministries, other levels of government, policing services, the judiciary, community-based organizations, and the people of Saskatchewan to achieve our shared objectives.

In closing, the Ministry of Justice plays a key role in our province. While we are proud of our accomplishments over the past year, we recognize that there is still work to be done. We will continue to collaborate with our government and community partners to achieve greater success in the delivery of programs and services. The funding for the 2014-15 fiscal year will ensure the ministry continues to play this role for our government.

Mr. Chair, those are the highlights, and I would now be pleased to answer any questions about our 2014-15 plan and budget for the Attorney General.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister Wyant. We'll open the floor for questions. Mr. Nilson.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good evening and welcome to everybody. We've got quite an audience here, so I appreciate that, and we'll see if we can organize this so everybody gets a chance to say something, like a good party.

My first question relates to how your budget is organized. Because I listened to your comments, and you both talked about amounts of money, but they don't really show up when you look at the estimates. So can you explain how the two are melded together? I know when I look back a few years they were separated out, but last year and this year it's all combined together. So perhaps you can explain for the public and for me how the accounting works on pages 91 to, I guess, 96.

[19:15]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Perhaps I'll answer the question this way. The budget that's been presented in years past has been fairly consistent. What has happened with this particular budget is that custody supervision, community safety outcomes, policing, and the Police Commission have been melded into the budget for the Attorney General. So those are the four areas that have been added to our budget. As you know, the two ministries operate together under one budget. So that's the four items that have been added to the budget which would have formally been presented by the Attorney General.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And so where have these amounts come from? How were they reported last year?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — You may recall that these items were presented this way in last year's budget. But those are the items that got moved in once the budget of Policing and Corrections and the budget for the Attorney General were moved together.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. I just asked the question because listening to your comments at the beginning, it was hard to tell where any of those numbers matched anything that's being reported and so it's difficult. I mean, given that I obviously know this budget fairly well, I could figure out where the things come, but when you're reporting and giving your overall amount for the budget, it's not anywhere here that's obvious. Like I think you gave a \$182 million figure as a budget for Justice. Well I don't see that number anywhere in here.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The subtotals between the Attorney General and Policing and Corrections aren't specifically set out in the budget, but all the items that are referenced are in the budget.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Well I hope so. That's why you're here, to answer that question. But I think, I mean I just maybe suggest that there might be some better way for all of us if it was clearer or if there was just one presentation and then we went from there. Now practically what it means as far as I can tell is that where you have things like central management and services, you've put all that together. But it's not clear for example when you were talking about the IT dollars, like are those together or separate? Or is that the same project that you were each talking about, or is this two separate projects?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The IT capital is all referenced in one area in the budget, but that supports activities in both ministries.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. So are there some shared IT services and then some separate IT services? Is that what that means?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — They're project-based IT projects, so to the extent that they may support either the Attorney General or CP [Corrections and Policing] or in fact both in some circumstances.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So can you explain how that works? Maybe you should start with . . . My rather standard question is, how many IT programs are you running in Justice these days?

**Mr. Tulloch:** — Dave Tulloch. I'm the executive director of corporate services. The information management branch services the entire ministry on both sides of the ministry. When we have projects that cross both sides of the ministry, we would sort of manage it in a project basis so that it comes across on either side. But we try not to sort of manage it as if it's one side of the ministry or the other side of the ministry. We manage it on a whole.

And in this year we've got two projects. The criminal justice information management system, CJIMS, and that's a project, it's a good example of a project that crosses both sides of the ministry. And you know, it's being set up to operate across the criminal justice system, which both sides of the ministry have a role to play in. We also share that project with the ITO [information technology office], and they've got some funding for it. And I believe the total is about 10.7 million — about 8.7 from the Ministry of Justice and 2 million from the ITO — and that shows up in the ITO budget.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So the 2 million shows up in the ITO budget, 8.7 in your combined budget here. It kind of begs the question, and I wasn't necessarily going to ask questions like this, but do you have any monies allocated in here for lean or lean-specific exercises or activities?

**Mr. Tulloch:** — Not as it relates to the information technology budget, not specifically. But we will have other projects that we can speak to on lean, if you want to go down the lean path.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. No, I might as well start off with that. It just strikes me in this, just even how you do your budget, you might want to use a little lean process.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Perhaps I'll ask Deputy Minister Fenwick to begin that discussion.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Yes, Kevin Fenwick, deputy minister of Justice and deputy attorney general. We have been using some lean processes within the ministry, and we have on occasion in the past engaged the services of some outside consultants. However what we have also done is we have had a number of people within the ministry who have been trained as lean leaders. And so for this year, for example, we are not budgeting anything specifically at this point for outside consultants.

There's no line or operating budget for lean exercises in the

ministry. No lean consultants have been contracted for '14-15 at this time. It's not impossible that at some point down the road we might decide that we want to use outside consultants, but our plan at this point is to use our internal lean leaders to facilitate the majority of lean exercises. If we decide that we want to go down that route for a particular complex project, we won't necessarily exclude the possibility that we might use someone from outside.

It's certainly difficult, probably more difficult, to estimate the cost of lean when we're using those internal resources. The time and cost of lean projects vary according to the scope of the project. We've done some value stream mapping exercises. They typically last about four days. Typically we would use six to eight participants with one particular project.

We have a number of agencies within the ministry that have used lean exercises within the ministry. Our provincial guardian and trustee is here, Ron Kruzeniski, for example, who has done a number of lean exercises in his agency. Our prosecutions branch has done some lean exercises as well. For example, looking at the file transfer process in the northwest prosecutions office, I can tell you that that was a four-day exercise, that it involved seven people. We used a lean exercise for Saskatoon traffic court as well. That was a four-day process that involved 12 people.

We believe that we have seen benefits with respect to those processes, but are at this point looking at relying on our internal lean leaders in order to facilitate those processes. I think we're actually fortunate that we have a number of people within the ministry whose job it is on a day-to-day basis to facilitate processes. So this is just one more particular processes that they can be involved in.

**Mr. Nilson:** — How many lean leaders are there that are fully trained within the department?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — We have eight. I'm just looking for that answer, Mr. Nilson, and I'm going to look to our officials. But my recollection is that it's eight. I actually highlighted that question in anticipating it, and because it's highlighted, of course that's the one I can't see. So yes, the answer is eight. We have eight internal people who are trained up as lean leaders.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So the examples that you gave, are those the main examples? Or do you have quite a few more examples of projects that have been ongoing over the last year or two?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — Those are good examples. We did one larger exercise as well that was a value stream mapping exercise to identify our core business lines within the ministry. That is lean-like, if I can call it that. And that would be a major project as well because it was ministry wide. There have been other exercises across the ministry as well. And again at this point, I'm only speaking about the Attorney General side of the ministry. I'm not commenting on the Corrections and Policing side. There have been, within the Public Guardian and Trustee for example, there was more than one exercise looking at different aspects of that business.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So you've identified your core business lines. Are they about what we all expected, or has this produced

something unusual?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — We haven't radically changed the way we've done business as a result of that, but we thought it was important to do that as a first step. Now we haven't, at this point, gone back in to do the more detailed value stream mapping with respect to those individual lines. We may do that down the road. We're engaged in a larger strategic planning exercise right now within the ministry anyway, so we had decided that we would hold off on sort of the detailed value stream mapping until we've done that. But no, I mean we haven't remade the ministry as a result of that exercise, no.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So I can summarize it. You're working to look at a whole number of parts of the ministry, using some critical thinking and Saskatchewan common sense, but given the flavour of the day you're calling it lean. Would that be an accurate description?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — Well lean certainly is a particular process and some would describe it as different than other similar processes. I'm not sure I would agree with necessarily the flavour of the day, but it's a process that certainly has allowed us to find efficiencies in the way that we do some of our work. Could we have found those efficiencies with some other process? I'm not sure I can answer that because lean was the process that we happened to use.

[19:30]

**Mr. Nilson:** — Well I was curious that you referenced the prosecutions department because one of the interesting issues I think for the Ministry of Justice — because not many other people would actually think about this — is to look at the whole process from the initial complaint to the police, to laying charges, to the prosecutor, to getting it into court and then dealing with it in the court, then if it's a criminal matter, getting people into jail, and then how you deal with them that way. And so, you know, practically have you been looking across the processes that you actually control with this same kind of a critical eye?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — I would say the answer to that is yes, but we have more to do. One of the areas of interest I think for all of us in the ministry is those seamless transfers from various players within the system. So the process that we looked at was primarily with respect to file transfers within prosecutions proper in that particular region. But what we're interested in now, consistent with the philosophy behind the Hubs and the CORs and getting rid of silos within the ministry and between ministries, is making sure that we have processes that are, I think where you're suggesting, is that need to be broader than just prosecutions proper. So we'd started to do that, but are very interested in doing more.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. And I think part of it is that often different parts of the system don't understand that they're part of a broader choice and that a simple decision at one place ends up costing a lot of money for the Minister of Corrections.

And so perhaps I can ask about the Corrections side. I guess that's how we have to do it is one side and then the other. But are there specific activities that you're doing in Corrections that

are different than what I've just heard?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Well I think from a specific project basis, ours are different. I'm not sure that that's what you're wanting to hear at this point in time, the individual projects. I'll let Deputy Minister McFee go through exactly the similar process that Deputy Fenwick went through, if that's okay? Okay.

**Mr. McFee:** — Thanks, Mr. Chair. In relation to the question that you're asking in the area of Corrections and Policing of engaged and continuous improvement process — and that's something we've done I know for the last just about two years — and what that is is continuous improvement, is basically looking at, just as you described, ways that we can look at the entire business, figure out what drives the business, and then use lean as a methodology or as a tool to bring focus to that.

And I think that's where it's really helped us is taking that tool and taking it to individuals and helping them map out what's good, what's not good, and what needs to improve. And what that leads to is basically an understanding or a format where you can bring exactly what you're talking about, collaboration or communication among other ministries, to understand what you're doing.

So the lean methodology has really brought that focus to us. And we have three examples. I'll let the minister speak to what we are doing. And one of those specifically is the enterprise project or the life cycle of the offender. But the life cycle of an offender is cradle to grave. It's, you know, from birth to they pass away.

And we all know that a lot of the predictable, preventable stuff and the cross-ministry work, if we actually look at this with a tool such as lean, we can come up with some probably some good things and ways that we can change our business and of course look at other things such as better service delivery, better outcomes for client, and also obviously bending the cost curve.

As far as ministry-specific, obviously we have a large staff in the neighbourhood of 2,800. We have roughly 200 to 250 staff that have completed the foundational training. So the reason behind that is so people actually understand the methodology, understand what we're trying to talk about, and then they basically can have a focus in relation to what we're trying to accomplish when we go through this process.

We have 15 to 20 of those that have completed the lean practitioner training. And then we have a staff that are basically two or there's a staff of three that are continued to dedicate a continuous improvement teamwork which basically lean is a part of that. It's not everything but it's a strong part of that again as a process. And honestly, looking at the incarceration rates and stuff, it is the simple and easiest way that we can actually start to get out of some of the incarceration problems we have and some of the crime problems we have and reducing recidivism. So it's allowed us to bring a lot of clarity through a structured process which has identified our priorities. And just like moneyballing, the system has allowed us now to focus on individual events or individuals to better outcomes for the front lines. And if you want to speak on specific ones, we can give you some examples.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — [Inaudible] . . . I think you make a very good point in terms of the need to cross those jurisdictional boundaries, as it were. And so if I can pick up on something that Deputy Minister McFee said, the life cycle of the offender event that he talked about involved representatives from probably about eight different ministries. And I was able to take part in some of that as well.

And I can tell you that at the closing phases of that, for example, there were I think seven deputies that were present or eight deputies that were present. And I think it's a good example of what we are trying very hard to do, and it's to get rid of those silos and to make sure that there is a broad spectrum approach for these types of things. So the point you raise I think is a good one, and I think that life cycle of the offender is a good example of how we're moving to address that.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So did that include looking at issues like fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and its influence on the system? Because one of my specific questions tonight was going to be whether you had done an assessment of how much that costs both the justice system and the corrections system because I think the dollars are very, very large.

**Mr. McFee:** — And the focus of that, Mr. Speaker, is basically that and some . . . So first of all, as Deputy Minister Fenwick has said, is not only did we have ministries there but we had CBOs [community-based organization], we had non-government agencies there, we had our policing partners, we had clients that actually have went through the system. And then we did some advanced surveys with some victims as well, so putting the face of the client at the centre of this.

And yes, what we've looked at now in our ministry, particularly led by Minister Tell, is we've got an area of six areas of focus that we're moving into a strategic plan that we want to focus in. Those fundamentally are the things that are driving the system. And one of those is mental health and addictions. Of course fetal alcohol comes out of there. So I mean mental health and addictions is something that obviously is a priority for us, Hubs and CORs which we talked about last year in relation to the 75/25/5 rule in policing — 75 per cent being non-criminal — you know, using the early intervention, using the partnerships as you're seeing in that lean event, to draw out the expertise and ask what we can do to help versus respond to it after the fact when it's in the system.

The third part of that is serious violent offenders. We know that they're responsible for 50 per cent of recontact. We've now studied the communities in our own province. And now we can look at the science and what the science tells us in how we can be more successful. So when you start pulling all three of those down, not just one, you start to make a difference.

And then of course you move over to the system and you look at jobs and literacy. And you look at trying to improve that and connecting jobs to the economy. And then you look at alignments. So making sure that what we're getting from data out of the Hubs and CORs, what we're getting from data out of policing, that we're actually aligning to the priorities that make a difference at the local community. And to the other one which you've commented on is to actually look at sentencing practice or system practices that are contributing to that.

So those are the six areas of focus. It was a big part of this. It now becomes even clearer. And when you start to look at it through an enterprise lens, which lean has given us, it's allowing us now to look at a spectrum that we haven't looked at before.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Well thanks for that explanation. Just a straight factual question. What are the correctional numbers right now? Because that's kind of kept track of . . .

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — You mean the offender count?

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, the offender count, if that's how you describe it.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — I will just speak to the adult average daily count, in all our adult correctional facilities, is 1,530. And if you're interested at all in our young offenders facilities . . .

We're having a challenge trying to locate our average daily counts for young offenders and when we get that we will certainly give that to you.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Perhaps we can compare the . . . I think it was April 22nd last year you gave me this information, average daily count, and then the number of spaces that you had available. And obviously from your opening remarks there's a few new spaces so there'll be more than what there was. But last year there were 1,402 bed spaces and you had 215 people in temporary spaces. If that information is available under the adult side, perhaps you could provide that to me.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — What?

**Mr. Nilson:** — What's the average daily count? And how many are in temporary spaces and how many are in other spaces? I know when I used to be the minister I asked for this every Monday morning and so it's possible to get that.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — We have in custody in our youth facilities 134 average daily count. And in those facilities, we're running about 60 per cent capacity. Now with respect to the average daily count in adult facilities, their total bed capacity is 1,537 total throughout the province.

**Mr. Nilson:** — How many of those are permanent bed spaces and how many are temporary access, I know, using classrooms and gyms and other places like that?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Six hundred and sixty-four are contingency bed spaces.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Six hundred and sixty-four out of the 1,537 are contingency beds?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Okay, the cell count in our provincial correctional centres total 873. Contingency bed count, double bunk is 234; dorm space is 430.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And that gives us the total of 1,537?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Yes, with that total, those numbers I just gave you is 664 total and then your totals will add up to 1,530.

[19:45]

**Mr. Nilson:** — So then this year there are no inmates in temporary spaces, although some of these are, like the doubling-up in the dorms, are not necessarily ideal, would be my perspective. Is that correct?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — With respect to saying that we don't have anybody in contingency spaces would be inaccurate. It depends on what day you're taking that snapshot. So you know, it ebbs and flows depending on the count.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay, so there are times when people are in some of these other places. One of the reasons that I'm asking this, and sort of following these numbers over the last few years, relates to some of the Criminal Code changes federally which affected the length of sentences for some people, and also added more jail time in a way. Have you been able to track the effect of some of those federal changes on the provincial correctional system? I'm assuming you might even have information about how it affects the federal system, where the longer sentences are served. But do you have information as to how it affects the provincial system?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — We're not noticing anything of any significance with respect to the increases, yes.

**Mr. Nilson:** — But the numbers are still probably 50 per cent higher than about 10, 12 years ago. Is that correct?

**Mr. McFee:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Nilson, I think the better answer to that is the increase in our, basically, inmate count is very specific to remand. And that is really where the influx in the population comes, and remand counts are going straight up. And if you look since 1998, basically you're looking at an increase, 24 per cent of increase in the count. 98.9 per cent of that, I think, comes from remand.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Well I understand, and that's confirmed in what you said last year. So using your common sense Saskatchewan solutions, are you able to address this remand issue, or is that something that's almost impossible to solve? I mean obviously it's not just in Corrections. It's the court system that's very involved with this as well.

**Mr. McFee:** — You make a very valid point. And something that I had a discussion with Deputy Minister Fenwick as early as the end of last week is, roughly, in that remand population, 46 per cent of them serve one to seven days. So there are some serious things that we can look at right across the system in relation to how we can address it.

And remand isn't always a judicial function. Certainly the police play a role in that right throughout the system. Everybody plays a role in relation to that. So when you look at the six pillars that we're talking about, all of those things also play a role with remand and sentencing practices or system practices.

So to the point, can we address some of those things? Yes, we can. Will we address some of those things? Yes, we can. The data that we just got is as early as last Friday just because we're doing that analysis, a detailed analysis because unfortunately I



don't think this has ever been looked at across the country in relation to what remand is doing to the system.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay, thank you for that comment. And now I think I'll ask a question of the Minister of Justice. He'd identified that there was, I think, \$2.6 million or \$2.5 million for basically the professionalization of the Justice of the Peace. And that I'm assuming is dollars well spent to deal with exactly this issue of remand. And perhaps you can explain if that's the justification you used when you persuaded the Finance minister to give you extra money.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well I'll start by saying that, as you know, there's the issue of judicial independence of the Justice of the Peace is a concern. So we moved forward with legislation that allowed us to set up a commission to set the salaries of the justices of the peace independently of executive government, and that's what we did. So the commission came back with its report. So the salary increases that are reflected in the budget are as a result of the report which was accepted by the government in terms of that compensation. So that's where that salary increase came from, and it was based on 49 per cent of the Provincial Court judges' salaries. So that's where that number comes from, and that was established by virtue of the commission.

**Mr. Nilson:** — But my specific question is, that the reason that you would make these people more professional and compensate them well is to deal exactly with this question of remand and other process issues that result in increased numbers in the correctional system?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It's not our expectation that the results of the salary increase is going to materially affect the remand numbers. But I suspect that, as we move forward with a further review of the roles and responsibilities of the Justice of the Peace, that may have an affect. But it's too early at this point in time to predict what that might look like.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Well thank you for that careful answer which I think is appropriate in this area. Is anybody within the ministry jointly working on social impact bonds? The reason I ask that is that some of the first use of social impact bonds was in Corrections for building new prisons. And so can you give us an outline of what's being done in this area?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Within the ministry we're currently studying that particular issue. Certainly if we were to pursue social impact bonds within government, that would be something that the Ministry of Justice would be involved in internally through our civil law branch. But currently we're studying what their potential impact and affects could be on certain things. So we're studying it, and we're looking at it.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Have there been any new people hired to do this kind of work within the ministry or within the government?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There's been no one retained specifically to deal with this. It's being done internally within civil law, within our existing complement of FTEs [full-time equivalent].

**Mr. Nilson:** — Are you also making sure that you're keeping your independent, I call it that, financial services agency and all

of their officials apprised of what you're doing? Because this is a form of borrowing money that has some very tricky aspects to it.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The officials at FCAA [Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan] have not been part of these discussions so far. But certainly as we moved down the road, we would need to involve them in that process as we further study the issue. But at this particular point in time, that hasn't happened.

**Mr. Nilson:** — My question arises from a concern that I have personally about these types of borrowing, I guess because it is really a way of borrowing money from the private sector and then creating a very interesting method of compensating them. And I would sincerely request that you look very carefully at this.

There are a number of jurisdictions, New South Wales, England, a number . . . New York state, that have been looking at it, at these. And they do have a fair history coming out of Great Britain. But the actual number of successful projects are . . . there's not very many of them. And even then, they're quite suspect.

But this is something actually I've been following for a number of years, and so I was pretty surprised to hear the Premier and the Finance minister crowing about them on budget day. So that's interesting. I just give you my personal warning on that.

I think this whole area of working together through the system, I mean it's clear that your ministry has to work that way because your budget is so tied together. You're going to do that anyway. But I'm curious as to the next steps, which include the judiciary obviously and the private bar and I guess the legal aid, and I'm talking about the criminal justice system. Are there plans to keep working on some of these issues with a broader base? Because I don't think some of the issues you're dealing with are going to be able to be solved unless you get more of the actors into the process.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — Kevin Fenwick, deputy minister of Justice, deputy attorney general again. That's an excellent question, if I could say so, and the answer is a resounding yes. And I'd give one specific example of that: the Corrections and Policing side of the ministry. And we within the ministry still sort of struggle with the language as we work together, and we tend to talk somewhat colloquially about the AG [Attorney General] side, the CP side, and what we call the middle, which is the areas where we are already amalgamated, as it were.

But even in those areas where we're not amalgamated . . . And my colleague, Deputy Minister McFee referred a while ago to the six pillars that Corrections and Policing is talking about. One of those pillars specifically deals with sentencing practices. And when I talked to our provincial director of prosecutions about that issue and said, we need to make sure that we're working closely with CP with respect to the pillar involving sentencing, to his credit, he looked at the six pillars and came back to me and said, actually we need to be working on much more than the one pillar dealing with sentencing. There are at least three of those pillars that are crucial to the work that the Attorney General side does as well.

So I think we have made great strides at becoming one ministry and having working groups and executive committees that are cross-pollinating, if I can call it that, and working together. So you're absolutely right. We need to do that. We are doing that. The ministry was separate ministries for a long time, so we need to sort of change the culture and the patterns a little bit, but we're going in that direction. And the example of our senior staff saying no, no, it's not enough just to take one; we need to work much closer than that, I think is a good example of how that culture is changing.

[20:00]

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you for that answer. I know that before I got into politics I was quite involved with crime prevention councils, and it's very much just a different language describing what you're trying to do. You know, they tried to basically get the chief of police, the head of Social Services, the head of the hospital system, the Attorney General, everybody, because you can't solve some of these problems without all the decision makers in the same room. And so I'm happy to hear that you're doing that, but you're going to . . . Well you will need support from a much broader array to get at some of these particular questions.

So I'm welcomed here with Mr. David Forbes, who has some specific questions that he'd like to ask, and if it's okay, Mr. Chair . . . Mr. Forbes.

**The Chair:** — I notice he's helped himself to our water. Mr. Forbes, go ahead please.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much. And I have two sets of questions, and one is around the bullying initiative and what the intention or the role that the Minister of Justice or the Ministry of Justice will be playing within that. And I know that in the fall when it was released, in the article that was in *The StarPhoenix*, the minister had thought at that point that they wouldn't be introducing their own laws to complement the federal government's anti-bullying legislation but continue to look at best practices in other provinces, and that this may be continued to be raised at the federal-provincial-territorial tables to see what other provinces are doing. And so I'm just curious what you've learned and what are the initiatives and how the government will be, from the Justice point of view, supporting the bullying initiatives in the province.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well perhaps I'll start this dialogue a little bit by saying that when we . . . We are very, very supportive of the amendments that the federal government had brought forward to the Criminal Code. We thought they were very, very important. At the same time, we did hear that there was at least one province who was bringing forward specific legislation especially around the area of cyberbullying. You'll be well aware of that.

We continue to look to see what other provinces are doing from a Justice perspective in terms of specific provincial legislation. But at this particular point in time, as I say, we are very supportive of the federal government's initiatives with respect to the amendments to the code, and we'll continue to look to see what other provinces are doing and monitoring the effects of that legislation.

And I think it's fair to say that it, as I mentioned in my answer to your question in question period, that it was too early at that particular point in time to assess the effectiveness of the legislation, and I was specifically referring to the Nova Scotia legislation. And I think it's fair to say that it is still a little bit too early to assess the effectiveness of that legislation, so we will continue to keep an eye on that and again continue to keep an eye on what other changes other provinces might be proposing around this area.

But we think that the changes that the federal government brought forward under the Criminal Code is a very, very good first step. And again it's too early to determine how successful those amendments will be because we're not aware that there's been any significant number of charges that have been brought under those new sections. But we'll continue to keep an eye on it. It's a very important issue, not only for our ministry but for the government as a whole, as you know.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Do you have anybody appointed within the ministry to monitor this, to keep track of news stories that are coming out of, as you say, reference Nova Scotia? British Columbia is another one. I know particularly British Columbia because it seems to be the one that, from the Minister of Education, there is an alignment in terms of the website and their initiatives. So it would be interesting to know. So I'm curious, is there a process? Are you keeping track of this, or is it hit and miss?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well together with Social Services we co-chair a provincial inter-ministerial committee on interpersonal violence and abuse. So to the extent that there is any work to be done in terms of seeing what's happening in other provinces, that will be done at that committee. So I think it's fair to say that there are people that are keeping an eye on what's happening, and we're doing that on an interdisciplinary or inter-ministerial approach because this is an issue that not only affects the Ministry of Justice but Social Services, Education, and Health, and it continues. So that's what we're doing to continue to monitor what's happening.

**Mr. Forbes:** — And so how often does that group meet? Who's involved in that group? Can you describe a little bit of their work?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — The Co-Chairs actually are a representative from the Ministry of Social Services who's with the office of the Status of Women, and the Co-Chair from the Ministry of Justice is Betty Ann Pottruff, who is our new counsel for children and a former executive director of the strategic initiatives and program support branch. So certainly in her current role as counsel for children, she's ideally suited to be heading up that working group.

They're looking at much more than just bullying. Bullying is part of it, but the strategy that we're working on is really to look at the broader issue of interpersonal violence and abuse. We believe that we need to take steps so that the kinds of violence that society unfortunately seems to accept are no longer acceptable.

So there are a range of things that we are considering bringing forward, the use of social media for example so that people can

have quick access to resources to give them the ability and the knowledge to say no, that's not acceptable any longer. Sometimes it's victims, but we actually think that there is excellent work that can be done with bystanders so that bystanders who are witnessing abuse and either don't know what to do or find it socially acceptable to do nothing, no longer find it socially acceptable to do nothing.

So there are a broad range I think of initiatives that need to be put in place, and we are hoping that we're going to be able to come forward with a wide-ranging strategy to address those issues. The specific concept of bullying and in particular cyberbullying is part of it, but just part of it.

**Mr. Forbes:** — So two questions coming out of that. One — and I'm not sure; maybe I missed your answer in terms of specifically how often — how many people are involved in this? What is the structure of this group? And the second question I'm looking for an answer to is, you mentioned the strategy, and when will the strategy be released? Or how will this play out? Is it going to be something the public will see, or is it an internal working strategy?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — So I'll make sure I've got all of the questions. The specific answer to how often the provincial committee meets is monthly. In terms of when we might have a strategy in place, we're hoping as early as this fall that we'll have the wide-ranging strategy, but parts of it are already under way. We're already doing some things. And in terms of the provincial committee meeting monthly, we're also part of a national working group that's looking at the same issues. So we have some specific things that we're trying to do in Saskatchewan. We're benefiting from the experience of other provinces, and we're contributing to a national strategy as part of that national working group.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Is this national strategy coming out of the bullying discussions that happened at the federal-provincial-territorial thing, or is this something that's been going for a couple of years?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — The answer is both. There's a national steering committee on family violence. There's also a working group on cyberbullying. It's difficult to say that one necessarily was the genesis of the other. The national steering committee on family violence would have come first, but cyberbullying is part of that. So both of those things are happening independently but in an interrelated manner, if that makes sense.

**Mr. Forbes:** — So when might we see, or is there any plans of a public release or an update of what's happening with the national work? And what's their timelines?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — The steering committee on family violence has already released its report. And the working group on the cyberbullying, their work was what resulted in the amendments to the Criminal Code. So a lot of that work has already been released.

**Mr. Forbes:** — So how would somebody find their work? It's online, or is it public? Or how does one access that?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — Sure. We can certainly send you a copy of it.

It would be accessible online. I can't at this point give you the particular site, but we could certainly get that for you. Yes, by all means.

**Mr. Forbes:** — For sure, absolutely. And your answers remind me of another set of questions. But I do want to say, counsel for children, that's a very good initiative, and we're pleased to hear that. I mean always government would like to do it sooner. But I know the Children's Advocate's been calling for it, but better late than never. And I'd be curious if you could tell us more about their initiatives. There's some training that's going to be going on. But I think this is an important, important initiative.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — With respect to the counsel for children, the Public Guardian and Trustee will establish a roster of lawyers who will be trained to provide support, legal counsel to children who are in child protection hearings. And they will be working with the Law Society of Saskatchewan to establish that roster, and that training will start relatively quickly. So I am not sure if that answers your question. But the fact that the roster will be created . . . There will be an application process. People will be vetted and then trained so that there'll be lawyers available for children in child protection hearings across the province.

**Mr. Forbes:** — One of the questions will be that, you know, how does a child or how does . . . And I don't know how it works in terms of a family approach. How does one make the connection to get access to counsel?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Counsel can be provided either by way of an order of the court through the Court of Queen's Bench and, with the amendments that we're making to *The Provincial Court Act*, as a result of an order of a judge of the Provincial Court. Counsel can be appointed at the request of the child, at the request of any particular person that may have an interest in the proceedings, by the child advocate, or by the Public Guardian and Trustee. There'll be a set of criteria that's set out to make the determination as to whether or not counsel is appropriate in any particular case. But that's how the process will work or at least who can request the appointment of counsel.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Will there be any communications and/or advertising or way that will let people know that this service is now available?

[20:15]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It's anticipated and it's expected that anywhere where there's a contact point of a child in the system, anybody involved at that particular contact point will be trained. So there'll be training for social workers, court workers. Judges will be aware of the new program as a result of communication at that level, as well as members of the bar. It's anticipated that the website will also contain information in terms of access and how to get that access. So there certainly won't be any shortage of training to those people who will be in immediate contact with a child who may or may not need counsel in those circumstances.

**Mr. Forbes:** — I appreciate the fine balance here.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I think it's clear we want to make sure . . . And the reason for the program is not to exclude children from protection, but to make sure that children who need counsel in those . . . get that counsel. So that's the entire idea of the project. It's not to kind of restrict who's entitled to counsel. It's to make sure that those who need counsel get counsel.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Now would there be any restrictions to on- and off-reserve children?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There'll be no restriction to access. The question in terms of who pays for that representation is still an open question. Certainly whether it's a provincial government responsibility or a federal government responsibility, for children on-reserve for instance, that hasn't been completely worked out yet. But I think the simple answer to your question is that there will be no restriction in terms of who's entitled to protection.

Certainly if the court ordered that there'd be counsel in a particular case, then that will happen, as well as if the request were made from other people. So I guess it comes down to a question of who's paying for it. But the simple answer to your question is, there'll be no restriction.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well thank you very much. And again it has a lot of promise and we, you know, from the opposition think this is a great step forward. So thank you very much. Much appreciated.

The other set of questions I have is something that's just incredibly moving so quickly I can hardly believe it, actually. And I know you and I have talked a lot about gender, birth certificates, and ID [identification], and that type of thing. And it's hard to know who the minister is that's really in charge here, because we look across the province, across the country and we have a Health minister making an announcement in one province and we have the Justice minister making an announcement in Alberta. And I see that in Manitoba it was the Minister of Tourism who made the announcement. And so I don't know really who has jurisdiction. But I'll start with the Minister of Justice because we're here tonight.

And so the question really arises, and we've had our own situation in Saskatchewan where a mother wants ID rules changed to the point of not including gender identity. But the other provinces have moved really quickly to eliminate the need for surgery to happen before the gender is changed on the birth certificate or the ID. And I'm just curious whether the ministry is following this issue across Canada.

You know, we had in British Columbia on March 11th the BC [British Columbia] government introduced a bill to remove a significant roadblock on this issue. Then we had Manitoba on April 25th proposed changes to *The Vital Statistics Act* to better meet the needs of transgender people. And then, well it was on April 24th that the Alberta government said they won't appeal a court ruling striking down parts of provincial law about how transgender people can change their birth certificates. And then of course, this largely stemmed out of the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal that said that there were problems with the *Human Rights Code* there.

So have you set up anything within the ministry to take a look at this so that our province is up to date and won't find itself isolated in this area of human rights?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well let me start by saying that the issue of the vital statistics and the issue of the process in terms of surgery, those are issues which are properly directed to the Minister of Health. We know that there has been at least one file at the Human Rights Commission with respect to this issue and that they're investigating that, so I can't make any further comment on that.

But I will say that we know that the Human Rights Commission is keeping an eye on what's happening in other jurisdictions. So I guess that's the short answer to your question. It certainly isn't something that's being ignored by the commission. But we're waiting for their deliberations with respect to the one complaint, at least the one complaint now that's been filed. So we'll wait for that. But in terms of the issue of the birth certificates, those are properly put to the Minister of Health.

**Mr. Forbes:** — So is that your advice to the government today, that it's a Health issue and not a Justice issue? Because what they're saying in Alberta, and to quote the Minister of Justice there, he said that, well that Justice Brian Burrows ruled that the Alberta *Vital Statistics Act* discriminates against transgender people and said that it was inconsistent with the Constitution of Canada, and to that extent has no force or effect. And then the Justice minister, Jonathan Denis, said that the government agrees with this ruling. So it's actually going beyond the Human Rights Commission.

And this is why my earlier remarks talked about the speed at which this is changing. Because I know we've talked a lot about this, but it seems like every day, you know, another province is — especially on this issue of ID and surgery — is saying hey, we've got to change. And so they're advising their health people or their tourism people, I guess, I don't know, but that they have to change.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well as I mentioned before, there is this file that the Human Rights Commission has with respect to the gender issue on birth certificates. We will wait for the Human Rights Commission to give us their opinion on that before we decide how we will proceed. We haven't done any independent work on this at all. We're waiting for the Human Rights Commission to come down with their decision with respect to that particular issue, and perhaps that will inform how we proceed from there.

**Mr. Forbes:** — The case that's before the Human Rights Commission here in Saskatchewan, is that going through mediation or is that going through the court process?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well the process that this would go through would be first mediation. And if mediation was unsuccessful, it would ultimately go to the Court of Queen's Bench. I'm not in a position to comment tonight in terms of where they are in the process. They've just received the complaint. So one would think, without speaking out of turn, that they are still in the investigation stage, before they would engage in mediation. Of course they have to do that first. So that would be my preliminary answer, subject to being

corrected by the Chief Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission. But I suspect that's where it's at.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes, I just found this very interesting, in that what's happening across Canada, as I said, moving so quickly that even what may happen with the Human Rights Commission ruling here, you know, it may be left behind with what the rest of the country is doing in their world view of human rights vis-à-vis . . . And I know I've raised the issue in the House about amendments, but this is not the amendment discussion. This is just simply, as they say in Alberta, it's a constitutional issue. It's not even a human rights issue. They've taken it up even a higher notch.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We're not sure what the status of that particular case is, whether it's been appealed. We're not quite sure where that's at, so I'm not in a position to comment on that. But certainly, and as I'd made public comment about this before, we're interested to see what other provinces are doing in this area. And we'll continue to keep an eye on that.

**Mr. Forbes:** — But it sounds like it won't be appealed because the Justice minister, he agrees with the ruling so the ruling will stand. And so that's from what I'm taking from the reading of the news article.

But anyways I appreciate that, and I will continue to keep you informed of how this process goes. I have appreciated your attention to this issue over the course of the past year or so. And I think it's an important one, and I thank you for that. But again we'll be raising this and watching as well because I think it's an important issue. It's one that speaks to, we think, you know, one group who's fighting issues, but in terms of we want to have our strongest human rights legislation, as we've always had in Saskatchewan. So thank you for your answers, and I think I'd turn that back now over to my colleague for further questions.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you. I think I'll change it up a little bit here, and maybe come back to some of the other things that we were talking about earlier. But I'm going to ask some other questions. Can you give me an update on the whole issue around missing women and men, and the initiatives that the Ministry of Justice has been taking?

**Ms. Pottruff:** — Good evening. Betty Ann Pottruff. The provincial partnership committee on missing persons continues to meet regularly. There will be a missing persons week proclaimed in Saskatchewan May 8th to 10th. And we have a number of different themes for each day, five days of the week. The first day will deal with people who go missing as a result of being involved in high-risk lifestyles, and what can be done to prevent that. The second day, we'll be dealing with situations of when people go missing because of drowning, and what to do about preventing that. The third day, we'll look at mental health issues, particularly dementia, Alzheimer's, and what can be done to prevent that. And then we'll be dealing with runaways and how to prevent runaways on the fourth day. And the fifth day, we'll deal with parental child abduction and how to prevent that.

As well we've developed a guide for agencies who work with families who have missing persons that is available to them this year. And we continue to reach out through the victim services

that are providing support to families who have a missing person and along with the coordination with the police activities and the victim services policies generally.

So we've been quite active in terms of the last year of trying to continue to coordinate and work on these issues. We've also been working with our other jurisdictions in Western Canada to try to profile these issues. There are currently 119 missing long-term people in Saskatchewan. And they are predominantly men, but there are approximately 31 women. Seventeen of those are Aboriginal women.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you. Are you able to access the over \$1 million in the Victims' Fund to fund some of these activities?

**Ms. Pottruff:** — We are working with the actual resources of the various partners that they bring to the table, and that includes the resources the ministry can bring from victim services and other places to try to support the work we do.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Well thank you for that report. And just to confirm, is that May . . .

**Ms. Pottruff:** — May 4th to 10th.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So that's next week.

**Ms. Pottruff:** — Yes. There will be a launch in the T.C. Douglas Building May 5th, 9:30 in the morning, of the week.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. So we haven't heard anything about this.

**Ms. Pottruff:** — You'll see a press release on Friday.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Oh, okay. Well have some reporters . . . [inaudible] . . . but I think that's okay because this is good things that are done in a very difficult area. So thank you for that report.

My next question relates to the therapeutic courts and the structure that's there. Can you give an update on how that's going? I know there's continual evaluation of them. Are they serving their purpose? Perhaps you can give us a report on that.

**Ms. Pottruff:** — Okay. Well there are three domestic violence courts in Saskatchewan — North Battleford, Saskatoon, and Regina. All three of them have had sort of celebrations of their success in the past year. Regina's is upcoming, I believe May 9th. All of them continue to do very good work with families and with offenders and victims to reduce the incidence of offending to ensure that we receive . . . The cases are processed more quickly and normally involves guilty pleas being entered more quickly and offenders taking treatment, and that leading to a reduction in reoffending. So we're pleased with the progress of the domestic violence courts.

There are two drug treatment courts. There's the Regina drug treatment court and there's the Moose Jaw drug treatment court. The Moose Jaw drug treatment court is supported by the regional intersectoral committee in Moose Jaw and doesn't get any specific funding. So it deals with a much more limited number of offenders, but it has once again graduated people from its program who are drug free.

The Regina program has had 50 graduates since it commenced and is considered a success nationally. And we have the evaluation data to show that.

We also have two new mental health docket courts, one in Regina and one in Saskatoon. And they're just starting up so it's too early to really report on success.

[20:30]

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. And while we're talking about specialized courts, is the Cree court still working? And what's the report on that?

**Ms. Pottruff:** — The Cree court is still working and as well, the Aboriginal court up in Meadow Lake is still in process. And in both of them, their function is to sort of have more relevance with the community and make decisions and process which are more understood at the community level. And I believe both are still accomplishing that.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you. Now to a completely different area. Has there been any involvement of the Ministry of Justice in the federal initiative between Prime Minister Harper and President Obama around border issues? And it relates to trade. It relates to policing. It relates to a whole number of activities that have been initiatives that came out of the meeting of the two leaders. So is there any work that's being done in that area in the Ministry of Justice in Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There's been nothing directly related to any of those discussions in terms of what's being done in the ministry. But perhaps I'll ask Deputy Minister McFee to make a comment about some peripheral issues.

**Mr. McFee:** — Not related directly to the Obama-Harper discussions but related to Public Safety Canada, in the three pillars of the economics of community safety, Saskatchewan is championing nationally the new models for community safety. A large part of that is the work done in the Hub and the COR and the enterprise work and the interagency work. So we actually are leading that initiative on a national perspective. And that should cumulate or come to . . . I think the next meeting here is the next couple of months.

So we've done quite a bit of work in relation to that. There's three pillars. One's justice efficiencies. And we have the new pillars or the new models for community safety. So we do have a direct role with the federal government and are actually championing that from the province.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Thank you. My next question relates to the public registry system and the regulation of ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan]. And perhaps you can give us an update on that. I think we're not even into a full year of a private corporation. But this was one of the concerns that I know a number of us had last year.

**Ms. Amrud:** — Susan Amrud. As you say, we're coming up on to a year. May 30th will be a year that the new system has been in operation and ISC has been a private corporation delivering registry services pursuant to the master service agreement and the other registry agreements that the government entered into

with ISC for that purpose. There's a small office in the ministry that oversees that work, that contains the registrars of land titles and corporations branch personal property registry, and the controller of surveys. And so they provide day-to-day supervision to the corporation and direction on specific cases and also, you know, on a broader policy basis.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And have any problems arisen *vis-à-vis* the legislation the way it was set up and the fact that we're now dealing with a private corporation handling many of these issues?

**Ms. Amrud:** — No, I wouldn't say there's any problems. We continue to ensure that there's awareness in the community, particularly in the legal community, about the new arrangements. But we're working together on that and if, you know, documents are served on the corporation that should be served on the registrar in Justice, then they're transferred over. So there's, you know, we're working together with them.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Is the cost of the office fully cost recovered through the fees that are charged to the corporation? I'm not quite sure where it would show up in this combined budget, but perhaps you could explain how that works.

**Ms. Amrud:** — It wasn't set up in that way. There's a budget for the office and then all of the fees from the registry transactions go to the corporation, and under the master service agreement ISC is required to pay the government \$500,000 per year. And the first payment was made in February of this year. I believe February.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And is that number 500,000 in excess of the cost of the new registry that's set up or approximate cost? I just finished asking some questions about the oil industry and there they were doing 90 per cent cost recovery on oil well regulation.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The \$500,000 payment was agreed to in anticipation of the fact that there would be costs incurred by the government with respect to the operation of the office. So that's the simple answer to the question. There are costs associated with the operation of the office, and there is a \$500,000 payment which is made on an annual basis.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So is that \$500,000 payment fixed for five years or two years or ten years, or does it increase as the years go by?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The \$500,000 is fixed for the term of the contract.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And is that 20 years? Do I recall that?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It is 20 years.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Well it's another interesting aspect of that particular arrangement. Can you tell me if there are any issues related to the residential school litigation that's going on? I know, I think last year we had some issues around some of the things that were happening in Ile-a-la-Crosse, and perhaps you can give an update on that.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — Thank you very much for the question. As

you're aware, there's a class action suit that's been launched against the province with respect to the residential school issues. There were a number of new plaintiffs added within the last year. We have been gathering information and have been providing information as a result of those court actions, and in fact added a number of staff on short-term contracts in order to gather that information. And they're working out of the freedom of information and privacy branch of the ministry. So we're still at the stage where the best thing we can do to expedite those matters is to gather information and to supply that information to counsel on behalf of the plaintiffs, and that's what we're doing.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you. How many class actions are there against the government right now? I think, just to assist you, I think last year there were 27, so are there more or less?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — I'm informed that we have about 25 class actions where the government has been named in total now — not all involving residential schools, of course.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Does that mean that some have been resolved and you can actually tell us about them?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It appears that there have been none that have been resolved in the last year, but it may well be that there was one class which wasn't certified.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. So this is not a high-activity area for the ministry, but it is something that you're continuing to work on? Or does it take quite a few resources? I just . . . I'm not certain if it's a major expense of the government or not. Perhaps you could explain.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It is just simply by process very intensive work, and there's a lot of resources that need to be put aside to deal with these. And as a result of the fact that it's intensive, that it's a longer process, certainly discoveries and, as you know, how the court process works, discoveries tend to be a lot more complicated, a lot more difficult to do. So by its very nature it's, you know, it's not only resource intensive but it's a time-consuming process.

There were a number, Deputy Minister Fenwick has just advised, where there was a number which were certified but haven't proceeded past that stage as well. But certainly they're still resource intensive as well to prepare for the process should it start again.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So would the budget for those items show up under the civil law section? I guess that's the — I see it's here — 4.18 million. So that's where that expense is located?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — That's correct.

**Mr. Nilson:** — The tobacco litigation is ongoing I assume, and last year we were informed that an outside firm had been retained. Can you please give us an update on the litigation?

[20:45]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The tobacco litigation is proceeding in nine out of ten provinces. There are certainly some issues with

respect to jurisdictional challenges, and that's really where we're at. Some of the outside tobacco companies from outside Canada were challenging the jurisdictional issues but were defeated in their efforts in that regard. So I'm not sure if that answers your question, but certainly that process, that litigation is continuing, and it is again a resource-intensive process and it is taking some time.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So could you provide us a bit of a timeline as to what is expected as far as the litigation is concerned? I mean obviously it hasn't gone to trial yet, but is that a prospect within the next year or two?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — As you know, this is very, very complex litigation, not only from the perspective of the timelines that are involved, the damages that are being requested. There are a number of provinces, jurisdictions which were out front of this litigation that are proceeding in a quicker fashion. That may well inform things. But at the present time, it would be almost impossible to give you a time frame in terms of when things will, well certainly when they'll conclude but how the process will continue. So I don't really want to hazard a guess in terms of the timing.

But as you know, and I know you're aware of the claim, it's a very, very complicated piece of litigation, and the consortium who have been retained, obviously they're doing their job. But again it would be very difficult to determine or to give you any reasonable estimate as to when things will be going forward . . . well not going forward but, you know, proceeding to a conclusion.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Well thank you for that report, and obviously we'll have something to talk about next year on this one as well. There's no question about that.

How much money does the civil law side of Justice spend on outside lawyers? Presumably there's money for the tobacco litigation, but are there other places where outside lawyers are hired?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I don't have that number before me, but we can certainly provide it to you, Mr. Nilson.

**Mr. Nilson:** — I would appreciate that if you could. Are there monies being expended to hire lawyers in the United States at all?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The only time that we do that is when we need to retain counsel in the United States on trade matters that require a specific expertise from an American trade lawyer, especially when we're in, well specifically when we're in dispute with the Americans over trade barriers and those kinds of things. So that would be the most likely expenditure of funds with respect to US [United States] counsel.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Do we have counsel retained now on the COOL [country of origin labelling] litigation?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes we do have a counsel on retainer with respect to that particular matter.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Do you also have the law firm for Mr. Wilkins

on retainer through this fund of money?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The Ministry of Justice does not.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So I'm assuming by that answer, the government does but not the Ministry of Justice. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I'm not aware of that, Mr. Nilson, specifically. I mean I can tell you that the Ministry of Justice doesn't, but I don't have any information in front of me with respect to executive government specifically.

**Mr. Nilson:** — No. I just noticed year after year, there appears to be a specific contract for that law firm that's in the overall expenditures. But I accept your answer as far as what you know in the Ministry of Justice. Okay. Well I think maybe we'll take a break now, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Nilson. This committee will recess for about five minutes. The time is 8:53.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**The Chair:** — Welcome back. We are the Standing Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice in consideration of vote 3, Justice. Mr. Nilson, you were questioning. You may proceed.

[21:00]

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you. I think the next area of questioning I'll ask is about the consumer protection area and obviously the financial services. I can't remember the exact date that this new agency came into effect, but perhaps you could give a report on the finances of that because, as I understand it, it's not in the budget that we have here because it's self-financing. Is that correct?

**Mr. Wild:** — Dave Wild, Chair of Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan. That's correct. We no longer operate under an appropriation. We're a treasury board Crown corporation funded by the fees we charge to the people we regulate.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So effective what date was the organization set up? And have we had a full year now so that we can actually get a report on how you're doing?

**Mr. Wild:** — Yes. FCAA was established October 1st, 2012 so we have a full year under our belt.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Perhaps you could give us an idea of what kind of revenue that you have and what expenses that you have. And if there's a surplus, where does that money go? And if there's a negative amount, what happens? Is there a subsidy that shows up in the Justice budget to cover that?

**Mr. Wild:** — For 2014-15, our budget for 2014-15, we have revenues of \$19.6 million budgeted. We have expenditures of \$8.8 million, leaving a net surplus of \$11.7 million. That amount is paid to the General Revenue Fund as a dividend from the FCAA on an annual basis.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So does any of that money go directly to the Ministry of Justice?

**Mr. Wild:** — All of it goes directly to the General Revenue Fund.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So basically there are no, I guess, revenues that flow from the financial service or the agency to any specific funds within the Ministry of Justice. Is that correct?

**Mr. Wild:** — That's correct.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. Of the \$19 million, would the most substantial portion of that come from the corporate registry side or the regulation of financial institutions or where does the money come from?

**Mr. Wild:** — I can break it down. We're organized by divisions which roughly approximate the areas of regulation that we're responsible for. So the securities division, which is responsible for *The Securities Act*, collects around \$15 million of the nineteen and a half million dollars in revenue. Our insurance and real estate division will collect around \$1.5 million, as will our consumer credit division. Consumer credit includes trust and loan, mortgage brokers, and payday lenders. Our pensions division brings in around a half a million dollars. And finally, our consumer protection division, which encompasses a whole bunch of licensing regimes for general consumer protection, motor vehicle dealers, direct sellers, etc., they bring in around \$800,000 a year. We don't have any corporate registry services per se.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. Okay. And the staff that work for the agency would not show up in the numbers of the Ministry of Justice. Is that correct?

**Mr. Wild:** — That's correct.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So how many staff work for the agency?

**Mr. Wild:** — We have a staff of 58.

**Mr. Nilson:** — 15?

**Mr. Wild:** — 58.

**Mr. Nilson:** — 58, okay. And so there are many different areas that are of concern in the areas that you regulate, and I have to say we haven't heard a lot of complaints, so that's a good sign, but I'm going to ask you about some specific aspects of the regulation. One of the challenges over the years for the Ministry of Justice was dealing with the regulation of insurance companies and insurance brokers and the credit unions and others, and some of the ability of credit unions to own insurance brokers. Can you tell me if there's been any change in policy in that area since you've now become an independent agency?

**Mr. Wild:** — There's been no change at all.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Are there any plans for any changes in that area to reflect some of the changes in the commercial activity in sort of the banking and insurance business?



**Mr. Wild:** — There's nothing that's being worked on or contemplated, to the best of my knowledge.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Well that makes it easier for the minister, I'm sure. There's no question about that.

The consolidation of insurance brokers across Saskatchewan and in fact across Western Canada adds another element to the regulation that you do. How is that regulation done in conjunction with especially the Western provinces? Have there been some new agreements developed, or we're still using the legislation that we've had for quite a number of years?

**Mr. Wild:** — There's a few elements to that question. First, we are still working with *The Saskatchewan Insurance Act*, as was in place when you were the minister. We are in the process of looking at a rewriting of that Act, and we hope to recommend to the minister and to cabinet that we see a repeal and replacement of the insurance Act. The major drive of that repeal and replace would be to harmonize with other Western jurisdictions, to modernize the Act, to handle new insurance matters but also to harmonize with the Western provinces.

In terms of regulation, the FCAA does not directly license insurance brokers. That's done by the Saskatchewan Insurance Councils, which are a self-regulatory organization. We oversee the Saskatchewan insurance councils, so we ensure they're meeting the public interest in the licensing of insurance brokers. Their activities though are very much done in harmony with the other licensing bodies across Western Canada. So, for example, we have a common education requirement. The same test to become an insurance agent is used in all the jurisdictions in Western Canada. So we've made every effort to try and harmonize the law, to try and co-operate with other jurisdictions, to try and ease the administrative burden of getting to be licensed in more than one jurisdiction, all of those elements.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So how many different types of agencies like that are you supervising at the present time?

**Mr. Wild:** — I don't have those numbers right in front of me. That's not a number that appears in our annual report because it is the insurance councils that do regulate. I'll undertake to send it to you, though.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Thank you. On the consumer side, that clearly is an area where the public needs to know about your agency. Have you been able to provide information to the public to have people understand that the traditional way that they would get information about consumer issues has changed and that there's now a new agency involved? I ask that because I don't think I've really seen any big campaign about that. But maybe I'm not the right person to be looking for that particular kind of information.

**Mr. Wild:** — We share your interest in not only raising the profile of the authority, but informing consumers on how to be better consumers. And that's certainly been one of the early benefits of becoming a treasury board Crown corporation. Since we've become a treasury board Crown corporation, we've added two communication specialists to our authority, one of which is dedicated to consumer protection issues.

You will have seen some of our efforts, but you're going to see a lot more of our efforts as these people, you know, start to develop campaigns. So, for example, we just had a fraud awareness month in which we profiled pension unlocking fraud. In May we're going to have a campaign around homeowners, you know, how to select a contractor, how to select a realtor, what to do if there's problems there. So we've got a whole schedule of things that we intend to pursue, Mr. Nilson, and we share your interest in informing consumers.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Have you been receiving any complaints relating to the tanning salons? Because I assume that's an area that you would have to deal with. And the reason I raise that is because of the lobby we've been getting in the legislature about regulation of tanning salons.

**Mr. Wild:** — I can only speak anecdotally, but the number of complaints is not large, and they would tend to be around contractual issues so, you know, where a tanning salon goes out of business and minutes are still owed to folks. That's the sort of issue that we'd tend to get more so than what I assume you're talking about, which would be, you know, should young people be allowed to tan. That just doesn't come to us. It's a health concern more than a consumer issue.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And so it continues to be then with the contracts for services that people enter into. I know there are always suggestions about how to make that information clearer, but practically many of these services are provided by national or international companies. And so is there a place where you work with other members of the other provinces and territories around some of these issues? And are there some things that are going to be coming in that whole area to deal with some of these contracts?

**Mr. Wild:** — This is an area where we continue to work closely with our colleagues in the Ministry of Justice. Both Justice and FCAA participate on an international organization called the consumer measures committee. It's a committee constructed of officials from every jurisdiction, focusing on consumer issues. And there is a particular committee in which we participate, focused on consumer contracts — things like standard language, plain language, rescission rights, those sort of issues that time and time again come up in consumer contracts. So we do have a committee that we're looking at those issues on and hope to produce some standard, harmonized approaches to consumer contracts.

**Mr. Nilson:** — I assume you also sit on the committee looking at national securities commission, and is it as co-operative as this other one on the consumer side? Or perhaps you can give us an update on what's happening in that area. I know there always seems to be a statement, well this is going to happen, and then we get many other things but not much progress.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well perhaps I'll just make a comment, and if Dave wants to add a comment that would be great. I attended a provincial and territorial securities ministers' meeting back in September. And prior to leaving for that meeting, we became aware that Ontario and British Columbia, Canada had signed an agreement with respect to the creation of a national regulator.

We weren't consulted on that discussion at all, but we went to the meeting with an open mind and we still continue to have an open mind with respect to that. It would be fair to say that there continues to be a dialogue. We certainly have some interest, although I will tell you that we're also committed to the passport system. We've been a participant in the passport system, and the system is highly harmonized at the present time. But I think it's fair to say that we continue to have an interest in this discussion and we will continue to wait to see where it goes.

[21:15]

**Mr. Nilson:** — So it's a continual discussion without much end in sight yet. Would that be an accurate description?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well we continue to dialogue with other provinces with respect to, you know, whether we will or will not participate. We certainly have some local interest that we need to protect here in Saskatchewan. We made that very clear. But at this particular time we continue to have that open dialogue. It's not a . . . Certainly been no definitive decisions made whether we will or we will not participate. We will continue to have that dialogue, but we're very interested in making sure that we do the right thing for the capital markets in this province, for investors in this province. That is our key goal and so in order to do that, we'll decide on what serves the best interests of the capital markets and investors in Saskatchewan as we continue that dialogue.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Are the decisions around the, you know, the labour venture capital funds in your Justice ministry area, or is that something that's dealt with in the Finance area? Because we know that there have been some questions about some of the limits that were set this past year. Is that an area that you work in?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The limits with respect to the venture capital funds are decisions that were made within the Ministry of Finance, although FCAA through Dave's shop is responsible for the regulation of those funds. So that's where the delineation is.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So basically you follow the orders on that particular part. But I think it goes back to the same question around, how do you raise capital in Saskatchewan? And the traditional question has always been especially raising capital in the smaller amounts needed for some of the businesses we have in Saskatchewan.

And I'm glad to hear that you're on top of that, and plus I know it's an area you know well. And so I appreciate that you continue to make sure we have something that allows large corporations to raise lots of money, but also many of our smaller businesses to get enough money to develop the businesses that have come here, because we did have quite a few years where we just had a huge difficulty getting the capital raised.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We have, you know, a fairly immature capital market in Saskatchewan and a small capital market. So we wouldn't want to make any decisions which will compromise the ability of capital to be raised, especially with

respect to small business, because we know how important that is in Saskatchewan. So those are certainly the considerations which we take into account when we, you know, as we have our ongoing dialogue.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Well I wish you all the best in that area. And time may eventually show us the way forward, but it may be that what we have now is something that we'll use for another 20 years or so.

Now I'm just trying to remember if there are any other consumer issues. I know that that contract issue and the clarification in that area is one that, you know, has been an ongoing issue and so I appreciate the work there. But I think that may end my questions in this particular area. Although I guess you also regulate the pension plans. Is that correct?

**Mr. Wild:** — That's right.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. Okay, and so I do have some questions around the pensions. And some of the rules that we have in Saskatchewan, as you know, we I guess trust people more. We're not so paternalistic on some of the things that we do. Has that attitude been adopted pretty well across the country now, or are there some other issues that are starting to percolate in the whole pension field? Because clearly we've got more people in the minister's and my age category where we're looking at these things carefully. And ministers, I would say. So perhaps you can give me a bit of an update in the pension world.

**Mr. Wild:** — I'm happy you didn't include me in that category. I appreciate it very much. I assume, Mr. Nilson, you're talking about the unlocking of pension money. And you're quite correct that Saskatchewan was a trailblazer in terms of permitting people to have greater access to their pension money. All other jurisdictions have to varying degrees followed. We have not had any adverse experience that came out of that change that occurred, and it's going back now 10 years that we made the most significant change to the unlocking rule — not had a single complaint about being allowed to access my pension money and then subsequently being hurt by that. It continues to be the subject of discussion. We don't for example allow unlocking for financial hardship prior to retirement. And that's a great source of letters to the minister in terms of letters of complaint, people wanting to access their money. So there are still things to be looked at, things to be done, but generally speaking the world has moved in that direction, allowing greater access to their pension money for other than retirement purposes, yes.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And the protections in place in bankruptcy continue the same because that's, you know, a place where we get some pressure as legislators from the banking side, about getting access to some of these funds in cases of default. Now luckily we've had low interest rates for quite a long time and a good economy so that those kinds of issues haven't been there. But I think a few of us have gone through some downturns, and we know that a lot of those issues show up very quickly. And so have there been any discussions about some of the changes? I know there's litigation in Ontario that caused some concerns, but I would be of the position, let's keep the protections there. But have there been discussions about opening that up completely?

**Mr. Wild:** — No. And there's two sides to the coin. What you're referring to is individual protection in individual bankruptcy, and pension money is not subject to seizure attachment. But nothing has also been changed in terms of corporate bankruptcy where the pension beneficiaries are unsecured creditors in corporate bankruptcy. And that's been the source of some discussion and disagreement over how to handle that situation. Neither situation has changed.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Well it sounds like your world is staying relatively the same and that's good for the minister and good for everyone else as well. So anyway thank you.

I'm going to move on to another area that I think crosses both Justice and the policing side, and that's the whole issue around telecommunications and the phone system. I don't know if it was 911. I can never keep with all of the designations. But it's the trying to make sure that the RCMP have a phone system that can communicate with everyone else. And perhaps you can give me a further update. I know you gave me quite a bit of information last year on that.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Yes. It looks like we spend, or we do spend \$750,000 per year for the RCMP, or the PPSTN [provincial public safety telecommunications network] is what the radio system is actually called, if that's the question you're asking.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And that's all? So that must be the contribution that comes from your ministry. And then the other amount must be paid for out of the 171 million that goes to the RCMP. Would that be correct?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — This is a 70/30 share, and 70 per cent is the provincial share. Okay, further to that is a \$1.8 million infrastructure cost which brings together SaskPower, Government Relations, and the RCMP. And it is part of the RCMP contract that they have, that we have with the RCMP.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And so then there is a joint system finally that is operating together, and that's how much it costs. Yes. Okay. And it does show up then in that \$181 million I think it was, \$171 million figure that's . . .

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — That's correct.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Well that's good to hear. And is this all operated by SaskTel then or who? Because one of the issues was sort of competing systems and connecting everybody together.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Right.

**Mr. McFee:** — I think what you're referring to is the old FleetNet system which particularly we moved away from. And now there's the owned system, that is the three parties are agreed. So yes, there is the three parties but it isn't SaskTel and the old FleetNet system. It's the system that's been in place for several years now. And now it has the partners as the minister said: power, RCMP, and Government Relations. So it's in the emergency preparedness component there in that particular . . .

[21:30]

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Well the RCMP contract obviously . . . I'm not sure what year we are in the 20-year contract. Could you tell us?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — April 2012 was the start of the 20-year contract.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So we're just heading into the third year then?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Correct.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Well that's, I imagine, good news for all of us because it's always an interesting challenge.

The compensation that comes from municipalities that use the RCMP as their police force always raised questions and concerns. Can you give me a bit of a summary of the cost for municipalities, rural municipalities, and then also the smaller centres, and then the cities that use the RCMP as their police force, and the differentiation between them as to how much is paid?

**Mr. McFee:** — The question in relation to the formula, community with the detachment rate, 2014-15 is \$66.07, and then without a detachment, I think is what you're referring to, is \$40.88. And it's a standard 8 per cent increase per annum to obviously get up to cost recovery.

**Mr. Nilson:** — 8 per cent per annum?

**Mr. McFee:** — 8 per cent per annum.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So how many years will it take to get up to cost recovery?

**Mr. McFee:** — Certainly I can get you a more definitive answer, but it's a long time before it gets . . .

**Mr. Nilson:** — So okay, because it continues obviously to be an issue for those of us who live in Saskatoon and Regina and other centres that pay for our own policing, and then we have the provincial money that goes into policing. And how does that all balance out? So there is a start towards some shared . . . That raises a question for me about the comment that was made about a review of the Saskatchewan Police Commission. Could you please explain what that means and what the effect of that is?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Are you specifically asking about the Saskatchewan Police Commission or are you asking about any review that's taking place with respect to the percentages or the formula? I'm not sure.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Well, I'm moving on from the percentages, because when you made your opening remarks you made a comment that you were reviewing the Saskatchewan Police Commission, and I'm wanting to understand what that is. I see it's a budget of one and a half billion or more. And so what is that review about?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Okay.

**Mr. McFee:** — So as you're familiar, the Police Commission

obviously has the running of the college, and there's the Police College that comes under the purview of the Police Commission. So part of that strategic review is exactly looking at the Police College. It's looking at obviously all the things that the Police Commission is in charge of, the hearings and everything else. So it's to make sure that we're looking at that as the continuum, as we've looked at everything else, and to ensure that we are doing the right things at the right time. So it's a review of those functions with a specific focus on the Police College.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Is there any thought of having RCMP in Saskatchewan be involved with the kind of review that happens at the Saskatchewan Police Commission? Or is that not on the table at all?

**Mr. McFee:** — Not at this time.

**Mr. Nilson:** — It continues to be a question that arises given that there are different procedures available. But anyway I thank you for that answer.

The issue of policing across the province obviously requires a great deal of co-operation between the city police forces and the police forces that are administered under that Saskatchewan Police Commission and the RCMP. Are there areas in that field where you have been looking at savings of money because there's some duplication? Or is that not really a possibility when you have another 18 years to go on the RCMP agreement?

**Mr. McFee:** — I think the question there is in reference to alignment and reinvestment. And absolutely, as I mentioned to you as one of the six pillars earlier, one of the things that we need to ensure, that we are using the appropriate alignment and the appropriate governance. So such things as Hubs and CORs where policing plays a role has obviously become a priority. The Internet child exploitation, which we have joint units across the province, have been a priority. The combined forces special enforcement units, which is organized crime and street gangs as per such, we have that. You know, traffic safety is something that certainly we're working in partnership with SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] in relation to ensure that that becomes a priority.

So I think the piece that we're looking at more comprehensively is what are those six main priorities that align with the policing needs, with the government needs — and policing needs both being the RCMP and the municipal police services — and ensuring that's aligned with what the communities need.

So absolutely that's all being reviewed, and certainly there is going to be a focus and is a focus starting now on those units with that governance structure that works. For instance, the combined forces special enforcement unit governance model is the same model, just populated with different people that we're actually using for the Hubs and CORs to deliver those services across the province.

So standardizing a lot of those practices will allow us to make sure that we're focused on the right things, and we're attaining not only outcomes for individuals, but we're getting a value for money that we're spending as well.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay, and I think that's especially accurate in places in like Yorkton and Prince Albert where the RCMP are even a greater part of the policing than it is here. Do we have any assurances around the number of administrative positions in the RCMP under our contract?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Each year when we work with the RCMP on budgeting, we work with them, you know, on what the right balance of service actually is, which would include the clerical or administrative staff. So they're part of the mix in the discussions.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Has there been a reduction in the number of RCMP staff at the local or the provincial level? And the reason I ask that is I know that services are shared between Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba on the administrative side, and I've been receiving some calls about the fact that a number of these jobs are moving to Edmonton or other places.

**Mr. McFee:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure exactly what you're referring to, but I think what you're referring to is the federal realignment that's been going on in relation to the Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. And we actually have a discussion with them, our policing folks have a discussion with them tomorrow to ensure that obviously what we need in Saskatchewan is being looked after.

You know, obviously the RCMP, being our municipal police force, have a federal responsibility as well. But as the minister has articulated, we're pretty prudent in those budget discussions, making sure that we have the right resources in the right places. And as a result they're currently reviewing what their framework is in relation to how many support people they need in relation to how many police officers they have. So if they can have a national perspective of that that seems to make sense, then, you know, that's something that we'll have discussions with them. And obviously the purpose of that is to reinvest in the system. I think that's what you're getting at.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, it's exactly what I'm getting at. And I think I asked my question to honour and respect former Deputy Prime Minister Herb Gray who is the Solicitor General. Because we had some plans coming out of the RCMP that he hadn't heard about, and he and I both heard about them at the same time, that made some very drastic reductions of staff in Regina. And I know the city police and others, everybody, we were all concerned about that, and I've since that time watched this fairly carefully. And so when I did get some calls in the last, you know, couple of months about reductions in staff, I thought, well maybe it's long enough that they would have forgotten some of the arrangements that we made that were, you know, on an understanding basis.

So you know, if there is anything that's happening there, I think it's . . . be well advised to, you know, let all of us know as quickly as possible. Because it does become a political issue when the home of the RCMP ends up all of a sudden not having or having very few of the administrative jobs. And we know lots of them have moved already. But if we ended up with a commander out of Edmonton covering the whole of the Prairies, well that would be, I think, not necessarily what we want. So I'm just making those comments.

At the present time, what's the number of people who are being trained at Depot in Regina? Because that also affects the local economy.

**Mr. McFee:** — We'd have to get back to you with the exact numbers of how many people. Obviously that's a national priority and certainly they train for the whole country. What we can say is that the numbers in Saskatchewan are getting up to the rate of relation to a 4 per cent vacancy rate, which is pretty common and standard across the country. So that's come up considerably about putting police officers on the street. And that's been a priority of Minister Tell and the ministry to obviously increase the RCMP numbers and we're now at that range. But we can get back to you on how many are actually in Depot.

**Mr. Nilson:** — I'd appreciate that because that's one where sometimes you think you need to keep it kind of quiet but actually getting the information out to the public, especially some of the mayors and others, it's an important influence on how some of the decisions seem to be made federally. So we just encourage that.

Now the next area I'm going to ask some questions about is courts and management of the courts. Can you give me the number of Queen's Bench judges that we have right now and the number of Provincial Court judges?

[21:45]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We'll just confirm the number of Queen's Bench judges. They are noting that there are two vacancies on the Court of Queen's Bench at the present time. But there are 48 members of the Provincial Court, which includes the chief judge and two associate chief justices, judges.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay and have the, you know, average times to get to trial improved since last year or stayed the same or are there some difficulties in this area?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The average time to trial in the Provincial Court is four to six months. I don't have any specific information with respect to whether that's increased or decreased. I do get reports from the chief judge of the Provincial Court on a regular basis with respect to time to trial, and anecdotally I haven't noticed any significant changes year over year. But then again I don't have the exact numbers in front of me. Certainly from time to time the Provincial Court recognizes some challenges in some particular areas, and they put protocols in place to deal with those particular areas.

Perhaps from a comparative basis, it's four to six months in Saskatchewan, Alberta's at about 5.6 months time to trial, and both British Columbia and Manitoba at six to eight, and Manitoba at 14. So in relation to the other Western provinces, we're doing better with respect to at least two of them. And just on your answer to the Queen's Bench, there's 36 Queen's Bench judges. There's 36 current sitting judges of the Court of Queen's Bench, but as I mentioned, there are two vacancies which need to be filled.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay, thank you. Just for the record, the answer you gave me last year was four to six months to trial, so that's

consistent. As far as the construction of courts, I know that you were building a few courthouses. Have there been any further courthouses constructed this year? Are there any plans in the next couple of years?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The only significant construction, as you know, is the Court of Queen's Bench in Saskatoon with the moving of the family division. There are no other courthouses which are under construction. Certainly some renovations and some capital improvements which were identified in our budget.

We do have some plans in terms of the construction of an integrated justice facility in Saskatoon, although they are just, you know, at the preliminary stages. And we'd like to see a new courthouse built up in La Ronge, but we don't have any plans or any timeline for the construction of that facility as well. But certainly those are the two capital projects which would be on the top of our list if we were to proceed with any construction.

**Mr. Nilson:** — The integrated justice facility in Saskatoon, what kind of a structure is that?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I'll let Deputy Minister Fenwick comment.

**Mr. Fenwick:** — There has been some discussion for a number of years about the possibility of another provincial courthouse in Saskatoon. And so we've revamped our thinking on that and so we're now talking about an integrated justice centre or an integrated service centre for Saskatoon, which would include the sort of traditional Provincial Court model. But our hope would be that we would integrate a much broader range of services, so it would be addition counsellors and probation officers and health care workers and social workers so that we could use an integrated model for service delivery.

I had an interesting conversation with a lawyer who used to work very closely in the downtown court facility in Vancouver and he talked about some statistics that they had looked at which suggested that for some of the integrated services that they were trying to have people access, in the act of having to go a block and a half from the provincial courthouse to access the other services — even with a map in hand — they lost about 50 per cent of the people along the way.

And so our hope would be, we could have all of those — and I don't want to say ancillary services because they're not ancillary; they're core services — but have all of those integrated core services in one facility in order that we can provide a holistic approach to what's going on with the courts. And that's what we're looking at now in terms of what we're calling an integrated justice centre.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Perhaps if I could clarify a comment, an answer that I made before. Once the family court has been relocated to the Court of Queen's Bench in Saskatoon, to the facility on the riverbank, there are plans to move traffic safety court to the former location of the family court. So to the extent that we're creating another court location in Saskatoon, we are doing that. But it's certainly to alleviate some of the space issues at the Provincial Court in Saskatoon. So we are doing that, and that's reflected in the budget.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. And eventually people will forget that it was the Ford dealership.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It was a Chrysler.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Oh, I thought . . .

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The Ford dealership was across the street.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Oh okay. Okay. So no, but it . . . That building has, the Provincial Court building in Saskatoon has lots of quirks and you can't really understand them until you start figuring out its history. And I guess we're all about repurposing buildings.

Now the other question around courts management is that you obviously keep statistics around how much courts are used. Are there any courts within the province that are in danger of being downsized or transformed in some of the smaller communities?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There are no current plans to close any of current court locations in the province. Of course there's always, you know, review going on and those kinds of things but there's certainly no plan to do any of that.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you for that. I'm going to move to another area now, legal aid. I see that the budget's been increased by about 7 or \$800,000, and I was wondering whether that increase relates directly to usage. Or has there been some expansion in the staff legal aid component of Legal Aid?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The increase to Legal Aid all relates to the settlement of the collective agreement. So there was no . . .

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. And so, and it relates then to the salaried staff, not the tariffs or the other amount. Or has there been an increase on tariff side as well?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — That's correct.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And I guess I haven't heard any particular complaints coming from that area but appreciate that you've resolved the contract and the matters going ahead.

There's been a slight increase in the amount of money for the Human Rights Commission and we don't, obviously in this document, see the budget. But I know with the changes that were made in procedures at the Human Rights Commission, is the increase in budget related to some of the other activities and goals that were set out by the Human Rights Commission? Or does it relate to the fact that there's still a backlog of cases that needs to be resolved?

**Mr. Fenwick:** — The Human Rights Commission has, as you're correctly pointing out, sort of changed the way that it does business. But in terms of the bulk of the funding for the extra work that they're doing, the education in the schools for example, the Chief Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission did an excellent job of making a presentation and obtaining funding from the Law Foundation to fund the majority of that. And I'm not certain of the number. My recollection is, is that it's to the tune of about \$650,000 from the Law Foundation over a period of I believe three years in

order to fund what the Chief Commissioner calls the civics program, the education on human rights program in the schools.

So the increase in funding that was provided by the ministry was for the regular ongoing program, albeit with a shift in focus from investigations to mediation.

[22:00]

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Thank you for that explanation. Now I have a few questions around the maintenance enforcement issues, and I mean obviously the work continues to be done well. I know we've seen some changes in legislation that give even more powers to the maintenance enforcement office.

But what's the status this year of the enforcement rate? We usually get a number each year, and I'd be interested to see if it's gone up a little bit, or is it staying the same?

**Mr. McNabb:** — Lionel McNabb. And the collection rate has stayed about the same where, for the last two or three years, where you're about ninety-one and a half to a little over 92 per cent, and that's where it's staying, pretty level at that. But it's hard to get much higher than that because at any given point I think there's 4 or 5 per cent of the payors that aren't working for some reason. So we're staying level at that. But the dollar rate, as we get more efficient and collect on arrears, is going up, so we're up about a million and a half, \$2 million over last year. So we're over \$40 million for the last fiscal year.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Now I understand that there are some other kinds of debts that you are now enforcing. Is that correct?

**Mr. McNabb:** — Yes. That's through a different area.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And so it's through a different area but it's . . .

**Mr. McNabb:** — We collect money through the fine collection branch.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes.

**Mr. McNabb:** — We took over responsibility for the fine collection branch in 2008 and we took . . . It was with courts before that, and they were doing a good job, but they didn't have the collection expertise. We sent a couple of our experienced maintenance enforcement officers down there for a period of time to train some staff and then left one. We also partnered with — and that was experience from collecting child support — we partnered with Revenue Canada, so people that aren't paying their fines, we now garnish their income tax and GST [goods and services tax]. And it's all means tested, you know, so if they . . . Below a certain level we wouldn't be able to garnish them. So we do that. So the collection rate in 2008-2009 when we took it over was about \$6 million, and at the end of this fiscal year we were at eighteen and a half million dollars.

**Mr. Nilson:** — And that's the fine money. That also includes the surcharge that goes into this.

**Mr. McNabb:** — That's all the surcharges. That's victim services and that's all . . . over and above that for victim

services and the revenue that goes to our rural municipalities and the cities as well.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. And it hasn't affected your operation on the maintenance enforcement side at all, or maybe it's given you a few more tools. Would that be accurate?

**Mr. McNabb:** — It's given us a place to train people. I would call it lower-level enforcement at the fine collection branch. But we're able to move bodies back and forth and get people in spots where we can train them and teach them different things and then let them move into higher levels of responsibility. So that's been very helpful.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Have there been any areas where you're frustrated and you need to get some more help in collection so that we perhaps will see some new legislation next year?

**Mr. McNabb:** — I'm not sure about next year. Governments have always been very helpful to us in collecting money for children and now in collecting money for fines but particularly in children. And as you know, this year we passed the legislation to collect on hunting and fishing licenses. We also a couple of years ago built in where we can collect interest on outstanding arrears for child support.

We are currently building a new computer system, and we're still a ways away on that, but once it's complete we'll be able to start using those new enforcement tools. And certainly we're always looking at new ways, and everyone's been very helpful in us getting those. So once we are up and running and the new computer system have the ones in place that we have, we will look at different things that we might possibly do.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Has there been a simplification of a system where people can challenge awards in court? I haven't obviously been in practice for a while, but it used to be quite expensive for people to get awards for maintenance change. So is there any work that's being done from your office that assists people in that particular area?

**Mr. McNabb:** — I think there's a couple of things. And you heard Deputy Minister Fenwick talk about an integrated court system, and that would help. But out of our branch I guess it's the family justice services branch that we run, and part of that is maintenance enforcement, and then we have social workers.

We have a Family Law Information Centre, and we have a lawyer there that helps people that want information on how to change court orders on their own. And that lawyer has developed . . . We now have 26 different self-help variation kits. And you forget how many there are; you want payments up; you want payments down; you want to see the children; grandparents want to see the children; children moving — we assist people that way.

When people go to the courts quite regularly, they'll go to the court and say, what do I do? Or even they appear in front of a judge and the judge will say, I'm just adjourning this for a while because you need to go talk to the Family Law Information Centre, and get all your documents in order; otherwise we can't proceed.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. No, that's interesting. I'm just smiling because many, many years ago, I think probably about 40, I helped write a do-it-yourself divorce book in Vancouver with the assistance of Mike Harcourt and Ian Waddell.

And so it's interesting how that style of information is now being done, not in a non-profit but right in government. So I applaud you for doing that, and I think it also helps the Bar in general as well as lawyers who are happy to help people with that. But it's very hard to do it very efficiently. So well done, and keep up the good work there. And I guess I would also say that if there are things that you need quickly, well we're happy to work on this side of the House to move things along in this particular area. So I have no further questions, but just keep up the good work.

And I have another question. It may be your area or may not, but it relates to the collection of the money for the victims service fund. And I know that I was quite pleased when I asked a question about that before. Then all of a sudden some groups got about 2 or \$300,000. And so I was wondering what I had to ask tonight, Mr. Minister, to trigger another 2 or 300,000 for some communities that have been waiting awhile for money?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well I'll tell you that that plan was already in the works when you asked that question, Mr. Nilson, so . . .

**Mr. Nilson:** — It looked pretty quick to me. Now I think we're tailing down tonight obviously, but I have another area that I was looking at and it related to the Office of Residential Tenancies and the Provincial Mediation Board. I know last year we had some particular challenges around such a low vacancy rate, and so it's eased a little bit, but perhaps you could give me a report on the numbers of cases that are coming forward and I guess the severity of situations people are in.

**Mr. Beck:** — My name is Dale Beck. I am the director of the Office of Residential Tenancies and the Chair of the Provincial Mediation Board. The numbers have been relatively stable in terms of volume of cases coming to the office. We're aware that there is an increase in population. There is an increase in the number of people renting and there are some challenges associated with that, but we've been staying stable at around 7,500 applications to the office on an annual basis.

One of the initiatives that we took about three years ago was to try to increasingly educate and train the staff to provide some dispute resolution and to encourage landlords and tenants to resolve issues directly, which I would like to think has had some effect on not seeing an increase in the number of applications, notwithstanding the increased population.

**Mr. Nilson:** — When was the last time that the legislation was reviewed and rewritten?

**Mr. Beck:** — The most recent version of the Act is *The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006* which came into effect in 2007. There were amendments to that Act in 2009 and 2012.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. And the reason I ask that is that there continue to be questions that come into our offices as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] around some of these,

and most of the time we'll try to get them to your office as quickly as possible because matters do get resolved. But some of these issues around I guess damage to apartments where people are living or damage to houses where people are living seem to cause some really big disruptions for people. And so I'm just wondering if you have all the powers you need in the legislation to deal with some of those situations where places are no longer habitable and people are caught in leases and things like that.

**Mr. Beck:** — It's always a challenge in trying to envision new and other ways of doing that, and we're constantly trying to think of ways that we can improve the way we deliver services.

There are some particular challenges that we're facing with respect to properties and the standard to which they're maintained. And one of the powers in the Act that has been rarely exercised is the power to withhold hearing notices from a landlord because they fail to comply with orders of the office. And we have just made a decision to withhold hearing notices from one landlord in the province that has failed to comply with an order and has a number of deficiencies. And we will see how that works in order to bring that landlord's standards to a higher level.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Well that's interesting, and we'll watch that one as well because it is an issue. Is there any discussion about certification of both rental properties and renters that might happen under your legislation?

**Mr. Beck:** — I don't anticipate that we're going to be developing landlord lists or tenant lists and I'm not sure what more I can say with respect to that.

**Mr. Nilson:** — I mean it's just a suggestion. We obviously get the suggestion from the landlord groups about somehow certifying or setting up a method whereby renters can have a special designation, and then vice versa, people want to know whether they're going to find a good landlord, and that becomes an interesting, interesting question.

**Mr. Beck:** — I agree, but at this point in time we're not looking at publishing lists of landlords or tenants.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. Well when we get that request in meetings, well I'll just say they should go and visit you about that. Because I mean, I think I agree it's not necessarily the best way to do that, but there are situations where it may have been of assistance to people.

Are there issues around the renting out of houses that have been damaged because they've been used as, as grow ops or something like that? And do you have the powers to deal with some of that? Because I know on the sale side, we're getting questions around that issue as well. And I don't think it necessarily fits in your area, but maybe it fits under the consumer protection side.

[22:15]

**Mr. Beck:** — I can simply say that I'm not aware of grow op houses having been used for rental properties. They're not coming to our attention.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Perhaps the minister would have some comment about the . . .

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — You know, as you know it's been a topic of discussion with respect to the creation of a registry. And we made it pretty clear that, well that in terms of the development of a registry, that certainly the RCMP have a registry. We think that it's appropriate for municipalities to work with the RCMP in terms of developing a registry with respect to properties that might otherwise be grow ops. We think there's lots of issues, lots of issues around that. And certainly on the remediation side, building codes are typically the responsibility of the municipality, so we leave it to the municipality in terms of remediation and those kind of code issues. So that's really where we're at with that particular issue. And we've encouraged that dialogue between the RCMP and the municipalities through the realtors.

**Mr. Nilson:** — That's right, and that's where the question comes is from the realtors because they're the ones that are kind of hung out there to try the best they can to get information. And it's not dissimilar, actually, to the asbestos registry issue. So right now you're still in discussions. Would that be the best way to describe it?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well our position from the Ministry of Justice is that any enhancements . . . We welcome to see any enhancements to the registry that's already been established by the Mounted Police, and we think that if that registry is to be enhanced, it needs to be enhanced through co-operation with municipalities and local law enforcement. Because that's really where all the information is generated in terms of, you know, what properties are being used for that purpose. So it wouldn't be our view that we would need to duplicate the efforts of the Mounted Police in that particular area.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you. I just have a couple of questions around the revolving funds under the control of the Ministry of Justice. I know there's one involved with the Correctional Facilities Industries Revolving Fund, and I think there's one other one. Perhaps you could . . . I guess the Queen's Printer Revolving Fund. That's correct. So they're shown here on page 91. How much activity has there been in the Correctional Facilities Industries Revolving Fund?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Is there something specific dealing with the revolving fund? We don't have any information, but we just want to make sure that when we provide you the information, when we get it to you, that we're dealing with the right area.

**Mr. Nilson:** — My understanding of this is that this relates to revenues received from goods that are manufactured within the correctional facilities. Is that correct?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Okay, that's great. It's related to Prism Industries and we'll get you that specific information.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. And I guess my question comes about whether there actually are activities that are taking place like this, or whether that has been scaled right back down.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Prism Industries operates at the Regina Provincial Correctional Centre and working with Evraz and



Mosaic. Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Prince Albert, Prism Industries again working in programs such as KidsFirst and the fire service in Prince Albert. Saskatoon isn't quite up or running to the level that these other ones are, but they are starting to get some programming there too.

**Mr. Nilson:** — No, the reason I specifically asked this is that I think both the minister and I received four letters from citizens in Saskatoon who basically asked about this specific question. And the text of it is the same for all four of them. So I'll read it to you because, you know, it's a reflection of some people who are concerned who I think maybe are grandmothers or great-grandmothers or grandfathers. It says:

I am writing this letter to ask that you redirect spending away from prisons toward actions that help reduce the causes of incarceration. It would help if they provided training in prison so that they could find work when they are released. By reducing inequality through redistribution and better education, we will reduce the need for prisons. Thank you for your attention.

But basically it's a group of people who have written, and we may actually be going to get more of these letters. And I think it always helps to remind us that in a fairly straightforward way, people applaud the things that we do that provide training and redirection of people's lives. And I think sometimes things like the industries' work get pushed to the side. I mean it's obviously not at the centre of the work there when you have such large numbers of people in the jails.

So practically then, the Victims' Fund, the Correctional Facilities Industries Revolving Fund, and the Queen's Printer Revolving Fund are the only places where the Ministry of Justice now receives revenue and then uses the expenses for very specific things. Otherwise the revenue for Justice and the corrections part of it all comes through treasury board. Would that be an accurate statement?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I can speak specifically to the Queen's Printer. The Queen's Printer has about \$900,000 in revenue and receives a subsidy from the GR [general revenue] for about \$97,000, and that's the \$97,000 that's reflected in the budget. So that's to bring the fund to a break even. And of course you'll know the benefits of the Queen's Printer with respect to the preparation of legislation and bills and making things available to the public.

**Mr. McFee:** — Just to respond to the letters, all of those letters, Mr. Nilson, have been answered. And the response in relation to that is obviously we are doing some of these things. But as I mentioned to you, pillar four of the six priorities that we're working on are jobs and literacy. And quite frankly, based on the evidence, and if we're going to really change the road map in relation to this, we need to have a more fulsome look into the literacy rates and of course how that's related to jobs and connected to the economy. So one of those pillars is, is how do we get to more meaningful work that are actually going to help the client or the individual actually have a purpose so that they can support themselves and their families coming out.

One of those things that we're currently looking at is what mechanisms can we actually partner in. Is there housing? Is

there things like that on a bigger scope that we actually can train the trades, because I think it's important. As Minister Tell alluded in her opening comments, is that we need to look at innovation and the new ways of doing that. And quite frankly there needs to be an investment that when folks get out, that obviously our goal is that they don't come back, and that they became, you know, dependent and obviously contribute to obviously the economy in relation to jobs.

So that particular pillar has had a lot of movement and certainly is something that's a focus. It's actually a paradigm shift in thinking in relation to how we do that, and a real focus on jobs. We think that the meaningful purpose in changing outcomes can be achieved.

**Mr. Nilson:** — So we can expect then that as the process of thinking this through goes ahead that there will be maybe some return to some of the kinds of things that were done quite a few years ago when there was a little more money available for corrections on a per capita basis probably, and that a lot of these initial industrial kinds of things and camps were created to deal with that. But it's been a long time since we've had that kind of thinking. So I appreciate that and I look forward to some good announcements.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Yes, for sure. I just want to say in relation to what you just referred to, it really isn't about money. It's about focusing on the right thing and focusing on strategic outcomes. And we are reinvesting in ourselves continually. We're looking at what our policies, our procedures, and programming within our correctional facilities. And are there some that don't have a good return on investment? Yes. So we take the money from that — I'm being very simplistic here — take that and reinvest in a strategic way to get the expected and anticipated outcomes that we need to keep people from coming back into our correctional facilities. So it really is not about money. It's about refocus and being strategic in what we're looking at.

**Mr. Nilson:** — I think, I mean, I agree with you. I think it's about money, but using it in the right place. It's not about more money.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Correct.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Well thank you. Mr. Chair, I think we're pretty close to the time of adjournment, and I want to thank both ministers and deputies and all the staff for hanging in for a long evening. Appreciate all the assistance that you've provided. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Nilson. We have a number of officials here. Thank you all for coming. Minister Wyant, did you have any remarks that you'd like to close with?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — On behalf of Minister Tell and myself and our deputies, we really wanted to thank all our officials for being here tonight and supporting us. We very much appreciate them taking time out of their evening to be here. I thank Mr. Nilson for his questions. I thank the committee for their time and their consideration, and to thank Hansard for being here as well.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. And Minister Tell, is there any

comments that you'd like to make at this time?

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — My colleague summed it up very well so I'll conclude with that. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Don't say we didn't give you the opportunity to put in the last word. But thank you, Minister Wyant. Yes, you did cover it very well. We have a number of officials here and it's been a long evening and I appreciate everybody's endurance. And we will conclude this portion of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. So we'll adjourn this committee to the call of the Chair. Thank you and good night.

[The committee adjourned at 22:30.]