



STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES

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Carrot River Valley

Ms. Cathy Sproule, Deputy Chair
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Mr. Greg Brkich
Arm River-Watrous

Ms. June Draude
Kelvington-Wadena

Mr. Rob Norris
Saskatoon Greystone

Mr. Kevin Phillips
Melfort

Mr. Randy Weekes
Biggar

[The committee met at 19:00.]

The Chair: — Good evening, everyone, and welcome to our estimates for Public Service Commission. I would like to introduce our members. We have Mr. Weekes, Mr. Parent, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. McCall and Mr. Brkich. We have Mr. McCall is substituting in for Ms. Sproule and we have Mr. Parent is substituting in for Mr. Norris.

Members have a copy of today's agenda. If members are in agreement, we will proceed with the agenda.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

**General Revenue Fund
Public Service Commission
Vote 33**

Subvote (PS01)

The Chair: — Agreed. The committee will now begin considering the estimates for the Public Service Commission. Before we begin, I would like to remind the officials to introduce themselves when they speak for the purpose of Hansard. We will now begin our consideration on vote 33, Public Service Commission, central management and services, subvote (PS01). Mr. Minister, I would like you to please introduce your officials if you could and make your opening comments.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good evening. It's certainly a pleasure to be here to provide additional information on the estimates for the Public Service Commission. We've brought some officials with us this evening, which is pretty common. Before I'd start, I'd like to introduce my officials. To my left is Cheryl Senecal who's the Chair of the Public Service Commission; Marlys Tafelmeyer who is the assistant Chair; Ray Deck, to my right, who is assistant Chair; Scott Kistner who is the executive director of employee services centre; Lorraine Von Hagen who is the director of business services; Kent Campbell who's the deputy minister responsible for lean; and Don Wincherauk who is the senior adviser to the deputy minister responsible for lean.

The Public Service Commission puts the appropriate people in place to help achieve Saskatchewan's vision to be the best place in Canada to live, work, start a business, get an education, raise a family, and build a life. Saskatchewan's public servants are the face of government, delivering a broad range of programs and services. As a central agency of government, the PSC [Public Service Commission] works closely with ministries to provide strategic support for labour relations and organizational development. It also supports foundational services including payroll, staffing, and classification. The focus of the PSC for 2015-16 is to strengthen our strategic leadership role, improving services to our clients, and work to deliver the fundamentals flawlessly. Our actions will continue to ensure we have a high-performing, innovative, and professional public service.

Lean continues to be a part of the ongoing continuous improvement work within the Government of Saskatchewan and with the advanced education, education, health sectors. It is

important services for the citizens, whether they are students, parents, patients, families, or citizens. Lean is an investment and we are receiving a return on that investment through savings, increased engagement of our employees, and improved safety in the workplace. This investment over time will produce savings and efficiencies for government.

Lean is a proven methodology that puts the client, customer, or citizen first. We are investing in our people in training and are continuing to build capacity within our organization. Lean is a mechanism for engaging our citizens and our employees in improving public services. This is ongoing work. Across Saskatchewan and other jurisdictions, a number of private and public sectors are using lean to achieve continuous improvement, increased productivity, and remain competitive. Provinces and states are engaging in lean across their governments.

In 2015-16 the PSC will:

No. 1, bring greater profile to health and safety. The creation of an integrated health and wellness unit allows us to be more coordinated and strategic in our approach to raising awareness and reducing workplace injuries.

No. 2, be more proactive in understanding emerging human resources/HR challenges. Plans are in place to expand the consistent workplace planning process beyond the three pilot ministries in order to identify key human resource priorities in the public sector.

No. 3, focus on bringing greater attention to disability issues in the public service. Implementation of a disability employment strategy will begin. As one of the largest employers in this province, we will lead by example.

No. 4, a pilot for disability management program. The pilot will involve four ministries and provide us with more information about how this model could be used throughout government.

And, No. 5, improve the experience of our clients. The enterprise learning management system, or learn system, is an e-learning system that delivers corporate information, orientation, and training to all of government employees. It is now implemented in 10 ministries with plans for expansion to the remaining ministries in 2015.

Just on some of the lean successes, the Public Service Commission underwent a number of lean projects. Of note are two with significant savings: the time and labour report project began in 2010 to address concerns over the complexity time required to complete and process time cards. Through lean, the total savings have added up over the past three years, three years and a half, to approximately a half a million dollars. It's estimated, on an annual basis, we've made productivity gains of 7.8 FTEs [full-time equivalent] within ministries and hard-dollar savings of approximately 150,000 just within the PSC itself. That means that ministry and payroll employees can spend that saved time on higher value activities like better serving our citizens.

The other lean-related project I will mention is document workflow management project. The PSC's employee service centre has streamlined the way they process employee transactions like benefit claims, commencements, and other HR paperwork. Through continuous improvement, we reduced time spent by 4.5 minutes per case. It doesn't sound like a lot, but when you're handling over 100,000 cases each year, the annual savings is around \$200,000. Over the past three years, \$500,000 has been saved. These projects demonstrate how the benefits of leaning the repetitive process really adds up.

There are a few other highlights I'll mention. I am proud to say that just today the Saskatchewan Public Service Commission was named one of Canada's top diversified employers. Additionally the Government of Saskatchewan has again, for the third year now, been recognized as one of Saskatchewan's top employers. The top employer designation helps us attract the brightest and best people. There's no better time than now for that. As the province continues to experience unprecedented growth, we continue to become a more innovative public service aimed at delivering programs and services that citizens truly want and need a government to provide in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Having a public service with the right people who have the right skills and are doing the right work is essential to our success and will help keep Saskatchewan strong.

The Public Service Commission has a challenging set of priorities outlined for the 2015-16 year. I am proud of our accomplishments and the work that is planned for the upcoming year. Saskatchewan continues to lead the way. The efforts of the employees across the public service are resulting in better, faster services for our citizens, safer workplaces, and improved efficiencies. We continue to focus on delivering the best possible government to the people.

Our government's goals are to sustain growth and opportunity for Saskatchewan people to meet the challenges of growth, to secure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people, and to deliver responsive and responsible government. With that I'd be more than welcome to entertain any questions from the committee. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister. We'll now entertain questions. Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, the Public Service Commission Chair, officials, colleagues, good to be with you tonight to go over these expenditures under vote 33 of the Public Service Commission.

Just off the top to explain . . . In case it gets redundant, please bear with me but we'll be going through the different subvotes just to get the general overview and then perhaps throwing down into specific subjects as recommended by the annual plan or the annual report, and certainly issues that have come to the public's attention over the last year. But again good to be with you, Mr. Minister, and Madam Chair, here tonight.

I guess if you could start with (PS01) and going through the allocation with executive management. There's a marginal increase under executive management. If you could, Mr.

Minister, or Madam Chair, talk about what's happened there.

Ms. Senecal: — Cheryl Senecal, Chair. In terms of the subvote (PS01), central management and services subvote, there was an increase of \$448,000 which is largely the result of an organizational structural change that brought together all of our corporate services functions into one entity and resulting in the creation of a business services division. And so the result of bringing those individuals together and moving them from elsewhere within the Public Service Commission resulted in a realignment of the resources, hence the increase of that 448,000.

Mr. McCall: — If you could further expand on what was brought into the business service division.

Ms. Senecal: — So the areas that were brought together included the resources that would have been responsible for financial management and your typical corporate services functions around corporate . . . around accommodations and managing payments, etc. We also brought in the responsibility for FOI [freedom of information] and privacy, along with records management.

[19:15]

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for the answer, Madam Chair. I guess moving on to the (PS06), the employee service centre, again a bit of a decrease on the order of just under a half a million dollars in that expenditure, if you could tell us what's happening in that particular subvote.

Ms. Senecal: — The employee service centre, (PS06) subvote had a modest decrease that resulted from the elimination of two management positions and some realignment of operating dollars within that subvote. So some of that money or some of the change in the allocation was the result of the elimination of those two positions.

Mr. McCall: — If you could for the record state which two positions were eliminated and then if you could further reflect on the overall FTE complement for the Public Service Commission and how it hasn't changed this year to another. I'm presuming that they're made up someplace else, but if you could expand on that.

Ms. Senecal: — So the specific two positions that were eliminated was the manager of HR administration and the director of HR systems and reporting, and both of those positions, the functions that were previously carried out through those positions were realigned with other positions within the employee service centre.

The second part of your question around the overall kind of picture of FTEs across the Public Service Commission, we have 295.1 FTEs. There was an elimination of five positions in 2014-15 that were the result of organizational restructuring. Two of those positions we just referenced in terms of the employee service centre, and there were three other positions that came out of the human resource and client service division, so there was a total reduction of five FTEs.

However you certainly will note, looking in the Estimates documents, that our FTEs actually remained constant at 295.

That is because of the fact that we are the ministry responsible for the . . . or in this case the commission is the only executive government entity that Minister McMorris is responsible for. Therefore we become responsible for the FTEs to support his office, so those five FTEs were moved in to the Public Service Commission in order to support the staff in the minister's office. So hence our FTE allocation remained constant.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that, Madam Chair. I guess we can certainly move on through the subvotes. (PS04), if you could highlight for the committee and for the record what's happening in that particular suballocation.

Ms. Senecal: — In terms of the subvote (PS04), employee relations, policy and planning, there was a transfer of the EFAP — that's the employee family assistance program — so that the funding for that program was transferred in from the human resource client service division into employee relations, policy and planning. And there was a move out of that subvote, \$250,000 to support the funding for Johnson-Shoyama. That funding moved into the human resource client service and support division, and the result of that was the net increase of 293,000.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that. Carrying right along in the subvotes, Madam Chair, if you could expand on what's happening under (PS03) with the human resource client service and support subvote.

Ms. Senecal: — The human resource client service and support subvote (PS03) resulted in a net decrease of \$444,000, again because of a couple of transfers, the two that I referenced previously: the transfer out of the employee family assistance program into employee relations, policy and planning; and the acquiring responsibility or funding for Johnson-Shoyama. And the elimination of three management positions which I referenced earlier came out of the human resource client service division.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that. I guess carrying on with general questions for the commission, of the 295.1 FTEs, what's the breakdown between in-scope and out-of-scope positions in the commission?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — I'll take a swing at this one. So we do have the results in, just in actually, but we did have the percentages: 48 per cent are out of scope, and 42 per cent are in scope. So what that translates into out of 295 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Did I say 48?

A Member: — You said 42.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Oh, I'm sorry, 58 out of scope, 42 in scope. 177 out of 295 are out of scope, and 123 are in scope.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I guess one question that perhaps I should have asked from the start, but it's certainly under the heading of general sort of queries about the commission, one change that the government you're part of, Mr. Minister, that was introduced a number of years ago was the practice of providing mandate letters for each of the individual ministers. Certainly it helped to keep . . . In exercises such as estimates it was a pretty useful benchmark to evaluate

where things were at, which of course, of course was the point of the exercise. Do you currently have a mandate letter as relates to your duties in PSC from the Premier? And if not, has that practice been discontinued, or what is the status of mandate letters?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — What I would say, because that is a very general question, I can't turn to my officials for that one unfortunately because they always have great answers. The mandate letters, when we first became government in 2007, were definitely kind of driven off the platform in what we wanted to accomplish over those four years, and I can only talk about my past life through those four years. I only had one because my portfolio didn't change.

After the next election in 2011, I believe mandate letters were issued again to the ministers, but at that time it was unusual because the cabinet remained intact, so it was just a continuation for those ministers to carry on the work plus what had been committed through the next election. I did not receive a mandate letter as of June of this past year in 2014. And I can't answer for every minister. I can only answer for myself because my responsibilities were quite or are quite varied. It wasn't, you know, like Health or Highways, but it's between CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], Public Service Commission, Lean, a number of areas, so I didn't really receive a mandate letter specific to my responsibilities.

I can't answer for other ministers. Perhaps I should. And you know, if I receive any more information before we're done tonight, as ministers are probably watching and texting me that they received a mandate letter, we'll certainly relay that. But from my perspective it wasn't something that that I received. I mean, yes, I mean when you change portfolios you certainly meet with the Premier and he talks about what's expected. It wasn't, in my case, put down in a letter, a mandate letter form.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for that. And certainly any additional information that should arise, please do provide it. I guess another sort of general question is, certainly as a central agency, the Public Service Commission has a fairly unique set of goals to pursue, dealing with line departments or line ministries and agencies of government, and in some cases there may be overlap arising with other central agencies such as Finance.

I guess again this is more of a general question, so I don't know if you need to get the lean troops right up to the front, but in terms of the decision to house lean or the lean initiative with the Public Service Commission, that would seem to make sense. And you know, please indulge my armchair public administration fancy.

As well, having, you know, it not . . . And we'll get into this a bit more I guess, but it always struck me as sort of odd that you'd have someone acting as the deputy minister of Education and housed in Education but carrying out duties within the Public Service Commission and pursuing those government-wide. That always struck me as sort of weird. So I guess, have you leaned up the org chart in terms of where the deputy minister of lean is situated? And is it primarily within the Public Service Commission? How does that work?

[19:30]

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So I'll take, again, a swing at this and certainly invite Kent or Don to add anything that I may miss. But just kind of the alignment in government is really what you're asking me and how it went from Education, why it is in Education . . . or it was in Education but now kind of under the PSC. But it was more, I think it was more a function of, first of all, perhaps the individual.

Dan Florizone has been kind of instrumental in lean in the province. In fact he was the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Five Hills Health Region under the former government when lean came in in Five Hills, and funding was put into that, that health region. He was instrumental in that and then of course progressed through government, but also through Health, when Dan was involved. Then Dan went to Education and it just seemed to be a natural fit, that he would not only be the deputy minister of Education, but also responsible for the lean initiative overall through government.

Even though it's through the PSC as the overarching agency for all of government and ministries, it's been switched. Of course Dan has moved on and Kent has taken over the responsibility, because of his involvement in the past and also carrying it on, some continuity from the past but having a strong background in it. It's not necessarily, for lack of a better term, first-ministry responsibility. So Dan Florizone was Education. He also could have lean. It wasn't necessarily because of Education, even though lean initiatives over the last couple of years have been very positive and there's been a lot of work done in the education system. So that kind of worked together, but that wasn't the reason necessarily.

And also now as Kent is Intergovernmental Affairs with a background overseeing the lean initiatives through the PSC, so I don't think it's necessarily aligned through the deputy minister as to their kind of, if you'd say first-line responsibility, Education for example or Intergovernmental Affairs, but more being able to oversee, with some experience, what has been done in the past and want to continue it on into the future through the PSC.

Mr. McCall: — In terms of the division of the deputy minister's attentions, is there a way to characterize on a percentage basis what amount of the workday is devoted to IGA [Intergovernmental Affairs] and what would be devoted to lean?

Mr. Campbell: — Yes, it's still fairly early days for me to assess that. I started in my IGA role in October and then I took this additional role on in February. But I would say about 20 per cent of my time. So say one day, one day to five per week.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for the answer. In terms of what kind of secretariat or what kind of FTE complement attaches to lean activities as pursued by the Commission as a distinct entity, and then how does that play across government?

Mr. Wincherauk: — We have five FTEs and a budget of around \$925,000 to support the lean initiative plus other corporate-related initiatives.

Mr. McCall: — In terms of use of contractors or consultants,

certainly one of the things we've heard over the years is that the desire was to develop in-house capacity. It being March 31st of course, you know, I wish you a happy end of the John Black contract. What is the state of the in-house capacity of the government? Or is there a continuing use of contractors or consultants to continue to bolster lean expertise both within the Public Service Commission and then government-wide?

Mr. Wincherauk: — We do not use John Black. John Black is solely for the Ministry of Health and the health regions. We have a contract with PricewaterhouseCoopers. Previously they were known as Westmark. They have supplied us with our lean training and lean support for I think it is close to five years now, and that contract will be up at the end of June this year.

Mr. McCall: — If you could tell us a bit more about the value of that contract, what were the deliverables? What will the legacy of that contract be with the Public Service Commission?

Mr. Wincherauk: — So I think this year we will . . . in '14-15 our expenditure right now as of to date is about \$527,000. We anticipate that being a little bit more as we work our way through year-end. And what PricewaterhouseCoopers provides us with is lean training, and that is lean training on a . . . it's an introductory training course and we have about 90 people attend that session.

Then there is a more intensive lean training session for our lean leaders and those are three-day courses. And it's through the development of those lean leaders that we're developing internal capacity to do lean events across government. And then PricewaterhouseCoopers supports us when we're doing lean value stream mapping exercises, and they're our primary support for that, with the idea that by the time we finish the contract we should have the capacity to do most of that in-house other than maybe for some very complex value stream mapping.

Mr. McCall: — In terms of the lean leaders, is there any other additional certification that's provided? Are they, you know, sigma 6 black belts or what's the nomenclature?

Mr. Wincherauk: — Now what we have, and I think through the course of the contract we have trained about 300 individuals and there's no certification or anything like that. They're not black belts, green belts, or whatever. On top of that, the one-day sessions, we've trained about 5,000 folks.

Mr. McCall: — The minister doesn't make them tear a phone book in half at the end of it or anything like that or . . . Just kidding.

All right. In terms of the way that, again as a central agency . . . and certainly both Mr. Wincherauk and Mr. Campbell have pretty extensive experience on different parts of that divide. In the . . . Again, the officials are well aware in terms of the budget analysis component of the Ministry of Finance and the, what I understood to be called the performance management branch — and of course we'll get into the annual reports and the plans later here today — that to me always stood out as an example of continuous improvement exercise on the part of government.

So I guess if the minister or officials could provide information to the committee as to how the lean component of the Public Service Commission works in conjunction with the performance management branch of the Ministry of Finance.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So what I would say to that is that we, through our representatives here, our ministry works very closely with the Ministry of Finance on that. And we kind of set parameters and we work hand in hand I think on looking at, you know, either from Finance's view or our view of the ministry's, to look at the efficiencies. I think it's important that, you know, the lean initiative is small within government as far as a footprint, but large as far as the people that are leading it with, you know, Kent and Don, as far as being able to communicate with people throughout the ministries at that level, at a high level, and shows the importance really, from our perspective as a government, how important lean is to go through the ministries and look for those efficiencies, take out waste and take out, you know, in the case of Health, it's harm reduction. It's so many different initiatives, but the importance of us putting these fellows, or whoever it is but at a high level, in charge of the lean initiative . . . Kent maybe you want to . . . touch more.

Mr. Campbell: — Yes, so we work quite closely with that group. In fact, when I was at the Ministry of Economy, we actually ran a lean process around the budget process itself, and the planning process to better integrate them. And that's sort of become a bit of a template for the public service more generally. Because what we were finding was, you're getting sort of inputs for similar information at different times, and so that process was mapped out.

The way I see it is the performance planning portion. You look at sort of your ministry's priorities for the next year. What are the external factors? What are the pressures? You come up with plans to address those. And then the lean methodology is really about making sure that everybody in those ministries is looking at what their key processes are and making sure that if there's any inefficiencies in those, they're looking at them, getting feedback in terms of, you know, client perspectives or employee perspectives. So it's really about making sure that individual employees have a responsibility to identify areas how the organization can improve. That's sort of part of everybody's job and that's the culture you're trying to create through lean.

And just one more point of clarification. There was reference before to the corporate projects budget. That is technically in the Ministry of Education's budget, but we have a minister responsible and deputy minister responsible. So in terms of things like budget accountability, it's sort of a bit of a horizontal function. So when monies from that budget get spent, it's both the deputy minister of Education and then also myself that would be responsible for ensuring those monies are spent in an appropriate way.

Mr. Wincherauk: — If I could just add one thing, that Finance is really focused on programs and the delivery of those programs. Lean is very much focused on the processes and taking those from the beginning to the very end, and improving quality of service and finding efficiencies through that exercise.

Mr. McCall: — Again, Mr. Minister, you've got officials that know the answer to this so that's why I'm asking. Was there ever any consideration to housing lean within the performance management branch? And again I guess for myself I have a . . . we have a long and proud tradition of public servants in Saskatchewan that are very much focused on efficient and effective delivery of public services, which in terms of what I understand of lean, would seem to align quite nicely.

And I guess I'm still not convinced that some of the objectives that are set out for lean could not have been performed by the performance management branch by either refining or bolstering their mandate or what have you. So again, what's the value added? What does the lean shop do that the performance management branch couldn't do?

[19:45]

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So you know, it's a good question, and so why is it housed where it is and not in Finance? And it could be. It possibly could be. I think it's important though to realize that the lean initiative delivers a different function to government than what it would . . . than the group through Finance. The group through Finance is more on a kind of a macro level, on the major level, as to the finances and how that works through government.

The lean initiative is really taking it down to the very ground where the rubber hits the pavement, down to the very first level, and looks at the processes as it moves along to end date. Whether it's value stream mapping or, you know, rapid process improvements, all of those initiatives are on process and looking at how we take it from the first thought to delivering it to the client, whether it's within government or whether it's public facing.

It was probably housed . . . and the rationale, you know, you can debate it probably forever. Should it have been in Education? Should it be in PSC? Should it be in Finance's? You know, Education, there's lots of work to be done there. There is leadership in the ministry, and I think that made sense, but PSC makes sense because of our relationship with all the ministries.

You could say Finance does, but I think Finance has a different relationship with all the ministries than does the PSC where we are more looking at processes and how we deliver services to the client, and again the client takes many different forms. But when it's citizen facing, that would be more the kind of work that would I think fit better with the PSC and through the ministries than it would through Finance.

So could it be through Finance? Yes it could be. But are they still a different function? Even if it was through Finance, it still is a different function that we are involved with through the ministries than what Finance is with that group that you had mentioned.

Mr. McCall: — I guess a different way to ask the question would be then, if, you know, value stream mapping and the sort of process engineering side of lean, again working from the proposition that that's a worthwhile exercise — and at the same time you've got a considerable amount of effort being put into the annual reports and annual planning function of each

ministry and agency, and again that work being overseen by the performance management branch of Finance — why wouldn't you want to combine those or align those activities into a unified set of processes?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — You know, I think you can have alignment without being in the same working group, I mean, and that's kind of in a way a little bit a part of lean is, you know, and I've been very reluctant to ever use this term, but tearing down the silo — that it's either us or them. You can have alignment from different ministries. You can be working on the same initiative. Sometimes it's from a different perspective. Could they be together and still have that different perspective? Sure. Can they be separated from ministry to ministry and still have, you know a working perspective looking at the end goal? Absolutely.

But it is a different function that Finance is performing through performance management compared to what we are looking at through process management. So you know, and not that you're wrong, it could be Finance. It could be wherever. It is housed where it is, and not to say that it couldn't be Finance. But it's very important to know that regardless of which ministry it is, or if it's in the same ministry, they have to work and align very, very closely together even though they carry out different functions for government.

Mr. McCall: — I guess I'll not belabour the point. I've got other questions I'd like to ask the minister and officials. But again I guess, you know, how an annual report shouldn't be somehow an expression of the value that is being brought within a given agency or ministry of government. I don't see how that doesn't work or how that wouldn't be . . . In trying to eliminate muda in terms of what the government's doing, it would seem to me like the annual report should be a value map of what's going on in a given ministry or agency. Is that not the case or is this, you know, something to agree to disagree on?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — What I would say is that the annual report is, you know, obviously just what it says, a report on the annual activities of a ministry or PSC or whatever you want to identify. I think until you . . . and you know, I was going to use this later, but I think until you have an opportunity to go and work within a ministry, not necessarily work within a ministry, you don't have to work there, but attend and see what is being done through the lean process, you wouldn't get . . . and not that you're hung up, but you wouldn't get hung up on where it's housed, but what it's doing.

And that's very important because, you know, I've had the opportunity for many, a few years in Health, certainly in Highways, and now especially through the PSC and the lean initiative, to kind of go on the ground floor and see the initiatives that are being done. You wouldn't think, oh, that should be housed, these activities should be housed in the Ministry of Finance. Not at all. It could be, but it doesn't matter frankly. I don't think I'm too worried about where it's housed as much as what it's doing. And you don't know what it's doing until you see it, number one. And number two, once you see it then you realize it doesn't matter where it's housed. It's the work that it's doing.

Mr. McCall: — Well, I have some sympathy for that

proposition, Mr. Minister, but again one of the exercises we're engaged in here is accountability. And if you've got a relatively straightforward org chart for how you've arrayed the resources that are government, then that in and of itself tends to make for better accountability and transparency. And if you've got some funny paths around the org chart in terms of what's situated where, it's a bit harder to keep track of what government's doing and for government to demonstrate that to the people.

And again, you're part of a government that has said it would be the most open and accountable government in the history of the province. So if you're sincere about that, and I don't doubt that you are, then the org charts needs to make some sense. And it isn't just about, you know, the ethos of lean being inculcated into everybody on the ground floor. It's about being able to demonstrate how that plays out to the people of Saskatchewan through exercises like the one we're engaged in right now.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — That more is a comment than a question.

Mr. McCall: — You'd probably be correct in that taking of what I had to say. In terms of the . . . So just to go back over, you know, we've got the lean troops up here so let's get a little more detail on lean. So in terms of the five years, if other . . . Mr. Wincherauk, Mr. Campbell, if you could provide a recap. And I'm sorry, you'd provided some detail earlier there, Mr. Wincherauk, but if you could again. How many exercises have been headed up, the overall value in the contract with Westmark, now PricewaterhouseCoopers, and what are the exercises that have been undertaken? What takes place at the exercises? If you could provide that to the committee.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you. And thank you for that question, because I think it's very important to talk about, first of all, the activities that have been undertaken across government, not just in the health sector because it really has been across government. And there have been a number of initiatives and it's all around, you know, more effective service. It's all about a customer, and again, I'll use the word customer. And I remember using that once in Health and say, how could you talk about the patient as a customer? But it does make a difference.

If you look at, you're supposed to give the best service you possibly can to that customer — and we have customers throughout government, not just in health care but in highways and in so many of the different ministries — to give, to try and meet the customers' needs as best as possible. And it's all about continuous improvement. This isn't, there isn't kind of an . . . I don't think ever an end date to try and, to continue to improve the service that people are receiving from government. But also there is a responsibility of government to the taxpayers of the province to be doing it as efficiently as possible, to try and eliminate waste in the processes that have been probably built up, sometimes over decades and decades of government.

And I think quite often what I have heard — and then I'll get into more of your question about what has happened over government — but what I have heard so many times on these tours, when I talk to public service employees that have been working for 20 and 30 years and they've gone through lean events, and you talk to them after and the question is, why are

you doing it a certain way? And they don't really know. It's just been done that way. And so when we take a step back and look at how can we do it more efficiently, they usually know the answer once the question is posed.

So it really is, why have we done it a certain way? And the answer is sometimes because we've always done it that way. That's probably not the best answer to have. And so that's what these events are all, are all driven to ask, is how can we supply a better service to the clients that we have?

Sometimes it is dollar savings. Sometimes, quite often, it's time savings for our employees, and often it is time savings for citizens that we're trying to serve, whether it's through Ministry of Highways and permitting or whatever.

So approximately there's been about 1,130 efficiency and effectiveness improvements across government and especially in advanced education, education, and the health sector. Seventy were in school divisions, so school divisions have really bought in. And I've had the opportunity of visiting Prairie Valley and Regina Public and the Catholic school division in . . .

[20:00]

A Member: — Holy Trinity.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Holy Trinity in Moose Jaw. Thank you. That's it, but there have a number in school divisions. Sixty-four were in post-secondary institutions, and I've had the opportunity to sit down with staff at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] here at Wascana Campus and their leadership and the initiatives that they've put in place.

Obviously the health sector is by far leading the way at 328; 671 were in executive government ministries, excluding the Ministry of Health. One hundred and forty-four of the lean improvement events have been value stream mapping events, which are huge events to try and figure out, so what are we really trying to accomplish here? Those are very interesting processes to go through. That's when why is asked very, very often. Why are we doing this? What are our core competencies? What should we be delivering?

One hundred and fifty-five received funding from the productivity fund; 422 are citizen-focused and 124 of these have or will directly involve citizens to ensure that they reflect citizen priorities and perspectives.

In other words and, you know, I certainly stand to be corrected, but not too often have government or the delivery of government services called the people that they're trying to serve in to say, how are our services? What can we do to improve those services? That's part of lean and that's that citizen facing and how important that is, is to have the citizens in talking from their perspective.

One hundred per cent of the ministries have undertaken lean improvement initiatives so far. So you know, that's kind of what we've done over the past number of years, six years that we've embarked down the lean journey. Again it's not an end

date. This work continues on. Lots more work. Once you see the improvements that can be made, then you look at other places where you can improve, and there's still lots in government and lots of room for improvement, not only for the taxpayers but the citizens that are receiving those services.

Mr. McCall: — So 1,130 lean activities in the past six years? And again that would include those that have taken place in the health sector. Or what was the division there between health sector and everything else?

Mr. Wincherauk: — I don't exactly have a breakdown between health, education, and advanced ed, and Executive Council and some of the specific things. But you know, when it comes to where we go back to the dollars, and we were talking about 537 this year, and again that was for the lean training, lean facilitation support, and for strategic value stream mapping.

And you know, I think as the minister commented, so much of what we've been doing, especially over the last two years, one of the priorities is really trying to make sure that our ministries and the school divisions are including citizens in the actual events, and that's been one of the things we've been focusing on. And we found when you do that, it fundamentally changes how a ministry looks at something because they're bringing in these outside people to have a look at it and then reflecting back on it. And I think it's been very powerful for some of our organizations.

Mr. McCall: — With the PricewaterhouseCoopers rendition of lean training, did they bring in senseis? Do they have the paper airplane folding exercises? What constitutes the PricewaterhouseCoopers approach to lean?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So I think, you know, what we're talking about here is again, and I've used the term over and over again, but quality improvement, reducing waste, reducing errors, and it's all done through a lean focus. How that lean lens or focus is delivered will depend from consultant to consultant, all with the same end goal of again reducing waste and, you know, in the case of health, putting the patient first; in the case of the Public Service Commission, putting the citizen first. It's all about with that lens of trying to improve service.

So the consultants that we used had different teaching techniques than what was done in health through the Black consultant. Pricewaterhouse has a different teaching technique than John Black does, as does the next consultant would have a different teaching process. Having said that, the end goal is all the same. It's all about better services provided and more efficiently provided.

I know there's been a lot made of the John Black contract, and certainly there's been a lot made of the John Black contract especially from the opposition and certainly people within the industry. But quite often it's interesting how they'll get, people will get caught up on it and it really is a, for lack of a better term, teaching method as opposed to what the end result is. The end result is, you know, a better service. How we get to that will vary from consultant to consultant.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Minister, for that. If you could

then explain for the committee how the pedagogy of PricewaterhouseCoopers is different. What methods did they employ to get the lean teachings across?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So what I would say, and I haven't sat in on any value stream mapping — I've been in after they value stream mapped and talked to the employees — but Westmark or PricewaterhouseCoopers uses a different teaching technique. A lot of the principles are the same. John Black talks about value stream mapping. PricewaterhouseCoopers talks about value stream mapping. John Black would use certainly more Japanese terms because that's where he learned lean from, is through the work that he had done in Japan. PricewaterhouseCoopers will use some Japanese terms as well. They're not anti Japanese terms. They may not use them as much as certainly what John Black does. But a lot of the concepts, in fact pretty much all of the concepts are virtually the same. Whether it's Six Sigma black belts and that organization and qualifying through the American academies, it's virtually the same. It's the terminology perhaps that they use different. It's the teaching techniques that would be different. But the end goal regardless of whether it's Westmark, PricewaterhouseCoopers — same organization — any other lean consultants that we've looked at or John Black, the end goal is the same.

Mr. McCall: — So I guess to put the question in a bit of different way, why would, as the central agency responsible for lean and heading up the process, why would the PSC go with PricewaterhouseCoopers, Westmark before that, as opposed to John Black?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — I'll try and hit the answer to your question. I'm not sure I'm going to hit it exactly. So maybe we'll just kind of talk a little bit about the timeline of lean regardless of who's delivering it because I mean it's lean, and then who delivers that project. We'll kind of talk a little bit about that.

It started . . . Nice sheet. Here's the timeline and I don't have to memorize it. So it started in 2006, prior to our government, in Five Hills as a pilot project. Money was put towards Five Hills to look at it, and you know, there were certainly benefits seen. That's why it continued on.

In 2008 the Ministry of Health pilot projects also were undertaken at that time, not necessarily with John Black, but lean projects were taken on. The Government of Saskatchewan then started to expand and look at . . . not expand but look at how we could use the lean concepts and that type of lens on work done in government. We went through an RFP [request for proposal]. PricewaterhouseCoopers won the RFP, and so they were the firm of choice for all of government.

Health went on their own way. And I think you do have to look at health as perhaps a little bit different than, you know, the Ministry of Highways or any other ministry just because of the intensity of the work that they do, the size and scope of the work that they do, the fact that . . . And not that they're completely but they're kind of unto themselves, with the health regions delivering the work. So the Ministry of Health at that time, after the government as a whole were looking at one central contract, to then contract through the Ministry of Health someone to deliver lean specifically to health — not

government but specifically to health, and that's when, you know, through an RFP, it was chosen that JBA [John Black and Associates] would be the vendor of choice to deliver it through a health sector again because they had experience within the health sector down in the United States in Seattle and in a number of jurisdictions.

That's kind of how we got to where we got to. JBA didn't bid on government, executive government lean RFP, but neither did Pricewaterhouse bid on Health's RFP. So that's why we have two different deliverers of the same concept, and that's why you have two different delivery models.

Mr. McCall: — I thank the minister for that answer. In terms of the local content of the Pricewaterhouse sort, certainly the different sort of field trips to be it Utah or Washington, is there a similar component with the PricewaterhouseCoopers approach?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — No. There has been no field trips, if you want to coin it as that, but no going and seeing what other jurisdictions do. Again, from my experience, I would say it's a little bit, you know, a factor of the services being delivered. In a way, when you see it being delivered, you know, in Seattle at the Children's Hospital, and I realize that they are more than visiting just health care facilities, but that was again part of the teaching model that JBA has that Price Waterhouse doesn't.

Although it hasn't been uncommon for us as government, as executive government to use that term, to visit sites perhaps that are further along in lean than we are, but certainly aren't government. And a classic one, and I've had the opportunity to visit Brandt and the work that they're doing there and have been doing for a number of years, and the effectiveness of that. And so, you know, that would be perhaps a resource that PricewaterhouseCoopers would use, whereas JBA is using other resources to make the same point.

[20:15]

Mr. McCall: — And in terms of the folks delivering the training on behalf of PricewaterhouseCoopers, are they coming from out of province or is there in-province expertise? How does that work?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So Price Waterhouse has been at this for a very long time. They've developed expertise within their organization, but that doesn't mean that expertise is here in Saskatchewan. Of course it's an international firm. So where most of the consultants come in from through Westmark, Price Waterhouse would be most from Vancouver, some from Toronto. They have an office here in Saskatchewan, but their lean expertise is not centred or is not located here in Saskatchewan. It's located at their Vancouver and Toronto offices.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for that, Mr. Minister. And again, it's not a matter of anti-Japanese or not, but does the different approach to PricewaterhouseCoopers preclude the use of senseis?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So again I just kind of . . . Not that I'll necessarily clear the record, but I want to take an attempt at

clearing the record. The use of senseis — or as you said, senseis — but senseis has certainly been used in this House an awful lot and is used through the John Black contract because of the teaching technique that they have.

Sensei is really a term, Japanese term for leader. Our sensei with PricewaterhouseCoopers would be Haneef Chagani. He doesn't call himself a sensei. He would say he's a leader. He's a consultant, which is the same thing, is what a sensei would be in Japanese. A sensei would be a leader or a consultant. They would lead the group through a particular exercise. We don't call the people that we use that name. We'll call them leader or consultant. But the job description and what they do in a lean workshop would be virtually the same. Just their title would be different, which certain people like to make, not fun of, but like to certainly throw it around like it's some sort of different term that is just absolutely unusual in Saskatchewan or Canada, and fair enough. The term is, but the work being done by a sensei or Haneef, who we would call a leader or a consultant, is virtually the same work.

Mr. McCall: — But again you don't refer to him as a . . . Mr. Haneef Chagani, he's not, he doesn't hand out sensei business cards or anything like that. It's just a lean consultant, and that's how he's approached by PricewaterhouseCoopers. That's correct?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Yes.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you. In terms of where lean is going from here, again just to be very clear on where things will be wrapping up with PricewaterhouseCoopers, if you could just go over what's the timeline in terms of once all the need for an external lean expertise has come to an end, there's the internal capacity been developed, and on we go from there. What's the timeline on that, if you could?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So the current contract that we have has been extended to the end of June. And so we're kind of in discussions throughout the ministry and through the deputies as to whether we need to continue this on. What I will say is that there has been a certain amount of capacity built up within the ministries over the last five years, but there is so much more work to be done that I would expect that we would land at a spot that we still continue to need and require some consultation work through outside organizations to continue us on this journey.

What I have learned, again through my experience as limited as it is, but over the last six or seven years and touring facilities, facilities that have been going down this journey that are seven and eight years in say, we still have so much more to learn. It is not, I don't think there is an expiry date or an end date. It's a continuous journey just like continuous improvement is. It's ongoing. I think, you know, the ideal state will be, continue on. We've got some capacity within government, continuing to build that capacity. And as we build capacity, we can rely less on outside consultants.

And so the ideal date I guess maybe is build enough capacity within government, like Health is trying to do within its organization, so we can not rely at all, so that we can continue the work on within the ministries or within Health. But having

said that, that doesn't mean the work is done because we don't hire consultants. There is still work to be done. I mean it's an ongoing, lifelong learning process on quality improvement, or harm reduction in the case of health care.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for that, Mr. Minister. In terms of accounting for the costs of lean and the lean initiative, certainly there's the dollar figure of the contract with the consultants. But is there, in the criteria by which you evaluate lean, how do you account for the staff time that is involved in lean exercises, the 1,130 exercises that you'd referenced? How does that show up on the balance sheet?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you for the question. Sorry for the delay in giving my response. But I've heard this question often through other critics, and other ministers have answered and/or not answered, or whatever it is. And I just want, because I've been thinking about it quite a bit and it's a fair enough question, I just kind of wanted to take a swing at it myself because I really look at lean and the workshops that they're in and the work that they're doing as part of professional development. It really is professional development. It's taking what they do and improving on what they do, which is in the peer terms what professional development is all about.

We don't track when a person goes off on a professional development day necessarily. Do we track . . . We would maybe track what the costs of that course would be that they were attending, but we don't factor in, if they were gone for one day or two days, what is the cost to the ministry for those one or two days. That hasn't generally been the case today or over the last however many years you want to look at government.

It has looked at professional development. That is a responsibility of government to make sure that their employees are as up to date and have access to professional development. And that takes a myriad of different examples, you know, from ministry to ministry.

Right now our government is asking for a lot of our employees, through their professional development, to look at making their workplace work more efficient. So it's all part of professional development. So do we have a number of how much it would cost for a specific lean workshop or value mapping, the time that they spend and what the cost would be? We haven't done that because that has never been done for professional development before. And that's really what lean work is.

It's extremely important. It really does become, you know, not kind of off the corner of your desk but a core function of what we want our employees to do as we move forward, such as value stream mapping. Value stream mapping isn't something we'll do over here, and our job is over here. Value stream mapping is about what we do. It's studying and understanding what we do. It's not, well we've got to do this work here today, and oh we're going to go off on a course and value stream map about something. That something is what they do and how do we do it better.

[20:30]

So I don't look at it as an add-on. What we want to do is have it as part of their work. That is their work, not an add-on, which is

certainly kind of the frame that has certainly been advanced by many that are opposed to lean and lean initiatives is that it's something over here that necessarily maybe doesn't apply to our work. Then if that's the case, then we have to adjust it because what they are doing through lean workshops and value stream mapping and quality improvement processes is about their work. So it is part of their work. It's a function of what they do in their workplace.

And having seen it on the floor, having been able to go to, you know, Highways a little bit when I was in Highways — and I hate to say it, even more when I was not Highways minister — and Minister Responsible for Lean, seeing what they're doing.

Having been to the CVA, central vehicle agency, and seeing the work that they've done in that area in car management. And you know, some of the stuff when you go there, you say, man, that's pretty common sense, pretty simple. But it hadn't been done in 20 or 30 years.

Having been in North Battleford hospital and seeing the work that has been done there that you would say, why wasn't this done? The hospital's 100 years old. They've had the same process in place for almost 100 years. Until you look at the process which is part of . . . It's not a stand-alone; it's what they do. Until you look at what you do and ask the questions, why do you do it, changes never were put in place. And it's 100 years old, this place. And the amount of miles that were saved by people walking because all it took was a bell at the desk to let the person in the door instead of walk over and open the door.

And you can say that is just too simple, but that's what lean and quality improvement is all about. It's common sense stuff over and over again, but until you ask the questions, why, you don't find the answer. And so it's not an off the corner of the desk. It is their work. So is it time away from work? No, it's time as part of their work to improve their work into the future.

Mr. McCall: — I guess it goes back to an earlier point that we were talking about, Mr. Minister, in terms of how you account for these things and, you know, what is it about a value stream mapping exercise that is separate and apart from an annual report? And one of the great things about the annual report that the Public Service Commission provides for all people to see is the different performance measures and results that are there in terms of what the ministry is doing or what the commission is doing.

And certainly in 2013-14 annual report, there is a discussion of the direct learning and development expenditure per employee, which since 2008-09 has gone from an average of \$365 to 2013-14 to \$635. So you know, this is something that the commission is able to track. They're able to make that distinction. It's not just sort of this trope of it's price lists. And it's integral to what you're doing so, you know, should we really call it professional development? They're able to track it in dollars and cents. So in terms of what is being indicated here, could the minister explain for the committee, you know, what's happening with the professional development dollars? And if they're able to track those expenditures, how it is that lean exercises are somehow not able to be tracked?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So I think again that questioning is

along the same frame and line as your previous question. The dollars that are being tracked are the dollars that are spent, for example, on courses. What is the fee for a course? Not how much time employees spent away from work and what that number would be. It's dollars spent on training. All the work that's being done on lean — and that's also being accounted for; that's what these numbers are — and I don't know if you've ever heard the term, but \$40 million spent on John Black, I happen to have. That's the cost of the training, just as the PSC is tracking or whatever annual report you want to look at will track the cost of professional development. It's the cost of the course, not the person being away from work and what that would be as far as the dollars and cents. It's the cost of the course.

So when you try and say that lean is costing way more because people are away, professional development will cost . . . if you want to use those terms, professional development will cost way more. Because all we really do is track the cost of the course, not the time away necessarily from work.

But that's what we're doing with lean is we're tracking the cost of the consultants and all of that, just like we're doing with professional development and not necessarily . . . And I know what you're trying to do, and other critics have done it and I've heard it in the House. You're saying there's a whole lot more cost for lean as there is on every other professional development that government's undertaken over the past however long you want to look.

Mr. McCall: — So government doesn't track the time that is taken in terms of be it professional development writ broadly or lean exercises generally. Government doesn't track them.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So if for an example an organization, and I'll use the example of . . . And I remember it being done in Highways where they put on a number of lean events and they were doing 5S [sort, simplify, sweep, standardize, self-discipline] on a number of their shops around the province. And so they were taking people away from perhaps what they were doing that day. They were, you know, it'd be professional development and going through that. If that person was taken away and there was no need to backfill for that time, there was no cost added. It would be the cost of the course, like if that person was coming into Regina to learn about the new truck that they were driving, professional development, and we didn't have to backfill, there's no added cost to the Ministry of Highways.

The only time that you would find that government, and probably specific areas of government that are 24-7 where if you took a person away, you had to backfill for a day or two, there may be. . . Some don't, but some may track that as what that cost would be. But for the vast majority of professional development, which this is, the vast majority of professional development is the cost of the course and not factoring in the cost of a person being away from that workplace for a day or two, depending on . . . There are some examples where if it's 24-7 that they had to backfill, that may be a cost added. And even then, not all ministries would factor that in.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for the answer, Mr. Minister. In terms of the contract with PricewaterhouseCoopers, is that publicly

available?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — I'm not 100 per cent sure. I would like to say yes, but we want to check with Justice and make sure, or the contract itself, whether anything would have to be redacted for confidentiality reasons. I don't think so, but I can't give you a definite yes. But we'll get back to you on that for sure once we check with other officials. Our first blush is, we think so, but let us check first.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Minister, for that undertaking. In terms of other provincial jurisdictions — and certainly there's an argument to be made that Saskatchewan's gone deep with lean as a province-wide exercise — is the minister aware of the federal government or the other comparable provincial jurisdictions having pursued lean to the same extent?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thanks for the question, and as much as it seems to be an issue that's gaining a lot of attention here in Saskatchewan, and it's a great question: are we an island; are we a stand-alone? And we certainly aren't. Kind of through government, New Brunswick, Manitoba, and British Columbia have all embarked on the same path. In fact British Columbia has used our RFP to contract work for their government. Manitoba has certainly looked at it. I know again over the last number of years other governments have. It may not be across government but Manitoba I know is certainly looking at implementing it in their health system. I was talking to their ministers. They were certainly looking at how they could implement, and maybe not copy, but certainly implement lean within a major structure like health, which is a challenge for all.

I think the most telling though, about half the states have some form of lean, some greater than others. But I think the most telling example or testimonial as to whether we're on the right track or not was about a year ago. Last April we had 11 of the most senior federal officials for the Government of Canada come to Saskatchewan to see what we are doing. This has never happened before where you've got senior leadership from government, from the bureaucratic level, the top officials coming to Saskatchewan because they've heard of the great work that's going on in Saskatchewan, and they wanted to see. And they've gone back and they've been in touch with us to see, you know, continue to follow up and ask questions and see how they could further implement this through a federal system which you can imagine is certainly even much larger than ours.

But I think all you've got to do is get past the borders of Saskatchewan — I was going to say get past the marble walls of this building — and get out on the floor of so many facilities, both government, both public sector and private, and see what people are doing and the benefits that they have received. You've got to get out of here and you've got to get to the floor.

[20:45]

And I will invite you at any time that you want to come and we'll show you the successes and where it hasn't been as successful — because there are times where it hasn't been as successful, but there are so many times where it has been successful. I would ask you, implore you, beg you to get out of here and get on the floor and see what is done. It won't be staged. You can go in and you can talk to the employees. You

can have one-on-ones . . . well I'd better watch what I can promise from an individual employee. But I am asking you to come out on a tour and see what's being done.

That's what other officials from other provinces are doing. That's why the federal government came here to see what was being done here. That's why we go to other jurisdictions to see what is being done. If you never look outside these walls or the walls especially of your province, you don't know what else can be done and the improvements that can be done. And certainly seeing improvement work, quality improvement work, harm-reduction work that has been done in other jurisdictions, you come back here and you say, why not here? Just like the federal government came here and said, why not us? Just like BC [British Columbia] came here and said, why not that RFP? It's worked really well.

You have to get out on the . . . if you want to use the Japanese term, you've got to get to the gemba and have a look. Or if you want to use my term, go to Brandt Industries and walk the floor. Go to other health facilities where it's been successful and times where it hasn't been. Go to CVA and see the work that they have done there. Go to Highways. Go to the Ministry of the Economy and talk to the employees there and what a difference that it has made. It's not again off the corner of your desk. It's a part of their work. It's a core . . . it should be a core function of their work. And we're slowly, slowly getting there and so are other jurisdictions slowly getting there and looking at Saskatchewan truly as a leader.

Mr. McCall: — Well thanks for the invitation, Mr. Minister, and we'll see what we can do to take you up on it. But in terms of the federal jurisdiction that you'd referenced, certainly we do look out beyond the walls of this legislature to other jurisdictions to see what's going on and certainly we'll be looking with great interest to the federal budget coming up whenever that may be announced.

But in terms of what you've put on the record here tonight, have there been announcements with the federal government in terms of what's been indicated for implementation of the learnings that they must have taken away from their Saskatchewan visit? Does that wait till the budget, or have we already got some that have come forward?

Mr. Wincherauk: — Just following up on the visit last year from our federal colleagues, a couple of weeks after that there's a report, eighth report to the Prime Minister of Canada from the public service commissioners, and in that they flagged one of the areas that they're going to profile and work on is streamlining business processes. And in their view, lean is the methodology they would like to adopt to do that.

And I think as we've had discussions with other jurisdictions, the interest in people coming out and having a visit with us and finding out exactly what we've done and how we've managed to move it across the entire corporate entity, all across government, is what I think really fascinates people, because a lot of people have wanted to do that and haven't had a lot of success in it. So I think we're hearing a lot more from those folks now.

Mr. McCall: — Well thank you for that, Mr. Wincherauk.

Thank you for that, minister and officials. I think I'll use my remaining time if I could to ask some more general questions based on the report, so as much as it pains me, perhaps the lean folks can stand down. And I thank them for their contribution to the committee here tonight.

Again the annual reports are quite helpful in terms of examining what a given ministry or commission are up to, and certainly one of the goals or one of the performance measures referenced in the annual report is the whole question of retention rate of new Government of Saskatchewan permanent full-time employees. And there's been something of a decline, from 2008-09 wherein 64.2 per cent of first-time FTEs were being retained, to 2013-14 down to 50.4 per cent. Now this comes in for a reference in the plan in terms of what the Public Service Commission sees as important to be working on to try and do a better job of. And certainly that retention level is a pretty key indicator as to whether or not people are satisfied, feeling challenged, feeling like they're being engaged in their workplace. And so to see it at 50.4 per cent is rightly identified as something that the commission would be working on. Can the minister or the commissioner or officials expand on what the plan is, what seems to have taken place, and what the plan is to turn that around?

Ms. Senecal: — So I'm pleased to respond to your question. Certainly as you've noted there is perhaps, you know, a change in the retention rate of new workers, and certainly it's something that we've flagged as a key indicator and as something that we're going to be concentrating our energy on addressing.

Just to put a bit of context around that particular issue, I think it's important to recognize that when we look at the younger demographic, if we look at younger people in our lives, certainly if I look at my own family and my own nieces and nephews, they have a very different approach to their careers. They come into a position and they want to have challenging, interesting work. They don't necessarily come into the position thinking that I'm going to stay here for 25 years. They very much want to have a variety of experiences, and I think the access to various opportunities really is very appealing to young workers and new professionals.

And so, you know, in some respects when you look at that context, we know that a demographic . . . we're dealing with a demographic that wants to have new and different experiences. And so while it is important to retain workers and we obviously are working towards that, it's also important to recognize the context of perhaps how people look at their careers today. And I always feel strongly about the fact that if we attract young, new workers into the public service and they happen to, you know, choose to leave to go to another career opportunity, I want to make that a very tough decision for them, and I want to be able to attract them back, perhaps at a later point in their careers. And we do see where some of that is happening.

That being said, there's some particular things that we're doing to attract and retain young workers and certainly new professionals. The efforts that we put into employee networks, public service renewal, our mentorship program, very positive internship programs — one in particular that we have with the Johnson-Shoyama graduate school. So we're doing some

specific things that we believe are important.

And actually these things also contribute to the minister's reference earlier this evening to the fact that the Government of Saskatchewan is a top employer. And these are certainly some of the things that contribute to us being selected as a top employer along with working conditions, the fact that we have a very good benefits package and total compensation package for our employees, the fact that we are a unionized work environment. Those types of things also contribute very much to being a top employer.

So I'm just going to pass it on to my assistant Chair, and she has a few comments around some of the specifics.

Ms. Tafelmeyer: — Thanks very much, Cheryl. Marlys Tafelmeyer, assistant Chair. Certainly with regards to the retention rate of new hires over a four-year period, we've actually seen an improvement in our statistics. You did mention a retention rate of approximately 50 per cent as of March 2014. As of December 2014, that retention rate was at 54.7 per cent so we've certainly seen an increase there.

Cheryl Senecal made reference to our internship programs. Yes, one of our strong relationships with Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy has been very beneficial for us in bringing young people into the public service. In addition, our arrangements that we have with various universities and our technical colleges here in the province that offer co-op programs have been very successful to us. And as well, in 2014 we hired 1,232 summer students. That's the highest that we've had since 2008, which has actually almost doubled, almost 97 per cent.

So we have a couple of good initiatives in place to improve that retention rate, and I'll pass it back over to the minister for a couple of other concluding remarks.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you. I just want to compliment and comment on the great work that the Public Service Commission does and the initiatives that they have looked at to try and increase retention, and even more importantly — well they're both equally as important — to have government or Public Service Commission, government work looked at as an employer of choice, that people would choose to come and work for government.

Because I can tell you from kind of perception, but also I think can be backed up by people that have been in government maybe longer, is that government used to be a place to come and get a job there and then you had a job for life. But people don't look at it that way. People look at other opportunities. But even more, I think now in light of the way Saskatchewan is now, there are opportunities. There are a lot of people leaving government jobs because there are more opportunities in the private sector than there ever has been before. And I think that's pretty evident. I mean you don't have to talk to too many private employers in the province that aren't looking for strong employees.

So we, I think, as a government and as a public service, have never been in such a competitive environment to attract but, more importantly, even retain our employees than we are right

now. It certainly wasn't this case, let's say, 10 or 12 years ago because the opportunities certainly weren't in the province, and I think everybody would agree to that. There are certainly more opportunities in the province now and as a result, we're in a competitive environment to attract and retain the employees that we have.

[21:00]

That's why again I want to compliment the Public Service Commission on the programs that they've got in place because they realize it's a competitive market. And we have to be able to be looked at as the best employer in Saskatchewan and a secure work environment and a safe work environment. That's why they're doing work on occupational health and safety. How important that is to people that are looking for a place to work. But it is a changed environment from where it was a number of years ago, just simply because of the opportunity here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. McCall: — I thank the minister and the officials for those responses. Just one last question and then we'll thank you for your time. But in terms of the wage freeze that was implemented for out-of-scope Crown and executive government employees, were there any executive government employees that actually had their wages rolled back, that had December 31st as the clock? Or was that limited to out-of-sector Crown employees?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — The answer from the officials is for executive government there were no rollbacks from where they were before.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that answer, Mr. Minister. One last: in terms of last year, there was a . . . It's the next to last, honestly. Honestly this will be the last one . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well I got three great answers to the one question. It just, you know, no end of good answers there.

But the question is this: in terms of the workforce adjustment strategy — I believe last year was the completion of that — does the commission have any analysis of where those, the FTEs that constituted, or how that 15 per cent reduction in the overall workforce was accomplished? Which ministries? Which positions? Is there any sort of analysis that's been concluded as to how that all happened? And could that be provided to the committee?

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — So that's a kind of a fairly complex question at 9 o'clock, but what we'll do is commit to you that we'll gather what we can gather and get it to you. It's not necessarily . . . The Public Service Commission wasn't necessarily the lead, but we can maybe work and see what we can provide to you as much as we possibly can. I don't have it here. And it's a more complex question than what a one-minute or two-minute answer will be able to provide. So we'll commit to the committee that we'll get the information that we can to the committee as soon as we can.

Mr. McCall: — I appreciate that very much, Mr. Minister, and certainly I'm an avid reader. I wasn't expecting you to hit it in the one-minute version, so I appreciate that undertaking and look forward to the information being provided.

But with that, we have hit the agreed-upon hour of adjournment and a little bit besides. So I thank the minister and officials for joining us here tonight for consideration of these estimates and these activities of government. And thanks to my colleagues and Mr. Chair as well.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the opposition for those questions and especially thank you to all the officials that are surrounding me that do excellent work, not just from 7 to 9 tonight, but all year long and for many, many years. So I want to thank them very much.

And also thank my committee members, even though they were kind of sneaking further and further in back. I was going to have to shut the door there for a second. But anyway, thanks to the committee members for giving us the time to explain our appropriation for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

The Chair: — Well thank you, Minister, and I want to thank all your officials too, and all the committee members that are here. The time being 9:05, I would now ask a member to move the motion of adjournment, please.

Mr. Phillips: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Phillips moved the adjournment. Are all agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — All agreed. This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 21:06.]