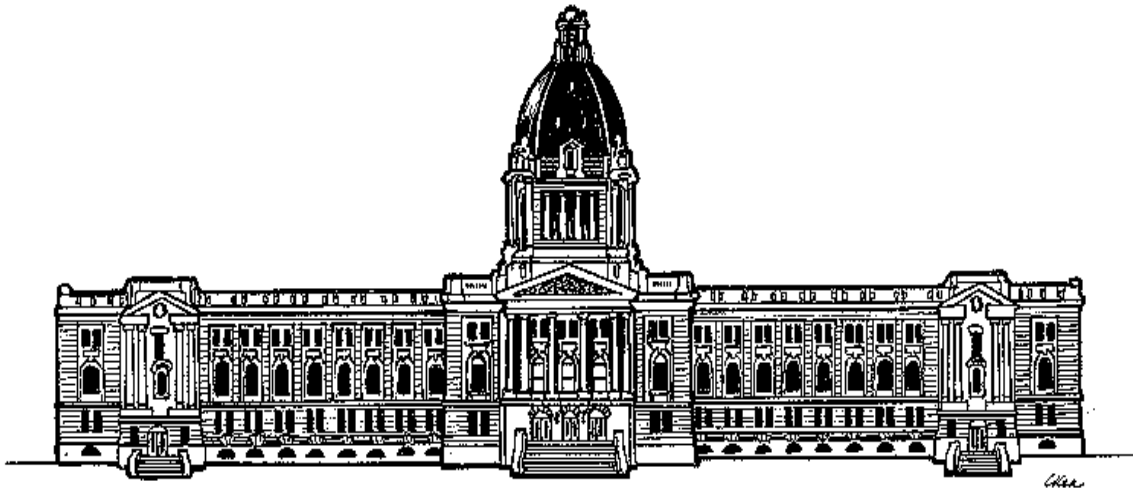




STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Twenty-sixth Legislature

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE**

Mr. Delbert Kirsch, Chair
Batoche

Ms. Deb Higgins, Deputy Chair
Moose Jaw Wakamow

Mr. Fred Bradshaw
Carrot River Valley

Mr. Greg Brkich
Arm River-Watrous

Mr. Michael Chisholm
Cut Knife-Turtleford

Ms. Joceline Schriemer
Saskatoon Sutherland

Mr. Trent Wotherspoon
Regina Rosemont

[The committee met at 14:48.]

**General Revenue Fund
Municipal Affairs
Vote 30**

Subvote (MA01)

The Chair: — Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We will now be considering estimates from Municipal Affairs from now till 3:45. So if the minister would wish to introduce his staff and any brief comments, then we will get started.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to be here as always. And I'm happy to introduce the following list of officials that have joined me today: Mr. Harley Olsen, deputy minister; Ms. Maryellen Carlson, assistant deputy minister; Ms. Wanda Lamberti, executive director, central management services; Mr. Russ Krywulak, executive director, grants administration and financial management; Mr. John Edwards, executive director, policy development; Mr. Keith Comstock, executive director, strategy and stakeholder relations; and finally, Mr. Ralph Leibel, executive director of community planning. We're ready to go.

The Chair: — All right. If we go straight to the questions, Ms. Higgins will start the questioning.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Minister and officials, thank you very much for being here this afternoon. The revenue-sharing Bill was first passed, first reading was on April 9 of this year, this session. And it was only a couple days before the Premier was out in the rotunda musing about the possibility of there being more money that may go towards the municipalities. So can you tell me, was this kind of poor planning, or did you expect revenues to increase substantially?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well, Mr. Chair, I'm astonished. What an uncharitable remark, almost unparliamentary I would suggest. It was neither of the above of course. This is a government that wants to remain nimble and agile and take advantage, very quickly, of opportunities as they present themselves. That in brief is the entire answer for that question.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you. In February there was land sales also where there was a profit of 197 million. Then we've seen again in April that there was again substantial land sales of 265. So we're talking about well over \$400 million that came into the provincial coffers, and this over and above the 1.3 surplus that was still sitting there in reserves after the budget documents were tabled in this House. So how did you come to the amount that was added to revenue sharing? With that kind of money sitting in reserves, how did you come to this new figure?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Very simply by discussing it with our municipal sector partners, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Higgins: — So the municipalities . . . I know the last time we met in the House, you said that there was 265 million more in land sales that come into the provincial coffers, unexpected that it was that high. And when you had talked, I think, at that time you had made arrangements with SUMA [Saskatchewan

Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] to come to the legislature to have meetings.

And I'd asked you at that time how much money you had on the table for the municipalities, and you were pretty vague in your answer. And, you know, I asked you, were we talking 50? Are we talking about 100? Are we talking about the whole 265 on the table? And you gave me the answer, I believe, you would wait and see what the municipalities came forward with as to what kind of dollars would be dedicated. So I guess the municipalities, you're telling me, only came forward with a request for an extra 7 per cent?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Chair, I wouldn't characterize my initial remarks as vague at all. I would say they were quite explicit. What we said was, we will wait with respect and listen to what sort of ideas and suggestions are brought to the table by our municipal partners, and that we didn't presuppose any given solution going into the meetings. Otherwise what point would there be in even having the meetings?

Ms. Higgins: — So the municipalities came forward with the same amount that was in your election platform?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — The municipalities came forward with ideas and suggestions, and what we decided as a group was to take forward the proposal that was brought to cabinet. And cabinet made a decision, and that was eventually made public, and those are the results.

What we said in the outset was that we would go in there with a few comments of ourselves, from ourselves, and we would await with respect with the suggestions and ideas that would be brought forward by our municipal sector partners. We had the exchange that we promised to do. And in the end we brought forward a proposal to cabinet, and cabinet reviewed the options and approved the one that was made public. And this is something which is greatly appreciated and very satisfying to municipalities.

It's not everything municipalities can use. That's obviously the case — we've been very clear about that again and again in our comments — but it's a great step along the road towards getting a solid, new, and improved revenue-sharing agreement. Those discussions are already under way.

Ms. Higgins: — So when the province is sitting with considerable resources sitting in reserves — and we're talking well over \$1.5 billion that is sitting in reserves — does the minister feel that the additional money is appropriate for the municipalities when we have all seen that there is still tax increases, property tax increases that are coming? And on top of that, the shortfall to schools which has been felt right across the province, that there will be additional property tax that will also be added to municipal taxes. So we're going to see increases right across the province. So do you feel that the added 7 per cent is appropriate when the government is sitting on well over \$1.5 billion?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Two comments might I offer, Mr. Chair, in response to that question. First of all, the amount that

was agreed to by cabinet and made public a few days ago is welcome and appreciated by municipalities. All you'd have to do is ask them.

Second of all I'm constantly reminded of the fact that the former government has really no moral authority in even posing such questions. This is the former government that took \$300 million out of the revenue-sharing pool and now wants a miracle cure. This is the former government that tried for 16 years, we can suppose, to come up with a better revenue-sharing deal and failed, and now wants instant action. Mr. Speaker, it's unbelievable.

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Minister, that's all fine for you to go on a little bit of a rant. But when you look at the actual figures, '94-95 there was a government debt of \$882 million, which was 20 per cent of our total budget at that point in time, and the budget was 4.28 billion and there was no \$1.5 billion and growing sitting in cash in the bank. Now you can look for the Government of Saskatchewan total debt, payment on debt is 535 million in '08-09 from a total budget of 9.1 billion, which works out I think to about 5 per cent. So there's a big difference and with \$1.5 billion growing in the bank daily.

We've all seen oil prices that are far above what's been budgeted in the provincial budget, and you can do a rough calculation that for every dollar above the budgeted amount equates to about 25 million in the coffers of the Government of Saskatchewan over the year. So I think oil is budgeted at about \$85, 85.46 a barrel, and we're well over 110 at this point in time, or last I heard we were, and I don't think there has been any drastic changes since.

So there's continuing dollars flowing into the government coffers, and what we're seeing for municipalities is tax increases for citizens right across this province. And yes, I'm sure municipalities are pleased with the additional 7 per cent, but it still falls short of the demands they have. And you will know from your days in municipal politics that Regina figures that their shortfall in infrastructure is \$1 billion. I would assume Saskatoon would be pretty comparable. And I know in every city you go into — whether large, small, hamlets, towns — there is a need for additional infrastructure.

So I guess 7 per is nice, but I would, I guess, like a little more explanation as how you came to that amount. And you said that there was options put forward by the municipalities. What options were put forward by the municipalities?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well, Mr. Chair, we always have to remember where that infrastructure gap came from. It was in fact, in my experience as a former city councillor, the \$300 million that was taken away from revenue sharing. That's where the whole problem began.

And the former government, while it found dollars for other priorities, decided not to fund municipalities, but to take money away from them. That's how we got here. Let's always remember that inescapable fact.

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's fine to sit there on your pile of cash and point fingers, but the fact of the matter is you're only providing 7 per cent more to municipalities. And

it's pretty small increases when you look at it. We're talking about \$10 million. Top end we're talking \$10 million — that's it — out of . . . never mind the 1.5 billion that's sitting in cash surplus in the bank that this Government of Saskatchewan is sticking away for probably third and fourth year of their term.

But we can look at the land sales that are coming in now, and the next sale is coming up in June, and I don't believe that there are any reduced expectations that it will be any less successful than the first two of this year were, and we're talking about well over \$400 million.

So I guess the question is, why only \$10 million more towards municipalities when last year they received a \$30 million increase? This year you're talking about 8.4 and just . . . or actually it isn't even 8.4. I think the first was seven something, seven point . . . just under \$8 million. And this one is a little bit more because it's compounded, so it ends up being close to 8 per cent I believe.

So 10 million, it's a drop in the bucket when you're looking at the money that is coming in to the province of Saskatchewan. And these are the stakeholders that have the expectations of building municipal infrastructure and providing the on-the-ground services to communities to be able to grow, to be able to build the infrastructure that's required with the population growth in the province and the economy the way it's booming. So I guess, why only 7 per cent is really the big question. Why couldn't there have been more that had been dedicated to the grassroots in this province, municipalities that provide those services?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well, Mr. Chair, as arithmetic seems to be a challenge for the member, I'd be happy to provide a calculator. The increase is actually 7 per cent plus 8 — 15, just to use round numbers that are easy to remember. So we need not use decimal points. We'll just go with the 15.

With respect to the allegation that we might be holding money back for a possible last-ditch effort to win the next election, we only need turn back the clock to remember that in fact the former NDP government's single large contribution to the revenue-sharing pool in the whole 16-year period up until their defeat in the last election, was the year of the election itself.

I remember as a city councillor the year before saying — you know what? — they just might stiff us this year in 2006, hold on to the money and bank it, and then come to the table with twice as much next year. That's what we felt that was likely to happen. Wouldn't you know it? That's exactly what did happen. Members that do that have no more authority to even question the motives of other members, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Higgins: — So can the minister give me actual dollars? And you can use decimal points if you like. Please and thank you. Be accurate is what I'm looking for as to what the total value of the 7 per cent is, and what the total value of the additional 8 per cent is.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Chair, I'd be delighted to refer that to my colleagues here who have all of the figures with them.

The Chair: — I'd also ask that when you start speaking, to give your name, so it'll allow Hansard a better chance to record. Thank you.

Mr. Olsen: — This is Harley Olsen, deputy minister. The 7 per cent is an amount of 8.5 million, and the 8 per cent additional to that is another 10.4 million.

Ms. Higgins: — So we're talking about \$10.4 million additional out of 265 million out of the land sales. That's what we're looking at?

Mr. Olsen: — I mean I have no information with respect to the size of the land sale or of any relationship between the two, between the two numbers. This was simply a percentage which was added to the municipal revenue-sharing base.

Ms. Higgins: — Okay. A question is . . . I guess this is more to process. Are you planning on tabling a new Bill or amendments here today in committee for the additional money? And when will it be accounted for in the budget process?

Mr. Olsen: — It's Harley Olsen. It's my understanding that there'll be an amendment which is brought forward today during consideration of the amendments to The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act.

Ms. Higgins: — Okay. So that's currently what we're doing. So I'm assuming, how does the process . . . Could someone please clarify how the process works, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Okay. We'll be going through the estimates, and when we start reading off the estimates, when we get to clause 2, that's where the amendment comes in. And that's on Bill 23, when we get to Bill 23.

Ms. Higgins: — Okay. Thank you very much. So, Mr. Minister, then I know you're carrying on with the strategic plan, the municipal strategic plan. When do you expect to see a definite or a more solid recommendation on long-term revenue sharing put forward?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well as you've stated many times in the past, what we've done is to make arrangements for the discussions to get that going as quickly as possible. Those arrangements have all been made.

The two chief differences this time is that instead of simply negotiating with the cities' table, we're negotiating with all four tables simultaneously. The second major difference is that we've arranged to have the Finance folks at the table so that any and all ideas about what the province's own-source revenue might be can be vetted with them directly. With these two innovations, we expect that the process will move along much more quickly and much more effectively.

And with all of that having been said, we intend to accelerate the process so that not only will we achieve the goal that we set out as a campaign goal in two years, we're hoping to get it done later this fall, so that it in fact can become part of the next budget cycle.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much. Can I just ask also, the

additional \$10.4 million that was put on the table for the municipalities, what formulas were used to distribute that funding?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — The existing formulas.

Ms. Higgins: — So it was done basically on a per cap of it in the rural, or combination of?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — It actually varies from table to table of course, but the original formula will be followed for the top-up.

Ms. Higgins: — So is there any requirements attached to the funding that it go towards property tax, or is it just unconditional funding to the municipalities?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — As we have said repeatedly and very clearly to our friends at the municipal sector tables and to the media, it is unconditional funding. These municipalities are perfectly welcome to use it for any purpose they so choose.

But what we have also said very clearly and repeatedly to our municipal sector partners and our friends in the media is the following. It is our request that they give serious consideration to using this new money to reduce property taxes.

Ms. Higgins: — So, Mr. Minister, what kind of property taxes are we still going to see across the province? What's still on the table for municipalities?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — In order to get the answer to that question, you'd want to call the 7 or 800 municipalities and ask them. I suggest that you do that. You'll find that there are slightly different cases and scenarios all over the province. There is no one answer because all the needs are different.

Ms. Higgins: — So your expectation is, is that even with the additional funding put forward to municipalities that there will still be property tax increases.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — The final decisions rest with each and every municipality, as we have said. That's the way it works in a respectful, collegial, government-to-government relationship.

Ms. Higgins: — Well in a respectful, collegial government, normally the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Municipal Affairs would keep tabs on what activities are transpiring around the province — the needs and demands of municipalities — not just sit back twiddling their thumbs waiting for something to be said in the media, that there would be some type of communication ongoing so you would know the needs and expectations of municipalities.

From comments seen in the media, heard and seen in the media, and from speaking to various city administrators and mayors, there is still an expectation, in case you don't know and haven't heard, there is still an expectation that there will be some substantial — and I would call 5 per cent substantial for citizens across the province — 5 per cent, up to a 5 per cent increase in property tax in Saskatoon is what they're looking at. In fact not to get into decimals but I think 5.6 was the last number that I

heard. There are some that are smaller, but there's still some pretty hefty increases. I haven't heard from Yorkton what this will do for that city, but they were close to a 10 per cent increase in their municipal tax rate.

So I was just curious if you have heard or if you are willing just to sit back and wait and see what kind of effect this extra 8 per cent will have on municipalities.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Chair, my definition of sitting back and waiting and twiddling my thumbs would be crippling the revenue-sharing program in the first place and shamelessly making municipalities wait 16 years for a new deal, and then not delivering.

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Chair, this is all very cute. But the fact of the matter is that the previous government didn't have a billion and a half dollars sitting in the bank and the types of revenues that we are seeing in the province today. So while you can make your comments, there isn't anyone in this province that doesn't know you have this kind of revenues coming in and that there are many expectations across the province for you to support the municipalities in a way that would allow them to provide the infrastructure that they need in their municipalities for the province to continue to grow and to continue to see the increases in its economy that it has over the last couple of years.

So you know, you can go back 16 years. You can keep looking in the rear-view mirror all you like. But I would say, Mr. Minister, that won't get you very far, that you need to look ahead, and that there needs to be some efforts to make a permanent revenue-sharing formula a part of the budget of the province of Saskatchewan so municipalities can plan long term. They can plan for the growth that is expected in our province, and they can put in place what's necessary in their communities.

You know you can keep looking back all you like. But the fact of the matter is, is you have more substantial resources at this point in time than the province of Saskatchewan has ever seen and especially sitting in cash reserves that you are holding on to. And I think it's important that not only municipalities but citizens of this province have an opportunity to feel the benefits from a growing economy and feel the prosperity that the Government of Saskatchewan is enjoying at this point in time. That's my point.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Chair, the citizens that were abandoned for 16 years by the former government can obviously take heart in a couple of facts. First of all, we've been able to increase the revenue sharing as an interim measure by 15 per cent. Second of all, we have a government that's willing and able to move quickly to take advantage of any and all opportunities that present themselves, as soon as they present themselves. Thirdly, we have an infrastructure growth initiative that's providing \$300 million interest free for five years to enable the kind of growth that Saskatchewan municipalities are enjoying today. That's part of our plan to prepare for growth.

They can also take comfort in the fact that we've invested an unprecedented \$1 billion to get ready for growth in infrastructure of all kinds, everywhere in Saskatchewan. And finally, no doubt those residents can take heart in the fact that

we have committed to coming up with a better, permanent revenue-sharing deal, and we're most likely to actually exceed our target and get it all done in one year rather than two.

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, other than . . . or Mr. Chair, sorry, specifically to the Bill, well I guess I go back to a former question. Do you feel this is an appropriate amount of money for the demands that the municipalities have?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Speaker, surely the same question deserves the same answer.

Ms. Higgins: — Which is? Well that's fine, I guess I'll read it in *Hansard* if he can't remember what his initial question was.

Mr. Chair, I do appreciate the extra money that goes to municipalities because, as I've said a number of times, municipalities provide the on-the-ground supports to build the province of Saskatchewan and to be able to build the infrastructure that's needed in our growing economy. I think I along with many others appreciate the 8 per cent, but feel that the provincial government could've made a little better of an attempt to support the municipalities in this time of growth.

I don't have any more questions on the Bill, Mr. Speaker, so if that ends it. No, any questions. No.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Yes. No, I mean I just completely support my colleague, Ms. Higgins. The minister went to the table here, and we felt we might see significant resources come with that. We talk about the unprecedented growth in Saskatchewan that we've seen, I guess, take shape over the after . . . actually after following many, many years, that's finally taking shape, and this truly is unprecedented growth, unprecedented prosperity. And if we're looking at a graph, we're in significant compound growth here. And, you know, to talk about marginal increases or record investments, well I'd sure as heck hope there would be record investments at this time, because if there ever was a time to have significant record investment, it'd be right now, and I sure hope that we could keep pace with the growing needs that we have.

Municipalities are hampered significantly by a growth agenda that's not going to support them in the process. That only damages Saskatchewan. The current dollars we're seeing don't assist municipalities to keep pace with the growth occurring in this province. And I think it's in many ways it's overwhelming for all of us in Saskatchewan to either keep pace with the new value of our house or the new value of per acre per land and all the different growth that we are seeing.

And I guess the minister's going to be, have to be fleet of foot and I guess I would argue that he's not keeping pace in a significant way with the growth that's here, the growth that's going to be here tomorrow. And we need a much, much stronger investment to make sure our cities, our municipalities can keep pace and make sure that they benefit. Otherwise we're in significant challenge.

To talk about this \$1 billion infrastructure investment, it's not, it's not a whole heck of a lot when we look at the kind of

growth we're experiencing in revenues. That's my only . . . I guess my question is, does the minister realize how compound the growth has been in the last couple of years, what it's projected to be here this year, and are you going to step forward in a more significant way going forward?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well, Mr. Chair, while the concept of growth might actually be overwhelming to the opposition, it's most welcome and well understood by members of the government.

And our friends in the municipal sector understand two things very clearly. First of all, the approximately 15 per cent increase in revenue sharing that's been provided this year is an interim step to help people cope with what's going on in today's reality. And it's just a step. The long-term solution is coming. We fully intend to accomplish in 16 months what the previous government was unable to do in 16 years, and provide a long-term, predictable, own-source revenue-sharing deal for municipalities.

And as I've said before and I've said publicly many times, those discussions are already underway. We have a goal. We're organized. We're dedicated. We're energetic and enthusiastic about the task, as are all of our friends in the municipal sector. And with those things going for us, we are optimistic we will in fact meet that target.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well there are challenges that the municipalities are facing right here. For you to talk about the opposition not ready or not embracing the growth that exists, I haven't seen a single economic change that your government brought that we could indicate and say, well there's where this growth has come. It's been handed to you. It's been hard work. It's been through consultation of the people of this province — experts, families — and we're here at a special time right now. So you can offer the smart answers. You can tell us how energetic you look. I'll tell you right now, looking at you, you don't look that energetic. The municipalities could expect a bit more from you, and I hope it comes in the future.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well, speaking of rants, I suspect that's more of a rant than a question, and I don't think it deserves an answer, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chisholm: — Mr. Chair, those last comments were completely inappropriate for this committee, and I understand they should be withdrawn . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You're calling somebody lazy and you think that's okay? Maybe we have to look at the *Hansard* on that one too, Deb, dumb bitch.

The Chair: — Mr. Wotherspoon?

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Belanger has some questions.

The Chair: — Mr. Belanger.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just have questions in terms of the northern municipalities. Often the North is one of the areas that, as the minister may appreciate, are faced with higher costs for a number of reasons. Remoteness of course is always the primary

factor.

For northern municipalities, what kind of dollars does it translate in terms of the recent increase just to the communities that are in the northern administration district?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our officials have the exact numbers. Perhaps Ms. Carlson can help.

Ms. Carlson: — Maryellen Carlson. The size of the northern pool will now be just over \$11 million.

Mr. Belanger: — So in terms of the increase itself, what was the exact amount of the increase, year over year?

Ms. Carlson: — The increase is 857,000.

Mr. Belanger: — 857,000. That's one of the reasons why I think we would stand in full support of our colleague from Moose Jaw and Regina in reference of asking for more dollars for northern Saskatchewan because obviously you look at the price of gasoline in Regina being \$1.23, I can almost tell you that in the Far North, Uranium City, it's probably two bucks for a litre of gas.

For the cost of providing supply and services — and the list goes on — there's no question that the amount of money that's necessary to operate these northern communities is much, much greater than that of even southern Saskatchewan. Not to diminish the southern Saskatchewan municipalities' arguments, but the North has a more profound effect on it than the . . . And this is one of the reasons why I think the argument made by my colleague from Moose Jaw in the sense of finally giving some money to the municipalities is desperately needed and the argument is warranted.

So I guess my question to the minister is, would you look at the northern factor, the northern issues and try and increase the amount of money that they have available to operate their northern communities with?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Actually we already have. As the member may be aware, we had our northern municipal sector round-table discussion only last week. It was a full day. We had a number of municipal leaders from the New North coming to our Legislative Assembly here, and we had a great discussion about a number of issues. Revenue sharing is one of them. Capacity building is another. A whole range of issues were covered with the understanding that these discussions would be ongoing. It was an excellent first step.

Mr. Belanger: — My question is to the minister, as per the intent of the member from Moose Jaw asking for more money for the municipalities because the 7 per cent is appreciated, but her argument is that there's much more need out there than what is being presented and offered by the current government in terms of revenue sharing.

So my question is again, will you look at increasing the revenue-sharing pool province-wide and make special provisions for northern Saskatchewan communities because of the profound costs of operating northern municipalities for the variety of reasons that I mentioned earlier?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well as the member must know, those discussions are already under way with the specific goal of concluding them this fall in time to present to the Ministry of Finance in order to respond to their call for estimates. If we reach that target — and we're determined that we will — we'll have a new revenue-sharing deal which will benefit all municipalities, and certainly including northern municipalities, at that time.

A group that required municipalities to wait 16 years without a solution should be prepared to wait a few months for the solution.

Mr. Belanger: — Again noticing the tone in which the minister answers the question, it's very demeaning, and it's not showing fair respect to the process of us being able to ask questions of the minister and expecting respectful answers because certainly we presented the presentation as respectful as we can. And it's our right as opposition to ask the minister a variety of questions. That's the role of opposition. And if we ask more money for certain groups and organizations, it's our every right to ask those questions. If the minister chooses not to answer them and suggests we go to some organization to find the answer, well that's not fair to the process of accountability, nor is it . . . [inaudible] . . . the intent of this legislature.

The money that you sit on, Mr. Minister, you didn't arrange that money. That money was handed to you. It's Saskatchewan people's money. It's not our money. It's not your money.

So the question I'm asking again is, are you going to increase the revenue-sharing pool to northern Saskatchewan communities and the province as a whole? Yes or no. Are you entertaining that option, not just this year but every year hereafter, to ensure that communities are well positioned? Will you do that?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — The member will know that those discussions are already under way. To presuppose what the end result will be while they're still under way is in fact demeaning. That's the demeaning part of the process, is to simply forget that there is a process altogether.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Chairman, I want to point out, as I've mentioned time and time again, is the minister is obligated to provide as much information and answers to us as opposition as you should be giving us as detailed information as possible. Now if the minister chooses not to do that and continues ranting about a six-year governance that we had, these past 16 years, that's not fair to the people of Saskatchewan. It isn't in the least bit fair to the people of Saskatchewan. So if the minister wants to continue on his rant in that capacity, well we'll continue on in our rant.

The fact is as the opposition, we have every right to get as much information off this minister and every minister there is in the Sask Party government. Now if the minister wants to appear smug and not give us answers and refer to a 16-year-old government, well, Mr. Speaker, not only does he disrespect this process in this legislature, but he disrespects the people of Saskatchewan as well.

He has every right and a moral obligation to provide as much

information to the people of Saskatchewan through the opposition as possible. And his rant about 16 years, he knew, he knew very well the debt that this province had. He knew very well, Mr. Speaker. He knew about the \$890 million in debt payment we had to pay . . . interest payment, interest alone. It was our third largest expenditure when this government was in power, behind health care, behind education, and even at one time the interest on the debt surpassed even our education budget, Mr. Chairman. So for him to say, well in 16 years you guys didn't fix that, that's a very simplistic political argument. And I think people of Saskatchewan are saying to this minister: enough already, enough already. Give us some answers. Give us some direction because if you want to rant, Mr. Minister, we can rant all day here if you'd like to rant.

The fact is we had a huge debt hanging over our head, and I think you owe the people of Saskatchewan a lot more respect by offering some decent answers, respectful answers, without going on this rant about a 16-year-old government. People of the municipal world are counting on you to forward their argument as best you can, and this whole simplistic notion of saying, well you had 16 years to fix it — that's not very respectful, Mr. Minister. We have questions we want answers to, and we don't need a rant.

Again, Mr. Minister, are you prepared to support the municipalities for as much as they need to be partners in the growth that Saskatchewan is currently encountering, and finally giving them the money that doesn't belong to you or your government? It belongs to the people of Saskatchewan. Will you give them their money, the money that you inherited, and that your government had absolutely nothing to do with arranging? Will you at least do that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — The member will be aware that those discussions are already in play. To presuppose what the end result will be while they're still happening is a ridiculous thing. How can we possibly say today exactly what the number will be? We're just getting to the tables right now and talking about it. No municipal leader today that I am aware of expects a solution before you even get through the discussions. To expect otherwise is completely unrealistic.

Mr. Belanger: — My final point I would make, Mr. Chairman, is that the notion of a simple commitment from the minister saying, absolutely, we recognize a northern factor. We recognize the cities' growth. We recognize that we have money. And we're not presupposing any number here.

I agree there's a process in place, absolutely. That's what this governance is all about, but the main thing is to have that commitment to say, yes, the money that we inherited from that former government and the economy we inherited from that former government and the record revenues we have from oil and gas and the amount of people working that we inherited from that government — guess what? We're going to give some of the monies back to our main partners, which include the municipalities.

I'm not presupposing any formula or any magic number. They have a need, and I'm just reminding the minister that they have a need, and it's so bloody important to respect that position that they have presented to you, Mr. Minister. And if my colleagues

or if I have questions on your ministry, we have absolutely every right to ask those questions. And we have absolutely every right to even demand fair and respectful answers because, Mr. Minister, that's exactly what you do as a minister. You respect people. You answer questions from people you may not agree with. And that's all part of governance.

So again, Mr. Minister, I'm not asking you to presuppose a formula or a figure. I'm asking you to simply say you're going to be committing to working with the municipalities on a wide range of issues, including revenue sharing, that people have been asking you to consider. And for you to sit back and blame a 16-year-old government, that's not a very respectful position to take.

The municipalities tire; they tire of that. We tire of it. And the people of Saskatchewan tire of it. So again, Mr. Minister, all we want is a simple commitment that you will work with all the municipalities, including the northern municipalities, to position to be good partners for the growth that all parties support when it comes to Saskatchewan. You inherited that money. Give it back to them. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Chair, if I understand that very long question, it boils down to the following: is the current Government of Saskatchewan willing to commit to meet with municipalities — both north and south, large and small, rural and urban we can suppose — to try to tackle a large range of issues including revenue sharing. The answer is simple — yes. We already have. We continue to do so and we will in the future.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Ms. Atkinson.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Minister, municipal leaders in Alberta recently tabled a report asking the province to grant them certain taxation rights. So they wanted the ability to levy new municipal taxes. And I'm wondering, is that part of your ministry's thinking as you think about what revenue sharing should look like in the province?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well in a respectful government-to-government relationship such as the one that we have established with our municipal sector partners, we are willing to consider all ideas that might be presented by those partners.

Ms. Atkinson: — And can you share with the committee what kinds of ideas have been shared with your ministry?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — With respect to the exact subject that you introduced in your previous remark, none to date.

Ms. Atkinson: — And can you share with the committee what kind of thinking municipalities have? It doesn't have to be a monolithic thinking but thinking in terms of what revenue sharing might look like with the province.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — The commitment that we have made in our campaign is to review the revenue-sharing formula with our municipal sector partners, as I said before. That's happening as we speak, with the idea of identifying own-source revenue that comes to the province and using that as part of the

calculation for the ongoing revenue-sharing agreement.

Ms. Atkinson: — So might this include gas tax, vehicle registration revenues that go to the province? Are these the kinds of things that you might be looking at in terms of revenue sharing?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — The province, as you will know, receives a wide variety of revenue streams, and the goal of these discussions is to consider a number of options which might be presented by our municipal sector partners along with options suggested by the Minister of Finance through his officials. And then we'll discuss them in our forum and come to a conclusion as to which seems to be the best option.

Ms. Atkinson: — I'm not trying to pin you down, Minister, in terms of what revenues, you know, what particular revenues the province has an interest in. I'm just trying to get an understanding of what kind of revenues that are presently collected by the province that might become part of this new provincial-municipal arrangement.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well in theory at this early stage in the discussions, almost anything. It could be PST [provincial sales tax]. It could be provincial income tax. It could be a basket, if you will, of revenues such that when they are averaged we mitigate the risks of them going up and down in any particular fiscal year. Those are the kinds of discussions that we're having, and we're not sure at this early stage exactly what the right solution will be.

Ms. Atkinson: — One of the recommendations from the group in Alberta, from municipal leaders, is the notion of sharing property transfer revenue. As you know, we have the, I think it's ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], which is the old land bank or land titles system. And of course when properties are transferred from one owner to another, there is revenue that's created for the province.

Is this something that has been thought about in the municipal sector or in the government sector that there could be some form of property transfer tax or revenues that could be shared with municipalities, given that we seem to have a number of properties that are changing ownership in the province?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — That particular issue hasn't been raised with us by our municipal sector partners. But again we're certainly willing to consider any and all suggestions.

Ms. Atkinson: — The other recommendation is a vehicle registration tax because vehicles are travelling obviously on provincial highways, but they're also travelling on municipal infrastructure, and that infrastructure needs to be constantly upgraded or replaced. Is this another thought that might have been presented to the province as part of revenue sharing?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Again that particular one hasn't been raised by our partners, hasn't been brought directly to our attention, but it's certainly something that's worth considering.

Ms. Atkinson: — Are municipalities talking about some of the revenues that we're getting from our oil and gas sector or the mining sector? I do know that there's been a lot of increased

traffic in particular parts of the province as a result of the significant oil and gas developments that are going on. Is this one area where municipalities are looking at, particularly rural municipalities?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Well if I understand the question correctly, the appropriate answer would be as follows. Municipalities, both urban and rural, are very keenly aware of the extra wear and tear on roads that's introduced by increased traffic for the oil and gas industries for sure, and potash and other industries — wherever there are heavy-haul loads. That's why a significant increase in infrastructure investments is being proposed in this budget currently, both for paved structures and for gravel roads as well.

It's going to be a concern. There's no question about it. We've introduced new measures to try to address that, but we'll have to monitor it and see how things work in the future. That kind of wear and tear on municipal infrastructure — whether it's urban or rural, and in this case it's both — is going to be an ongoing concern for municipalities, without question.

Ms. Atkinson: — And I certainly understand that and appreciate the increase in the budget, I think of \$140 million that came from the sale of the upgrader here in Regina. And I appreciate that. That's not really getting at the answer to my question. What I'm interested in knowing . . . with increased oil and gas development, mining development, and value-added development, there are revenues that will accrue to the province, and you used the example of the provincial sales tax as one.

But there are corporate income tax, not so much corporate capital tax but corporate income tax in particular, and then of course there are royalties that the province collects in the form of resource rents. And I'm wondering if any municipalities have suggested to you that one place that the province might look to is the whole area of royalties because as I understand the municipalities' position . . . is that they, as things go up, as revenues go up, they want to be part of that. And as revenues go down, they understand that they would not be receiving the types of revenues from the province.

And so I guess I'm interested from a public policy perspective and just a how-do-you-design-a-program perspective, what kinds of tax instruments your government is thinking about as part of this revenue sharing. Is it royalties? Is it sales tax? Is it vehicle registration? Is it property transfer tax? I mean what kinds of tax tools are you looking at as part of your public policy making?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can offer the following answer and hopefully it'll be helpful. All of those revenue streams are under active consideration right now. That's the expectation I have and it's my understanding that the Finance officials are already digging into those facts and figures for us. What we'll want to do is to come up with a formula which mitigates the risk of volatility.

Just to pick the one resource that you were talking about, the revenue stream of royalties; if exploration is hot as it is currently, there will be all kinds of investment going on and we will receive large royalty revenues. If it happens to cool off then

those royalties may diminish substantially. If it also happens to be at a time when the rest of the economy is doing relatively well, if it's properly diversified, we might have the odd and unacceptable result of revenue sharing dropping while the economy is prospering.

That's not the intention of municipalities. Their intention is clearly to benefit when the province is benefiting and to pull in their horns a little bit when the province must as well. So in the process of these discussions with our municipal sector partners and with the Finance folks at the table, what we'll be looking at is a broad range of provincial revenues with the clear understanding and expectation that we'll come up with a formula which mitigates risk but yet accurately reflects the growth or lack of in the provincial economy in any given fiscal year, to the best of our ability.

Ms. Atkinson: — I think this is going to be a very significant and complicated task to get this work done, because one of the things that I know is that with some of the development in the oil and gas sector there are a number of tiers in terms of royalty structures. And the tier for conventional oil is much more lucrative to the province than some of the other tiers for the heavier oil that's being developed presently. And so while there may be a lot of development that's going on, the resource rents that we're collecting from that — I'm talking about the actual commodity that we're taking out of the ground — won't be as significant as some people think because it's so difficult to get at, which then leads me to this, not thought, but question. Is it the intention of the government to perhaps look at land sales — which we've had some significant land sales in the oil and gas sector that has brought revenue to the province — as something that you might be able to tie some part of revenue sharing to?

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — . . . one of the many options that are available. Again what we've asked our Finance officials to do is to consider a broad range. I mean it might in the end be just as simple as saying PST because it perhaps accurately reflects the confidence that the residents of Saskatchewan have in their economy. It's a decent measure of our prosperity or lack of at any given moment. It mitigates volatility of some of the commodity prices, etc., but that's just one of any number of ideas that we'll be bringing to the table.

Land sale revenues, royalty revenues — certainly those kinds of things need to be brought to the table for full consideration. And we'll be looking to the Finance officials for their good advice too as to whether they think these things are predictable and sustainable and, in effect, appropriate for this particular use.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Minister. My last series of questions has to do with the urban development agreements, UDAs. And I'm interested in understanding what your officials, along with the federal government and the municipalities, plan on spending this year's \$2 million, 2.8 million I think, or \$2.081 million on.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Maryellen Carlson will offer an answer to that question, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Carlson: — There is a decision-making process that is joint between the city and the federal government and ourselves. There are always a number of proposals that come

forward in year, and so we have not yet seen what the city of Regina, for example, has before us for consideration. But in recent decisions, we funded things like IPSCO Place and some of the preliminary design work that's gone on there. There has been some consideration of working with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and the north central facility that would be multi-faceted and a number of users could provide services. There has been an investment in a feasibility study to look at the legion building downtown and see what might possibly be a future use for that building that would be favourable to all. So that's an example of some of the early stage work that's been tabled by the city of Regina.

Saskatoon is more advanced in their use of money. They have invested a substantial amount into reclaiming parcels of the core, revitalizing it, and turning it into improved housing both in Pleasant Hill and on 20th Street where there has been some investments in Cosmo. And so, you know, those investments continue. We are not completely paid out, but we look forward to some more proposals from them.

Ms. Atkinson: — Of the 2 million, how much is presently allocated for this year in terms of ongoing commitments and how much will go into new projects?

Ms. Carlson: — Minister, I don't have that information available with me today, but we'd certainly follow up with you and give you the detail.

Ms. Atkinson: — If you could present that to the committee, that would be wonderful. I guess the other question I had, do you have a number of proposals from Saskatoon and Regina — because as I understand it the urban development agreements apply to those two cities — do you have a number of proposals that have been forwarded by the city of Regina and the city of Saskatoon for the urban projects in this fiscal year, '08-09?

Ms. Carlson: — We are not in receipt of any new projects at this time.

Ms. Atkinson: — And if I recall, I think the committee used to meet in . . . or not December, June, or maybe it was the fall, so if we don't have any projects, I guess the committee won't be meeting.

Ms. Carlson: — The meetings were not that formally set. When there were projects and a meeting was warranted, we would meet.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. I think those are my questions. I want to thank you very much, and I guess the Minister of Finance has been monitoring our discussion on revenue sharing. And I can say to the Minister of Finance that it appears as though you've made no commitments that will get the Minister of Finance into any kind of trouble.

But I did appreciate the conversation on revenue sharing because I think this is going to be very complicated, and there will be a number of different policy tools that the two ministries will have to look at. And this is not going to be an easy task. So I wish your officials much progress on this file and yourself as well, Minister. So thank you very much, Minister.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you for your kind remarks. Appreciate it very much, and it will be a challenge, no doubt.

The Chair: — Thank you. That concludes the questions for now.

Okay being that the end of questions for now, we move to the next section, which would be consideration of Bill No. 23, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2008. And Hansard has asked for a few minutes to work on their sound system, so we'll have just a few moments break while they clear that, and then we can step into that.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

Bill No. 23 — The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2008

Clause 1

The Chair: — The committee is ready. And we will start with Bill No. 23, An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act. And we have a substitution here — Mr. Gantfoer for Mr. Chisholm. And if we would have the minister introduce any of his new officials and an opening statement if he has.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — The officials are the same, Mr. Chair. And we don't need to have any further comments that we're aware of. Thank you.

The Chair: — And if there are any questions.

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Chair, I believe that we asked all the questions that we had on the municipal revenue sharing Bill 23 during the last round of estimates, just before this. So we don't have any further questions on the Bill.

The Chair: — Thank you, Ms. Higgins. So we'll get into the vote. And Bill No. 23, An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act, by the short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

Clause 2

The Chair: — And clause 2. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wish to advise the committee of a receipt of a royal recommendation for the following amendment. Because the procedures of the committee do not permit this notice to be provided in writing, I'm required to give oral notice.

Therefore I beg to inform the committee that His Honour The Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the subject matter of the amendment to clause 2 of Bill No. 23, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act, recommends it to the consideration of the committee.

Therefore I move that:

Clause 2 of the printed Bill

Amend section 3.971 of *The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act*, as being enacted by Clause 2 of the printed Bill:

(a) in clause (a) by striking out “\$50,102,000” and substituting “\$54,110,160”;

(b) in clause (b) by striking out “\$22,066,000” and substituting “\$23,830,840”; and

(c) in clause (c) by striking out “\$47,756,000” and substituting “\$51,577,000”.

I so move.

The Chair: — The question before the committee is the amendment moved by the minister. Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. The question before the committee is clause 2 as amended. Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 2 as amended agreed to.]

[Clause 3 agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 23, An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — I’d invite a member to report the Bill without amendment, or with amendment — sorry, with amendment.

Mr. Brkich: — I move that the Bill pass with amendment.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. That completes this Bill. I’d like to

thank the officials for their time. And Ms. Higgins has the floor.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. To the minister and the officials from Municipal Affairs, I’d like to thank you very much for your answers and a bit of a debate. But also I know, as my colleague had said, this is a difficult task, but while we have partnerships and the provincial government has a responsibility to work towards a final resolve, especially for the permanent revenue-sharing formula and program that many have put many long hours into. And I think you have a good start to move ahead with the project. So thank you very much for your time and thank you very much for the responses that we received today. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — On behalf of the officials that are here, thank you for your kind remarks and also offer my thanks to the officials today too. I think they’ve done a splendid job.

The Chair: — Thank you, one and all. That is it for that committee, and we move now to consideration of Bill No. 33, the active family benefits Act, and we’ll pause a few minutes to change ministers and officials. Thank you.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

Bill 33 — The Active Families Benefit Act**Clause 1**

The Chair: — Okay. If we are ready to start, we are at the allotted time, and we’ve got till 4:45. So consideration of Bill No. 33, The Active Families Benefit Act, and I’d ask the minister to introduce her officials and a brief statement if she so wishes.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I’d like to introduce, sitting to my left is Van Isman. He’s the deputy minister of the Ministry of Parks, Tourism, Culture and Sport. And I don’t have an opening statement today. I just am hopeful that the discussions here today will be fruitful, and we can get on with positive things that are going to happen. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. We’ll start the question then with the floor recognizing Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well I certainly extend welcome to our minister and to thank our minister’s official for being here today to answer, I guess, a few last questions that we didn’t get to in the last meeting.

I might start with one here. It seems that the new government . . . And I know that this policy right here or this Bill comes from an actual platform piece, so it comes directly from the party. I’m just asking the minister then why the Sask Party has such a fondness for rebates as a tool to address circumstances. I know we’ve seen it in post-secondary education, and now we’re seeing it in promotion of accessibility to sports, culture, and arts. And I know this came from the Saskatchewan Party platform from the election stuff, just wondering why a rebate is seen as such an effective tool.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Well I think at the time and especially when the platform document was being prepared, a tax refund or a

refund in this particular case — a refund of \$150 — is something that will be refunded to people who are actually participating in whatever culture or sport, whatever activity that is named in this particular piece. And it flows directly to the people who are using or registering for any of these programs. And hence we believe it's as effective a tool as any to get people involved in sport or cultural activities.

And I think that if it's the money that is causing people to not get involved in these types of initiatives, then we want to ensure that that's available to them.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well I guess I would contend that I don't believe the rebate, as it is, it doesn't address accessibility or the barriers to enter sport, culture, or recreation. And I guess it's a criticism as rebates maybe as a whole. They certainly don't do anything with upfront costs. They don't do a whole heck of a lot with accessibility. And I guess that's why they're not . . . We're looking at tuition costs for students entering education or whether that's . . . the costs to register in sport, culture, and recreation program, arts programs that we certainly wish, you know, our province's families to be able to access.

What we do know is that for many families that even though a registration fee . . . and some of them are quite expensive. But even let's choose a nominal registration fee of \$65 for a program. As nominal as that may seem for certain socio-economics or middle class or upper middle class, I believe that that truly does squeeze many families' financial circumstances. And unfortunately I don't see this then as a tool that does anything to address that nominal fee as it may be but is an absolute barrier for many families, many children, to access programming. It's a definite criticism as a rebate.

I hope that, you know, the fact that this came from the actual Sask Party platform isn't reflective of the fact that it's maybe bound in ideology or stuck to sort of the meritocracy that right wing beliefs might simply exist, the fact that if you put forth, then you get back. I certainly respect the value in that. But I think that if we're talking about accessibility for sport, culture, and arts, and accessibility, I don't believe this has achieved any of that.

I guess I'd like to see a comment on how this actually addresses the circumstances of the absolute barrier that nominal fees may be.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I think with respect to this particular program that is being proposed is that it offers universal access to various programs. And when I'm talking about access, I'm talking about . . . I'm not talking about what location, if someone is in a location where they don't have necessarily the facilities available. This program is not meant to address that nor is this program intended to help that. There's nothing . . . It wouldn't matter what we put forward; it wouldn't assist families if they are far away from any of these activities that are going to be cited, you know, in this legislation.

I think it's important to understand, though, that with respect to accessing programs, is that we have Lotteries Trust within government, an arm's-length organization that deals with kids accessing and the ability to access sport and cultural activities. We also have the building communities fund which looks after

the facilities that some of these activities may be . . . that is needed in order to have these activities up and running within communities.

There is also, with families who cannot afford the upfront costs of registration for these programs, we have through Sask Sport — and that organization is located throughout 41 communities in the province — that they facilitate and allow for families that may not have the upfront costs to actually participate in sporting activities. And as part of our ongoing consultations to address the cultural component of the active families benefit, we are in consultations with organizations that perhaps may be able to do something similar to what Sask Sport does in relation to cultural activities . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . KidSport, I'm sorry. I don't know, did I say Sask Sport? I meant KidSport. Sorry.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you and I commend the organizations that are delivering these services already and recognizing the needs of our population. I certainly think that if we're looking about being active and healthy, we need to make sure that's the entire province, and I certainly know you don't choose what financial circumstance for which you're born into or the level of distraction or challenge within one's home to organize the dollars and the registration that's so required to access the bulk of programs.

The minister's mentioned various programs, which are fantastic programs I'm a big supporter of. I do, I guess, want to get the minister's perspective on whether or not those in and of themselves, where they're at here right now, are meeting the challenge too as far as accessibility. Or do we have a minister who's going to be pushing forward on, on those fronts whether it's through ensuring dollars through for those organizations? Are those organizations meeting the needs right now of families that can't afford sports, culture, and recreation?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Currently we're undertaking an evaluation of these programs. With respect to the Lotteries Trust is that, I think it's in '09 that the licensing agreement has to be renewed with these particular groups and I suppose at that time we'll hear whether there's some challenges that they're facing or what are the issues. Our understanding is . . . And with respect to the program, it's expanding. KidSport is expanding; just expanded into 41 communities now, so up two communities within the last number of weeks. In the absence of hearing anything to criticize KidSport, is that I believe that it is meeting the needs as designed under their mandate of the community, and I have no reason to think otherwise.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I certainly offer no criticism of KidSport — fantastic organization, accountable organization, meeting their goals. I do offer criticism of this government and of this Bill in not being broad enough, accessible enough. I think the term universal was used. I certainly would argue that this Bill doesn't offer the universal benefit that it could. That being said, it's a step.

And I certainly don't think that families that are working hard to register their children in these programs and put forth those dollars, I certainly don't argue that sharing in some sort of a benefit such as a tax credit is a bad thing. I just would like to see something that meets further across the board.

I guess I'll just take a piece from *Hansard* in the last committee here and I just would like the minister to clarify what she was, who she was talking about here. And I quote: "... we're hitting the right people and that we're targeting the right group of people..." And that was in response to who this is addressing and it talked about kind of serving the right group of people and it's assisting the right people. I'm just wondering within our population who the right people are.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Well the group of people is 120,000 children and within the specified age groups of this particular... or this active families benefit. And you know, given the fact that this is, truly this is a platform document, the affordability was determined using those... the age group as the, from whatever to the age — is it 18, 19, 16?... [inaudible interjection]... 6 to 14 was used because that was affordable to the province of Saskatchewan, in our belief, at the time. And so we were trying to capture as many of the children as we possibly can. The right group is the young people, and given this time this is one of the first programs of its kind that's coming into the province, and we believe it is a true starting point on which to build.

This is the best information that we had at the time and insofar as affordability is concerned, were paramount. So anything, any program that would at all assist anybody in this particular age group to get involved in cultural activities and sport is hitting the right people. And you know, and given the time where now where we're dealing with very inactive children, obesity — inactive children is not just necessarily from a sporting activity, but it's also from other activities that it just... It keeps them involved, so any program...

Is this a panacea? Was it intended to be the panacea and to address everybody's needs at all times throughout everything? No, it wasn't. It wasn't intended to be. It was a starting point upon which we can build and move forward.

And from that vantage point, looking at it from that viewpoint, is that this is a good program.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The minister has now clarified that the right people are the children of the province or our province's youth, and I certainly would agree that those would be the right people that we'd want to target culture, arts, and sports programming or involvement with. I guess I would just strongly contend that in trying to meet the needs of the right people — meaning all of the youth of our province — our minister has failed.

Now this has been a Sask Party platform piece that this minister has been tasked with the responsibility of bringing forward and moving forward. I understand that. When we talk about programs that we can afford, well there's, when we look at sports, culture, arts within the province, there's a lot of... It's a pretty crucial investment and I guess we don't always see the immediate outcome of that investment.

There's a lot of qualitative measures for which could be employed to see an individual's worth or a child's worth, the fostering of self-esteem that occurs through these positive programs. And for a program that doesn't expand the base in any significant way, that can access those programs, I would note that it's a failure for the accessibility. And delivers the

promise, no doubt — I don't argue that. But I would definitely like to see something broader going forward, something more universal. I think it's in our best interest.

It's not just about how someone feels about themselves or how they're contributing back into whether it's their education program, how they carry themselves in their life. It also has all sorts of health outcomes that I know put us on the right side of the balance sheet for years to come when we're trying to look at our health system and preventative health care or being proactive with the many challenges that exist there.

I've lost my words for a moment here. I did have one thing, something else that I wanted to comment on. I guess we've also heard something about financial sustainability of this program. Well this program was unveiled as a Sask Party platform far before sort of the new record land sales were shared, far before record surpluses were shared. So we can sustain a lot more than we maybe could commit to at one point. We've seen a minister of municipalities go to the table and look for new funding to address some of the significant challenges that exist. I would hope our minister continues to lobby and be flexible and responsive with that mountain of wealth that we do have as a province to ensure that we all see benefit.

And it's only in every single person in the province's benefit to see healthy, strong young adults, our youth going forward in life. And I don't think that's an argument with the minister at all. I believe, looking at her, she shares that sentiment. I feel this Bill fails offering meaningful accessibility. I believe it fails in having new individuals, new families become involved in sports, culture, recreation. I hope to see more in the future. I certainly don't have a problem with a benefit going back to folks that are putting out that organization and dollars. That's all I have for questions.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes Mr. Furber.

Mr. Furber: — I just have one question. Now doing some research on the federal program — the minister can correct if my understanding is right or not — this program will not cover expenses related to school participation in athletics where there is not a fee?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Are you asking me to comment on the federal program? Or what are you asking me to do?

Mr. Furber: — Your program.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Okay. Well you had talked about the federal program in relation to what?

Mr. Furber: — You have referenced on several occasions where your program mirrors the federal program. Will it mirror the federal program in that way?

Mr. Isman: — Thank you. Mr. Furber, in terms of the initial assessment that we've done, and of course determining what the final criteria are going to be that would be in the regulations is one of those things that we need to fine-tune if you will through the consultation process. And that's why we have committed to going through those consultations.

Following through on the principles that were laid out with the federal program, program items that are part of a regular school curriculum program were not to be included, but items that were in fact extracurricular that might be run through the school system, like an after-hours basketball league or something of that nature, would certainly be included.

Mr. Furber: — Now in terms of accessibility for people who might not have the means to participate in sport outside of their school, there is a fee or a cost to participate in these programs outside of one that might be charged by the school, i.e., for shoes for basketball. You have to have a specific footwear — very expensive as I'm sure you know. You've got children yourself. Is there anything to be proposed in this program that would cover a cost like that?

Mr. Isman: — Our initial approach to this in terms of where we're leaning and what we're taking forward for the consultation purposes is that equipment that actually is part of a registration or membership fee — it might be jerseys, dance shoes, things of that nature — would in fact be eligible for inclusion. But again this is subject to finalization through that consultation process.

Mr. Furber: — Well that's great to hear. I guess another question would be in . . . Having participated in a number of these programs myself as a child, sports and athletic programs at school and the like, a lot of the camps that are put on for improvement are put on over the weekend. And I'm wondering if the minister can answer whether or not a two-day camp in advance of one's own ability might be included in her recommendations moving forward.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — We're leaning towards . . . As I've said, we're trying to develop criteria so that we can have this program up and running effectively. In the case of camps, a minimum of four consecutive days, and I believe that's in keeping with the federal program also.

Mr. Furber: — Does the minister have any desire to see that lowered so that a weekend camp might be included?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — It isn't something we considered. This is what's put forward as possible criteria, again following the federal program.

Mr. Furber: — I understand that. I understand that it was put forward and that that's what's in ink in front of you. And it's the same issue that I have with the age. It appears that you're going into a consultation process but you're unwilling to change the criteria outside of anything that's included in the federal program. Have you predetermined what the outcomes are of the consultation process?

Mr. Isman: — We've taken a look at the federal criteria as well as similar programs in Nova Scotia and Manitoba in terms of taking a look at what criteria that were established in those jurisdictions. And so what we've done is we've pulled together some criteria for discussion purposes, and as we go into the consultations, these will be brought forward and say, well this is what the federal program has and then talk to the organizations and get their feedback. So, no, it hasn't been finalized.

Mr. Furber: — Okay. Are you still able to change the criteria that you put forward for the consultation process?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Yes. I mean, all of it is open to consultation. The one thing that isn't open to consultation of course is the age and the \$150 refundable tax credit.

Mr. Furber: — Again, I mean, go back to the age thing. I have no idea how it is that you might think you'd break an election promise by expanding the age in the same way that you expanded coverage as a government for municipalities outside of what your election promise was. I think that program was well received as would an expansion of age for this program. The rigidity with which you approach this is unfortunate for the children aged zero to 5 and 15 to 18, and it's unfortunate for a number of reasons, including especially children that are at risk that are between the ages of 15 and 18.

So with that I would end my questions for today.

The Chair: — Thank you. If there are no further questions, we will get into the Bill, and we'll go Bill No. 33, An Act representing an active family benefit. The short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 33, an Act representing an active family benefit.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — I invite a member to move that the committee report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Chisholm: — I so move.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That concludes the business of this committee until 7:15. If there are any closing comments? Mr. Furber . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I mean Mr. Wotherspoon, sorry.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I'd just like to thank the minister for her answers here and her time and also like to thank our deputy minister for his answers. Thank you very much.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Any comments from the minister?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I don't have many. I just think that this benefit is definitely a starting point, and the amount of money

required to expand the age group is above what has been budgeted and what was allotted during the platform. That is not to say that during the evaluation period, that following the implementation of this program, that there isn't time for evaluation and to look at the program in its entirety. So this is our starting point, and we're looking forward to building upon what we've put forward. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, one and all. This committee is now recessed until 7:15. Thank you.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

Bill No. 37 — The Parks Amendment Act, 2008

Clause 1

The Chair: — Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It now being the appointed time, we have consideration of Bill No. 37, The Parks Amendment Act, 2008. I would ask the minister to introduce her officials, and a brief opening statement if she so wishes. And I would also ask that any of the officials when they speak the first time, use your name so Hansard has a better chance of recording it. Madam Minister.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Yes, good evening. To my right I have Jim Nick, who is with planning and legislation. He was a planning and legislation analyst. To my left I have Deputy Minister Van Isman, and to his left . . . Oh sorry. To my right. Sorry I got it mixed up. This is Ken Lozinsky, assistant executive director of parks service. Van Isman and Jim Nick with planning and legislation analysts, and bringing up the rear and just as much a part of this is Sharon Wood, manager of planning and culture resource management.

I just want to briefly touch on the proposed amendments to The Parks Act and note in very general terms that the amendments that are being presented are amendments that were under way and ready to go forward, as I understand it, from the previous administration. If there had not been an election called, these amendments would have proceeded forward through the legislative requirement. The amendments are no different than what was supposed to go through and what had been approved to go through the legislative process.

The Parks Act is to be amended, and requested to be amended to provide, no. (1), the authority to ticket the owner of a vehicle in a provincial park that is contravening park regulations when the vehicle operator is not present to receive the ticket. This action would make the registered owner responsible for the ticket unless the registered owner can prove the vehicle had been operated or parked by a person not authorized to do so by the owner.

No. (2) is revisions to the legal descriptions for 29 provincial parks and four protected areas that resulted from the digital mapping project that the Ministry of Environment has been doing in co-operation with Information Services Corporation and parks services of the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport that include correcting errors in typing found during the review, incorporating proper updated language used by ISC in describing their parcelization of titled lands, and recognizing private lands improperly designated as parkland. I'll leave it at

that and anxiously await any questions that the committee may have.

The Chair: — Thank you. The only problem that I can see with the Bill is that there is a hole in it, at least my copy. So I think we'll rectify that on our own here. We can handle that. Now with questions, who's going to be first? The floor recognizes Mr. Furber.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you to the minister and her officials for being here this evening to answer some questions. From what I had read, essentially I sort of believe that it'll enable parks officials to effectively give a ticket to a vehicle for non-compliance for park stickers, not having park stickers or improper dates or something like that. Is that the general intent of the legislation?

Mr. Nick: — Generally it is. What will happen is that a notice, just as it happens in the cities, a notice will be put on the vehicle colloquially called a ticket and it will give the operator of the vehicle a chance to accommodate a voluntary request to either buy a permit or whatever. If they don't, then a summary offence ticket will be mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle. And from that point the owner would then be able to either do a reduced payment in a short term or a full payment of the ticket, however it's addressed at that point.

Mr. Furber: — Who's authorized to issue notices?

Mr. Nick: — Any of our park enforcement officers that are identified by ministerial appointment.

Mr. Furber: — Any training going to take place for that?

Mr. Lozinsky: — Ken Lozinsky. Actually our conservation officers that are working parks, a number of them have been around probably for 15, 20 years. As well we do have park security staff, but they go through fairly intensive training for up to two weeks in the springtime. And a lot of them are returnees, probably six or seven years, so these would be the people that would issuing the tickets. So yes, they do have a lot of experience.

Mr. Furber: — That's comforting I guess, for everybody but the person that gets the ticket . . . Unfortunately for some of those folks, they probably ran into me a couple of times up north in my travels up there.

Now just a question that's regarding the usage of the parks in the North. I know the US Forest Service has permits to drive on public highways that, where the intent is to utilize parks that they've got . . . An issue in northern Saskatchewan is that the parks up there receive little recompense for people using them. Would the government ever contemplate a system like that where you're charged to . . . tolls, sort of, on the road in a place where it's evident that you're going to be using the parks system?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I am advised that this is something that has been looked at, or is being looked at, and it would be . . . basically is a park entry permit would be, you know, utilized to garner this particular aspect of highway traffic or roadway traffic.

Mr. Furber: — Could the minister just characterize at this time the nature of the changes, specifically for the park boundaries. I note that on the Makwa Provincial Park, there is a park Act amendment that excludes lands. Could the minister characterize sort of what the nature of the exclusion is.

Mr. Nick: — Jim Nick speaking. There are several revisions within Makwa Lake Provincial Park and the . . . Let's see here. And includes a portion of abandoned railway formerly transferred by agreement to the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport but for which actual title has yet to be transferred by ISC. Also excludes areas covered by water of lakes crossing beyond the edge of the park boundary. And there is also a small problem where boundaries overlap an Indian reserve and so we're adjusting that.

A lot of these were discovered during when ISC was plotting things with a digital mapping project that wouldn't show up with the hand drawing maps that we use, but when they're digitally applied there's usually a — for want of a better expression — a red light that goes off to say there's a conflict in land titles and that's when we go and take a close look at it. And on the recommendation of ISC and also Environment department, the Ministry of Environment, their geomatics services section, we would make an alteration to the boundary to adjust and avoid those types of conflicts.

Mr. Furber: — There is — do you guys have the coloured map handy there? — there is an excluded lands piece that's in the east central portion of the map, just south of Highway 699, that juts out into the water there.

Mr. Isman: — Sorry, could you please repeat that.

Mr. Furber: — Sure, yes. There's that the piece of excluded land just south of 699, east central portion of the map, juts out into the water. Which one of those pieces would that fall under?

Mr. Nick: — I believe that's part of the conflict with an Indian reserve right there. I just have to take a second to take a look at my notes here.

I believe that's the case is that that's the one that's the Indian reserve from this, from my notes. That would be under (a). Do you need the legal description — the (a)(vii) and (a)(viii) revisions?

Mr. Furber: — Are you confirming that that's the piece then or can we ask you to confirm now or at a later date?

Mr. Nick: — I would . . . Are you asking me to put money on it? I'm pretty sure that's the piece, but my map of course at this size — I'm almost certain that that's the piece of the Indian reserve that comes in there.

Mr. Furber: — If you wouldn't mind tabling the exact . . . No, just at a later date, table it with the committee, the exact answer to the question. Thank you.

The Chair: — The Chair recognizes John Nilson.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you very much, and I appreciate the chance to ask some questions about this. My first question is,

has this legislation gone to a caucus review committee before it was introduced in the legislature?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — No, it has not.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. Has it gone to a review committee of officials or other individuals or what is the process that this has gone through?

Mr. Nick: — As the minister has mentioned earlier, this was initiated in the summer and fall of last year, after about a year or so of work, and went through all of the review committees at that time and under that administration. And then confirmed with the Ministry of Environment, which is the government . . . sorry, the geomatic services branch and with Information Services Corporation mapping everything back and forth to come up with the right descriptions. And also there's been some review by Government Services where subdivisions were involved and some conflicts identified there. And Justice of course has had extensive review of this. In this submission under current administration it didn't go through such stringent reviews because it hasn't been changed from the original process.

Mr. Nilson: — But did it ever go to the legislative instruments committee in the form that it is now?

Mr. Nick: — Yes.

Mr. Nilson: — When?

Mr. Nick: — I don't have the exact date. It was, I believe, in June of last year. I think you chaired the meeting.

Mr. Nilson: — Well that's why I'm asking the question, because it doesn't appear from questions I've done with other departments, including the Department of Justice, that there is a process now which allows for a review of material. And so that we're not as at ease as members of the legislature when we get here because there hasn't been this pre-screening process.

So I think the questions that Mr. Furber and I have tonight continue along the line. And there will be some specific ones where, just for the record, we want to have the information; because we know that in very many parts of the province people watch very closely the boundaries of the parks because they have some fairly large implications for the value of properties, the access that people have to the parks.

And so what I intend to do is just ask some questions like that which I think will go fairly quickly. But the point is to get on the record what it is that's being done in each place with clearly the general understanding from you already that this does relate to a cleaning up of all the boundaries, effectively. And that's good news, but if it has an impact on a certain park or a certain place that the local people don't all understand, then we'll all be stuck trying to explain what happens. And we know in certain parks in the province where a 10-foot discrepancy means somebody has waterfront or not, or 20 feet or some very small measurements.

So that's the purpose of the questions that I think that I have. And I know Mr. Furber will be chiming in on some of them.

But I think it's important to go through them. And so what I suggest that we do is go to the Act.

And I think you can describe some of them as just, these are just corrections. There's a couple of them where there are errors that were corrected. Other times it's just the descriptions that are corrected. But then we'll have on the record exactly what's there. And if somebody from one of the parks has a question, well then they can go and look on the transcript, and they'll see what's there.

So let's start at the top. And you've provided us with some very good maps. So the first one is the Cannington Manor Provincial Park. What is the reason behind this one, this change?

Mr. Nick: — There were two amendments at Cannington Manor. One is to repeal and substitute the proposed change to correct the legal land description. Apparently, if you take a look at the map, the one parcel A was described in a very difficult manner; it was metes and bounds and very extensive. You can see . . . well I guess you don't have the side-by-sides, do you?

Mr. Nilson: — We don't have the side-by-sides; we have our own side-by-sides. But that would have been helpful actually and would have saved us a lot of time.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Yes, and I'm sorry. I have to apologize, Mr. Nilson. These side-by-side notes were to be sent over to you. And I do apologize for that.

Mr. Nick: — . . . we just redescribed that parcel 'A' that you see. And the second one, it's a small item in identifying the plan numbers on this plan. We have . . . and identifying that they are in the land surveys directory. It's basically a language thing as well.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. Just to assist you and all of us and the people who are watching is there are times when all they've done is because of the new province-wide geomatics effectively, everything is being described as being in the land survey's directory as opposed to in the Regina land registration district or Saskatoon land registration district. So in our shorthand as we move forward, you will see that a few times. But in this one then, it's fixing the meets and bounds descriptions so that they actually go into a plan that people can get an image of by going to the land title's website or in this case going to the land survey's directory instead of to a particular district. Okay, so we've got that one.

Next one is Cumberland House and that's just a plain old typo, I think, a typographical error that's being corrected. And then we go to Fort Carlton Provincial Park, can you tell us what's happening there?

Mr. Nick: — This is to clarify roadway and road allowance references and to update plan number references. It clarifies land to the water's edge as being part of the park and to facilitate mapping. So in this map that you have before you, you'll see edges of white and edges of green along the river's edge. And there was some conflict in the mapping of just where the water's edge was. And they were running off of old titles that were basically from the Hudson's Bay Company and so it's just an update of land description in order to make sure it can be

mapped properly.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay, how many acres did you add to the park in this one? That's good news, but you might as well tell us how many acres that we added to the park, or do you know that?

Mr. Nick: — I believe I don't know that offhand.

Mr. Nilson: — Well maybe that's something you can get us information about the number of acres because it looks like it's probably a fair bit of land that was added actually. I know the minister always likes it when we add acres to the park.

Mr. Nick: — If I may volunteer, usually in situations like this along the river there's land that is added or erodes away and so it's a variable item. But I'll do my best.

Mr. Nilson: — We go to Last Mountain park or Last Mountain House Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — This is to add an exclusion of lands covered by Last Mountain Lake. In other words, we're excluding those lands that are covered by the lake and to change text to reflect the way the land is now described in the automatic land system at ISC, automated land system.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. Then we go to Steel Narrows Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — This is also to add in that lands not covered by the waters of Makwa Lake in order to facilitate mapping along the water's edge, where it states things like that. There's a situation where we refer to it as square water, where land is titled on a square survey but the water of course isn't. And so we're just making sure by saying "not covered by the waters of Makwa Lake" that it allows proper mapping of the shoreline at that point instead of having a square map occurrence.

And it also just rewrites section (b) in order to correct the intent of the description to include portions of land only and not the water. On your map, you see some white areas, and you'll see an extension of the black lines over the lake which are just blue. Those are no longer included in the original description of mapping, but the white areas will. So it basically allows the lake to be filled, you know, the shoreline to be identified.

Mr. Nilson: — So the next one is the Touchwood Hills Post Provincial Park near Punnichy.

Mr. Nick: — This is basically just to reflect the way the land is described in the automatic land system. So it's updating language.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay then we go to Wood Mountain Post Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — Again in the original description, there was difficulties in mapping, and this just allows the automated land systems to better read the descriptions. So it's just an update to accommodate the way they describe things.

Mr. Nilson: — Just on that one, does that mean that it's been

slightly expanded or it's just been described in a different way? So there's no increased acreage to that particular park.

Mr. Nick: — In this particular park, I don't believe there's any increases. In some cases there isn't. In some cases — you'll see this as we go through then, if we're going park by park — there'll be a road allowance, for instance, that's added in. And in this case it doesn't appear that there is.

Mr. Nilson: — So that now we go on to the next section of parks, which are the recreation parks, under part B. And the first one is The Battlefords Provincial Park. Can you explain what is happening here? And I know this is one where people are people are watching the boundaries all the time, so we should probably describe it in detail, what's happening.

Mr. Nick: — This was one where there's three sections that are being revised. One is to specifically include the undeveloped road allowance to the east of what is described. So there is a road allowance that was not included in the original description, and it's now included.

There is an effort or a proposal to change (b)(i)(B) and substitute it with the proposed change to clarify road referenced as Parcel 'A', presently not identified in ISC's mapping. And there's another change to include the undeveloped road allowance to the east of the southeast quarter section, north half of southeast quarter section of section 11. Those sections aren't identified on this map though.

So basically what it is, it includes . . . On your map you'll see there's two road allowances that are white, and they have hash marks through them. They are included into the park.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. And then the area that's included in the park along the edge of the lake, does that relate to the change in the shoreline again?

Mr. Nick: — That's related to the way the water edge is. And that can vary almost depending on which version of the map you use. All that is, it's to capture of the edge of the lake that we have.

Mr. Nilson: — And there are no changes at all then to the subdivision areas, as far the size of the leased lots or anything like that?

Mr. Nick: — No. They're not touched.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. Then we go on to Blackstrap Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — There was an error in a plan number, and that was corrected. There was an updating of the language in order to relate to the automated land system at ISC. And the white that you see in this map is actually parkland. We're not adding anything to the parkland specifically. But because of the way the language read with the old titles, working off of the original plat plans, ISC indicated old land titles along there that are no longer in existence. And so we identified that that is actually parkland that should be mapped as such. And that's what this reflects. And the language is updated in order to accommodate that.

Mr. Nilson: — So the simple description of this would be that all of the parkland that's there is now accurately included in the legal description of the park, even though when you walk, you know, in the park, it would all appear to be parkland. Some of it wasn't included in the old titles.

Mr. Nick: — Also to facilitate the mapping of it as well.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. Then we go to Buffalo Pound Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — One of the changes excludes the road that travels through the park. It also ensures that road allowances under the water are not considered park land. It also captures a small portion of road that exists in . . . oh I don't have LSDs [legal survey division] on this map. So there's a small, little small portion of road allowance that, or not road allowance, but a road that was to be within the park, and so it describes that. That's the section (c), amendment (c).

It also includes an undeveloped road allowance into the park which we have . . . probably on the north of the lake and to the east. It also identifies . . . you'll notice about the centre of the map there's a small little yellow triangle. That actually is city of Regina land and for some reason got caught up in the description. That's part of their waterworks, so we are actually describing it so that we exclude that portion.

Mr. Nilson: — Does that include the city of Moose Jaw as well? I think they own it together, don't they? Or I'm not sure.

Mr. Nick: — It could be. I have in my notes that it was the city of Regina waterworks. It might be titled to Moose Jaw, but I don't know that.

There was also an error on the previous wording of the map which has been corrected. There's a couple of instances like that. Again there's four further instances which are correcting errors in previous wording in order to facilitate proper mapping.

Mr. Nilson: — So the area on the map that's by the, I guess what would be the dam at the end there, is that land that was in the park description and is now being excluded? And so why is it being taken?

Mr. Nick: — Yes, that's the road. The road goes across the dam at that point, and it's been excluded and it's . . . I'm not sure who maintains it actually. But we don't have the road included at that level as it goes across the dam. A lot of the road is excluded. It doesn't show up in this size of a map though.

Mr. Nilson: — So then probably that land is actually owned by the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority because they would own and manage the dams.

Mr. Nick: — Right.

Mr. Nilson: — So I guess it's still in the same areas of responsibility. So what you've done then is taken land that was double described possibly because I'm sure the lands and the dam were still in the Watershed Authority's . . .

Mr. Nick: — That's probably what showed up the error at first,

and then that there was a red flag that said there's two titles over this land. And so we would take a look at it and decide that this particular road should be excluded.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. Now we go on to Candle Lake Provincial Park. And there are a number of changes there as well. Perhaps you can explain those for us.

Mr. Nick: — This is in order to . . . one of the changes in order to reference the highway number and use correct languages, so we're just confirming a change in the highway number. In one of the subdivisions, there was a change, an upgrade of the subdivision. And so in our descriptions we're recognizing that new plan number, so it's an addition of the plan number in (b), item (b).

Item (b)(i) is just correcting the highway number. Item (d)(i) again is correcting the highway number. In item (e) there was some difficulty in mapping this area, so we've rewritten it in order to clarify the intent of the area to be mapped. And again there's no loss or gain of land. It's just to clarify it for mapping purposes, another highway change to upgrade the number. And also in this long item (g), there was a change at the very end of item (g) — sorry paragraph (g) — to clarify mapping again. So all of these issues are more mapping issues. There's no change in the land.

Mr. Nilson: — With these mapping issues, and they're quite long and complicated which is I know why we don't necessarily want to go through them, but I guess the concern comes is whether some of the interests that people have will be in any way affected by these land descriptions. Has there been public information provided at a place like Candle Lake so that people could actually have a chance to talk to somebody who would know what's happening, or is that not the kind of concern that people might have?

Mr. Nick: — There are no private or individual interests or corporate interests impacted by these changes so it was felt we didn't have to go and make a public review of this. It's just basically to improve the mapping.

Mr. Nilson: — So as far as you know then, there are no interests that are affected by this at all. Does that mean then that if somebody has a lease and it has the old descriptions that are wrong, that lease will still be valid? Or do they then have to get a new lease prepared once this legislation is passed?

Mr. Nick: — There are no impact on leases and if there were, we would be contacting the individual. But throughout any of this, there's been no impact of leases or permits or any type of interest.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. Well that's helpful but that's why we're asking the question, just to make sure that that's true and to have a record of that.

Okay so well let's move on from Candle Lake then the Crooked Lake Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — There was an area in Crooked Lake — you'll see it near the south and near the water's edge in the subdivision — that in the old description seemed to be included in the park, but

this new portion excludes this area. And I don't believe there's any development specifically on there although it was part of the subdivision, and so we've excluded that area. The subdivision is in Crooked Lake.

Mr. Nilson: — I have some questions about this one because this relates to the townsite of Greenspot, Saskatchewan, which I'm sure most of us have never heard of but, it's surveyed as a town, Greenspot. And portions of that town have been in the parks for decades, I would assume, or in this particular park and so now it's being taken out. Who then owns that land? Or is this a duplicate description of land?

Mr. Nick: — I'm not sure of the exact owner of that land at this point.

Mr. Nilson: — Would it be possible for you to get further information about this one? And I would suggest that we wouldn't want to move this Bill out of the committee until we get answers to a question like that because clearly it's a nice spot beside the lake there which, if it is park land well maybe we'd want to figure out a way to describe it and keep it in the park. But if it isn't park land, then we should at least know who's going to get the benefit of having it deleted from the park. So if you could provide that information along with the information that I'm sure we'll ask . . . have as a result of further questioning.

Mr. Nick: — We'll have to confirm that.

Mr. Nilson: — Let's move on then from Crooked Lake to Danielson Provincial Park, and can you describe what is happening there at Gardiner dam and the land on both sides of the South Saskatchewan River?

Mr. Nick: — The changes, one is to identify that lands not covered by the waters at Diefenbaker Lake, identifies that the mapping would not include surfaces of the lake. It shows the update and corrected highway number in a couple instances. It adds a new section C to D, recognizes a change in parcelization by ISC for proper mapping of the park boundary. So this was a change that fell out of their parcelization program. I can't speak to that directly, into the specifics of it, but we've put the plan number in, in order to identify that parcel.

Mr. Nilson: — So what was that process that you talked about, the park . . .

Mr. Nick: — It's called parcelization. Like they take a lot of the plans . . . And again like I say, I can't speak to the detail of how that works, but they've added in the numbers and parcelized the various plan numbers. But I can't answer that, I'm sorry.

Mr. Nilson: — Maybe I can help you. What they do is they take old descriptions which were always broader and then taking little pieces out, and so you'd get a whole layer, a number of layers of descriptions. And they've said this is like a piece of pie. Let's cut it up, and we'll call each piece of the pie a different number. Then when they do that, then it's easier for somebody to order the copy of the plan on the computer.

So what they've done then is, within the parks as well, is

parcelized it so that everybody knows what it is. Okay. Well that's helpful. Thanks. Let's move on to Echo Valley Provincial Park. And let's . . .

Mr. Nick: — This refers to a place called Bartlett Place, and there was another subdivision of that planned, so we're just ensuring that that's not included. It hasn't been included in the park. And we're identifying that it isn't still included in the park because they had new plan numbers there. Since we referred to the original, we had to also refer to the plan numbers as identified in section (d)(i)(A).

Mr. Nilson: — So what that means is that there was a subdivision there before that wasn't part of the park and that continues because when we looked just at the maps of the information, we were trying to figure out whether this was actually a subdivision within the park that was then being transferred out of the park.

Mr. Nick: — No, it's excluded from the park, and it's excluded by referencing the lots and plan numbers. And as a result, when that changes, then we have to continue to add in any changes that have come about by re-subdivision of the description. It seems it has to be all inclusive.

Mr. Nilson: — But there's been no change in the boundary of the park . . .

Mr. Nick: — No, not there . . .

Mr. Nilson: — That's what the question is. It's hard to tell from the material that we have. So this is clearly . . .

Mr. Nick: — . . . change the boundary of the park. And it corrects highway numbers and it corrects a roadway plan reference, so it's basically referring to new plan numbers.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay thank you. Now we'll move on a little farther down the valley to Katepwa Point Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — Again this will show . . . again it's mapping. There is also the plan numbers have changed in (b) because it references as exclusions from the park have been re-subdivided. So this again is similar to the previous park. There's been an exclusion. It's been re-subdivided, and we have to reference the proper mapping or update the references for proper mapping.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. Thank you. Then we'll move on to Pike Lake Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — This is to exclude roads that are owned by the Department of Highways.

Mr. Nilson: — And there's nothing else besides that? I assume that the Department of Highways has been maintaining these roads but they were in the park, and so this then corrects it because of the, once again, the new title system that wants to have every piece of land identified.

Mr. Nick: — That is correct.

Mr. Nilson: — So then we'll go on to the next group of parks, which is the natural environment parks. And we'll start out

with, I think, the Cypress Hills Provincial Park. And can you describe what's happening there?

Mr. Nick: — This recognizes the highway exclusion from the park, and that's it.

Mr. Nilson: — Then we go on to Douglas Provincial Park. Once again by the Qu'Appelle dam on Lake Diefenbaker. Can you tell us what's happening here?

Mr. Nick: — There were several lands that had been reverted to unpatented land that ran through the park. They were rail lines. Excuse me. And the rail line was abandoned. It became unpatented. And these are describing that the lands of the park are not covered by the waters at Diefenbaker Lake. But they include the railways property throughout for inclusion in the park.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. So that's a change for all the people who like local history, and they can track the railways under the lake on the maps. Well I mean, it is quite interesting to see because that was a major rail route through there that's no longer possible.

So we'll now go on to Duck Mountain Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — This is basically amended to exclude roadway, so we're excluding the main highway and farm access road. And the second change is in (f) (v) also refers to excluding a road that crosses a small corner of the park, and that's in the northwest, you'll see.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. That looks pretty straightforward. So let's move on to Good Spirit Lake Provincial Park. And what is happening there at this park?

Mr. Nick: — This has been amended to include an undeveloped road allowance that runs adjacent to the parkland in (a) (iii), and also to remove land covered by the water from the park, and just clarify further portions of road allowances that are part of the park.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay thank you. There aren't any changes at that park in the actual boundaries of the park in any way. No, other than to add that one road allowance. Okay so then we'll go on to Greenwater Lake Provincial Park and can you explain what's happening there?

Mr. Nick: — In this description, we're excluding the Highway 38. Actually there are three highways that are excluded from the park. You'll see on the east side there's 678. In the middle of the park is 38, and on the west side is 679.

And we are also . . . there's a small developed road diversion in that we've confirmed exclusion, and we're excluding the primary grid road, which I think are one of the ones I just referenced here.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay so that all relates to roads and the land descriptions of the roads? Okay. And then we go to Lac La Ronge Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — There was parcel item A, recognizes that parcel A

was exempted, is exempted from the park and has been sold and renamed by ISC as parcel A. So there was some private land that was renamed by ISC to parcel A. It had been sold and renamed as parcel A, so we're reflecting that in the description of the park.

Mr. Isman: — Not sold recently.

Mr. Nick: — No it was private to begin with and renamed as parcel A by probably a re-subdivision or something, I'm not exactly sure how ISC would have done that.

Mr. Nilson: — This is one that we're a bit concerned about because we can't really tell what is happening there because all we have is some numbers. So it appears that there are certain, according to the map here, that there are certain islands that were in the park that have now been excluded from the park and sold to somebody, and we would like to know when they were sold, who they were sold to, and if there's some change here that wasn't recognized before or what is happening.

Mr. Nick: — Okay I'll have to get back with the details on that one as well. We are not . . . it's our . . . [inaudible] . . . parkland out there in Lac La Ronge. These were probably exclusions that have been renamed by ISC somehow. I will come back to you on that with the other two answers if that's all right.

Mr. Nilson: — Yes please. And if you could at the same time describe which, if it's islands or pieces of islands that are being removed from the park or were removed from the park at some point, when they were removed and how they were removed.

Mr. Lozinsky: — Ken Lozinsky. I perhaps can answer that question. I was involved with the original legal description for Lac La Ronge Provincial Park in the late '80s when it was expanded because at one time the boundary was about half the size of what it is now. And so we included a much larger area to the north going over the Churchill River and east, and in some cases I think what we did do is describe land that had been . . . Because at that time it would have been provincial Crown land. So it had been sold probably for some time. And so we in error described parcels that we thought were park were actually private land. And I believe one of these or these ones being referred to here are in fact those situations. It's when we expanded the park we had some wrong information, and so we in error tried to designate land that wasn't Crown land.

Mr. Nilson: — Well I think for the purposes of this committee and for the legislature passing this legislation, we will need detailed descriptions of exactly what you've just described so that we're clear that there was either a mistake originally or if there was in fact a transfer at some point. According to the map we've got, most of these properties are identified as being in the southern part of the park not in the northern part of the park, and so we would need to have a description of each of the numbers that are here and who are the parties involved and what happened.

Mr. Lozinsky: — The park was also expanded to the east as well so it may have been . . . Like Hunter Bay and that whole area was also added in in the late '80s when we expanded the park. But we certainly can check into which ones — what was in place prior to the park being established — because I think

that's part of the confusion.

Mr. Nilson: — Yes, we just need to have a clear record that we're not here inadvertently deleting something that shouldn't be deleted or that we're doing something we don't understand. So this one has a number of questions and we'll appreciate getting more information about that.

It looks like part (C) relates to Wadin Bay. Could you explain what's happening there?

Mr. Nick: — Could you ask that again please?

Mr. Nilson: — In Lac La Ronge Provincial Park there's a part that relates to Wadin Bay Settlement, and that's over right on the Highway 102 on the west side. Do you know what is happening there?

Mr. Nick: — This is a further subdivision of private lands currently exempted from the park. And so we are just adding those plan numbers in because of the tallying of the numbers that we do for exemption. So they're already exempted and they must have . . . they've been subdivided and these are new plan numbers that are in Wadin Bay.

Mr. Nilson: — So there's no expansion of that particular settlement area.

Mr. Nick: — Expansion in land mass?

Mr. Nilson: — Yes.

Mr. Nick: — I don't think so. I think these are just subdivisions of existing lots, existing titles.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay.

Mr. Nick: — But because we identify the titles and we group them, then they have to be added in with, presented by ISC when we were doing our mapping.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay so that's something where you can get a little more information on that one as well. And we're asking these specific questions because that's where there's a number of people living. And if we're going to do something that affects what's happening to the people there let's at least know that that's what we're doing.

So the next one, I guess, is we go back to Makwa Lake Provincial Park. We did that one initially, and we talked about that one piece that you were going to get some more information for us. And I think that that's probably the main question that we had on that one. So I guess we can then move on to Meadow Lake Provincial Park.

Mr. Nick: — The first revision is that we're excluding all numbered highways, confirming the exclusion of all numbered highways in the park. And again this is a similar situation. We are looking at land that's already exempted, but there's been additional through sub, private lands at ISC. And so we have to include those in our description. This is at Greig Lake. Specifically excluding a developed road allowance, and we're updating the name of the Indian reserve.

Mr. Nilson: — It appears that there are some questions around the title, or the title descriptions for the federal land that's part of the First Nations reserve and the park. Is that what's being corrected here as well?

Mr. Nick: — There are no changes regarding the reserve. The only change is that the name, Big Head Indian Reserve No. 124, is being changed to Big Island Lake Cree Territory.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you. We can move on to Moose Mountain Provincial Park. We're going from the Northwest down to the Southeast.

Mr. Nick: — We are excluding the major highway that runs through the park. We are also including a portion of a roadway that . . . into the park there's a . . . It's hard to see on this plan, but there's a small, it's a small roadway that lies within that hatch mark there that you see on your plan. We are also excluding a developed road allowance which you'll see in two locations on your plan, one in the northwest, one in the south central.

Again on item (c)(v), we are substituting (c)(v) as there are 26 new plans for the new subdivisions in the area that ISC has established through subdividing private land. So this is land not included in the park but it's been re-subdivided. The new description describes what is parkland as opposed to what isn't by exclusion of individual plan numbers, which will remove the need to amend legislation every time private land is subdivided or renumbered by ISC. And this paragraph also adds an undeveloped roadway to the park which is in the similar area that you see by the hatch mark next to the highway.

So what this is doing is taking the existing subdivided parcel, which is not included in the park, and instead of saying that we are excluding lots 1, 2, 3 in blocks whatever, we're trying to exclude the whole subdivision. And then whatever subdivisions go on in there as a result of ISC and private holders buying and selling land, we won't have to keep doing what we did in the previous park areas.

Mr. Nilson: — That sounds like a very good idea, and I'm sure everybody who's watching us agrees. So this is the last time we'll have to amend the parks legislation because somebody who's a neighbour of the parks decides to create some new lots on their piece of land. Okay.

So does that cover everything for Moose Mountain then?

Mr. Nick: — Well there was another little road allowance that was excluded. It was a developed road allowance, so I might have referred to that already. That was it.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay, then we go up into the northeast part of the province, or central east part I guess some people would say. It's the Narrow Hills Provincial Park. And what's happening there?

Mr. Nick: — This is to clearly state that a highway that runs through the park is excluded from the map. So there was some mapping confusion there again and we've confirmed that no, the highway is not part of the park.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you. And then we go to Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, and can you tell us what's happening there?

Mr. Nick: — We had an error in section reference in the old description. Apparently there was a reference — I'm just looking over on the old title here. Oh yes, in the old description we're removing the reference to the plan number because the plan number was not in section 25. So in section (c)(iii) the revision basically removes that reference and we recaptured that legal description in section 36.

We also replaced the plan number with the updated plan number in (c)(viii). And we've included a small portion of road just east of the highway to replace . . . I guess what this does is improve the mapping of a roadway that ISC was having difficulties with. This is in section (d)(i). So there was a portion of a road east of Highway No. 4 that was to be included and the way the description read ISC was having difficulty, so we've just updated that.

Mr. Nilson: — Just for clarification purpose, the first item the plan isn't in . . .

Mr. Nick: — It states in the old plan description, sorry the legal description — this is (c)(iii) section 25 except Highway No. 4 as shown on plan no. DS 5701 and plan no. 64 SC 09366. Well apparently that plan number isn't in section 25 but rather in section 36 and so . . .

Mr. Nilson: — So basically you just corrected the legal description there. Okay. I just was trying to figure out what you were doing but that makes sense.

Mr. Nick: — And so then we've moved that plan number reference down to section (c)(viii) which refers to section 35. So it was just an error.

Mr. Nilson: — And so on this one it's basically the highways issues and the lake boundary issues that are being corrected for mapping purposes at ISC, the land titles system.

Mr. Nick: — Correct.

Mr. Nilson: — Well then we get to move on to the wilderness parks and we have a couple of situations there. One is the description of the Clearwater River Provincial Park, subclauses repealed. Can you explain what that does?

Mr. Nick: — Okay. The Clearwater River, basically, in the old description, it refers to an airstrip west of Careen Lake. And when we tried to map it with the help of ISC . . . Well actually ISC was mapping it and came back and it turned out that this airstrip was incorrectly mentioned in the textual description, and it is actually south of the park boundary. So it should not have actually even been referenced. It's just an error in locating that airstrip.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. So that we had an airstrip in the park but it really wasn't in the park so now we've fixed that. So as it relates then to this particular one, that explains why we don't have a map either.

Mr. Nick: — Right.

Mr. Nilson: — Because if you had a map of the park, the airstrip wouldn't be in the park.

Mr. Nick: — That's right.

Mr. Nilson: — Yes. Okay, but what about the other portions there, where it talks about Highway 955? You know like . . . Or is that all of those pieces that are described there are outside the park? Would that be the point?

Mr. Nick: — In Clearwater?

Mr. Nilson: — Yes. But I guess those other ones are staying and it's only the item (iii) that is being deleted. Is that correct?

Mr. Nick: — Reading the existing legal description, yes. The only repeal is in section (uu)(iii).

Mr. Nilson: — So it's the airstrip. And okay. So whatever slight tinge of park status that airstrip has, it no longer has it or will no longer have it when we're done. So then we move over to the Wildcat Hill Provincial Park. And once again we don't have a map here, so if you can explain what this is, that would be helpful.

Mr. Nick: — Yes. There was a difficulty in ISC understanding the intent of the mapping of this park and so there's no changes per se other than rewriting the description so that ISC can interpret it for mapping purposes. There's no land given or taken. And so the old, if you look at (k) in the old description we've actually made a reference so that the map will include the proper reference to Fir River and follow the bank of Fir River. In the mapping that ISC did, they were trying to cut across and not include part of the land that was following the bank of Fir River. So this is just to clarify the mapping language.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you. Then we go on to protected areas and there's a few of these that have some descriptions that are changed. The first one is the Besant Midden, just west of Moose Jaw.

Mr. Nick: — We found that in discussions with ISC that the old description for Besant Midden, the existing description, was a bit cumbersome. So with the new parcel numbers that they use, it was a lot easier to make a more simplified description. So basically we've simplified it down to where we refer to the parcel number and there's no change in the park other than that.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay, thank you. And then we go to Brockelbank Hill and it appears that one is pretty straightforward. There is no township 42 yet, so they call it a projected township 42?

Mr. Nick: — That's correct.

Mr. Nilson: — So okay, so this is that virtual world we're into now at the land titles office. Okay, thank you. Then we go to Gull Lake. Can you tell us what's happening there?

Mr. Nick: — When we got to mapping this in the digital format, we ran into a conflict with a titled property that hadn't

been recognized in the original description, and so . . . And it should have been. It was existing prior and so we've made that recognition in this amendment.

Mr. Nilson: — So this is effectively added the southwest quarter.

Mr. Nick: — It's taking the southwest quarter out.

Mr. Nilson: — Out.

Mr. Nick: — Taking it out.

Mr. Nilson: — Because it was not part of the park or . . .

Mr. Nick: — It's a private parcel and for some reason got included with a general description of this quarter section. And it wasn't, so this parcel was not recognized in the original plan. So we are excepting parcel where it states "excepting Parcel 'A' on Plan No. 101628097," which is what you see in your map.

Mr. Nilson: — So when was this protected area created?

Mr. Lozinsky: — I'm guessing probably late '60s when this protected area was first identified. And it would've been formalized, I think, in The Parks Act of 1986, because some of these protected areas were recognized and so officially designated, but in 1986 we had a very comprehensive parks Act, so it probably was formalized in 1986. And it would have been an error at that time where we included some private land which we shouldn't have.

Mr. Nilson: — So on this one though, are there people in that area that think this whole quarter is included in the protected area and so now this would be a surprise that it's not there? Or has there has been any public notification of this? I guess it just is a bit hard to understand that you would have a whole quarter that would get pulled in without anybody knowing about it.

Mr. Lozinsky: — No, it's not the whole quarter that's pulled in. I don't believe that we've had any discussion with anyone locally on this, and the assumption was the private individual that owns this is operating it as they would normally operate that property as their own. And so we felt we would just take and deregulate it in order to allow for the proper boundary to be included as Crown land and not private land.

Mr. Nick: — If I can add, a lot of our protected areas don't get a lot of use. I mean if anybody would be going there, especially this one being an archaeologist or whatever . . . And so it's not, I mean they're not publicly advertised because so many of them have resources that are very . . . that need to be protected, and so we didn't necessarily advertise a lot of these areas. And so there'd be very few people, if any, and probably the person, if it's a farmer that has the land, wouldn't even know it had been designated. He would've been using it all along, so the only impact is that he actually officially owns it and we don't designate it as protected area any longer.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay, so this was designated as a protected area and it included I guess it's 120 acres . . .

Mr. Lozinsky: — It was 16 hectares, 16.9 hectares is what part

of this white area that you see on your map is. It's the white area that is being excluded.

Mr. Nilson: — Yes but it looks like it's a legal subdivision basically under the system, yes.

Mr. Lozinsky: — I guess maybe you're right.

Mr. Nilson: — So that's approximately 40 acres, the farmers — how they would describe it. Okay, well that just seems a bit strange of a description. So this is a situation that is what you're saying where, when the parks information was overlaid with the local private titles, this 40-acre piece had two owners listed in the system? Okay, so . . .

Mr. Nick: — . . . and then felt this was the proper way to correct it.

Mr. Nilson: — So there wasn't any question that this should have been included as far as the protected area was concerned? It was just included in the land description as opposed to somebody looking at it on the ground?

Mr. Nick: — I think that's right, if I follow you correctly. Obviously somewhere in the initial describing of this land back in the paper world, somehow it jumped to just be the quarter section that was designated and, in fact, there was a title there got missed.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay, thank you. I'm sure somebody will eventually see that this was corrected.

So then we move on to the Thomas Battersby area, which I think is just west of Yorkton. And can you describe what's happening there?

Mr. Nick: — We're removing a reference to a plan number that isn't valid under the ISC land conversion project any longer. And the road allowance is not part of the protected area and we're confirming that by specifically excluding it in the description. It's a developed farm access road.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. So once again it's the road issues.

Well I think everybody will be happy to hear that we're at the end of this Bill, but I think we're in a situation where I guess the committee will have to wait until we get this other information, which I assume can be obtained in the next day or two without any difficulty before we finish off with this Bill because there are a couple of questions that I think are important to answer. We don't want to be in a situation where we've effected something that we shouldn't have, and we have a chance to fix that, so let's do that.

But I'd like to thank you for your patience and I think this is kind of like your, you know, thesis defence going for a master's or something where you never quite know how much detail you're going to get asked. But I think, Mr. Nick, you have done a very fine job and I appreciate all of the information that's here. And I think what it does is, it reflects how carefully everybody works when you get to this kind of a complicated project. And interestingly enough we're, you know, correcting 40 years worth of accumulated little things that have been

identified and that's important to do that as well. So thanks. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Are there any other questions? But we're not prepared to vote it off now, then?

Mr. Nilson: — I think it would just be safer for everybody if we ended up getting the other information. Because there are a couple of questions, especially up around Lac La Ronge, where there could be difficulty.

The Chair: — All right, being that the case, are there any other comments? If not, I guess we will adjourn this committee. Can I have a motion to adjourn? I've got a whole bunch of them. Joceline.

Ms. Schriemer: — I so move.

The Chair: — Agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Being there no other business for this committee, we now stand adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 20:45.]