



STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES

Mr. Herb Cox, Chair
The Battlefords

Ms. Cathy Sproule, Deputy Chair
Saskatoon Nutana

Mr. Steven Bonk
Moosomin

Mr. Glen Hart
Last Mountain-Touchwood

Ms. Nancy Heppner
Martensville-Warman

Mr. Everett Hindley
Swift Current

Ms. Lisa Lambert
Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood

[The committee met at 18:30.]

The Chair: — Good evening, members. Seeing it's the hour of 6:30, I'd welcome the members of the committee. I'm Herb Cox, the Chair of this committee, and we have Warren McCall on the opposition side. We're waiting for Steven Bonk, and Glen Hart will be here shortly. We have Nancy Heppner with us, and Everett Hindley, and Terry Dennis substituting for Lisa Lambert.

Committee members, pursuant to rule 148(1), the following estimates were committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies on April the 18th, 2018: vote 195, advances to revolving funds; vote 13, Central Services; vote 175, debt redemption; vote 18, Finance; vote 12, Finance — debt servicing; vote 177, interest on gross debt — Crown enterprise share; vote 151, Municipal Financing Corporation; vote 33, Public Service Commission; vote 154, Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation; vote 152, Saskatchewan Power Corporation; vote 153, Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation; vote 140, Saskatchewan Water Corporation; vote 150, SaskEnergy Incorporated; vote 176, sinking fund payments — government share.

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

Subvote (PS01)

The Chair: — Committee, this evening we will be considering the estimates for the Ministry of Central Services and the Public Service Commission. So I would like to now begin our consideration of the estimates for the Public Service Commission, vote 33, central management and services, subvote (PS01).

Minister Cheveldayoff, please introduce your officials and you can make your opening remarks if you wish, please.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and good evening to you and to committee members. To the critic opposite, I look forward to a fruitful discussion regarding the Public Service Commission. I'll take this opportunity to make some brief opening comments.

I am pleased to be here to provide additional information on estimates for the Public Service Commission. Before I start, I would like to take a minute to introduce my officials here with me today. I have Karen Aulie, who is the Chair of the Public Service Commission; Greg Tuer, assistant Chair; Ray Deck, assistant Chair; Scott Kistner, executive director of the human resource service centre; Glenda Francis, executive director of corporate services; Lorraine Von Hagen, director of business services; and Michael Kindrachuk, chief of staff.

The Public Service Commission, or the PSC, is a central agency for government, providing human resource services for executive government as well as some agencies, boards, and commissions. Through our business partner model, we help ministries ensure that they have the right human resources in place to help government deliver on its objectives.

Currently there are more than 11,000 employees who work for the Government of Saskatchewan. These employees work in various roles all over the province. As a central agency of government, the PSC provides strategic support for labour relations, organizational development, recruitment, compensation and classification, and health and safety. It also supports foundational services, including payroll.

Last year when I was here, I talked to you about the introduction of the business partner model. I am pleased to say now that the business partner model is fully implemented. This is a major shift that recognized that government was doing business differently, and in order to provide the support ministries needed, we did too. After a full year of operating under the model, all indications are that the model is working well and is meeting the needs of ministries.

In our annual feedback sessions with ministries, we heard very positive comments. Our employees provide strategic support and are respected as valuable resources to our ministries' clients. In the past year, the PSC made significant progress on many of our strategic initiatives.

The PSC is driven by a commitment to our client ministries and is innovative in coming up with new ways to support government. And when the PSC is innovative, it does benefit all of government. The work this past year on electronic time cards, the roll-out of Taskroom, Taleo, and MIDAS [multi-informational database application system] onboarding will help all government to be more efficient. In fact it is estimated that the move to electronic time cards will save more than 30 FTEs [full-time equivalent] across government.

We also made healthy progress on the implementation of the healthy workplaces initiative and common job descriptions. These accomplishments show that we are on the right track. The PSC strategic plan for 2018-19 is consistent with the previous years.

The five areas of strategic priority remain the same. They are effective leadership; high-performing organization; inclusive workforce; health, safety, and wellness; and an engaged, high-performing Public Service Commission. We believe that we have captured the strategic HR [human resources] priorities of government in these areas.

Our first area of focus, effective leadership, is about ensuring the Government of Saskatchewan has the leadership required to deliver on its commitments. This includes acquiring leadership capacity through proactive and targeted leadership and recruitment. It also includes building leadership capability by improving development programs for leaders, enhancing government's performance management system, and strengthening leadership succession across government. To ensure we can deliver on government priorities we need to ensure we provide a strong work environment and attract, develop, and retain high performers.

The second area of focus, a high performing organization, is about building and acquiring employee capacity through a proactive and targeted recruitment capability, developing a competency-based career progression system, and a

comprehensive learning and development strategy for government. PSC is currently doing preliminary work on a total rewards system that differentiates the government as a top employer, enhances the performance management framework, and refines the classification and job evaluation system.

And while it may seem odd to consider increasing compensation and benefits in a time of such fiscal restraint, one of our key risks is lagging compensation particularly in specialized skill sets. The reality is that without a competitive compensation package, the government soon will not be in a position to attract and retain the skill sets it needs to deliver programs and services to the people of Saskatchewan.

In addition to this area, this year is optimize technology to improve human resource information and processes. I talked earlier about the rollout of electronic time cards and the benefits that this initiative has had to all of government. Technology not only improves processes, it also allows for better information that is more accurate and available quicker, which allows for better decision making.

We will also continue to build on our corporate culture as guided by our commitment to excellence. The end goal is engaged and productive employees who are valued and appreciated.

The third strategic goal is building an inclusive workforce. We know that having a diverse workforce and inclusive workplaces makes us a better public service. It allows us to better understand and meet the needs of our citizens. The PSC will implement an inclusion strategy to assist the Government of Saskatchewan and implement the disability employment action plan.

The fourth area of focus is health, safety, and wellness. In order to have productive employees you must have healthy employees, both physically and mentally. The PSC will work to create a culture of health, safety, and wellness by supporting the corporate health and safety plan, implementing the psychological health and safety in the workplace standards, implementing the Be At Work program, and enhancing the employee and family assistance program.

The fifth goal is internal and it's about the PSC being engaged and high performing. This means ensuring we are enhancing our clients' experience with us, providing systems and processes through continuous improvement, progressing on our own culture journey, improving engagement, and ensuring that the PSC has the workforce we need to successfully execute our strategic plan.

This is an aggressive agenda for the PSC and much discussion went into it to ensure that we were on the right path. We met with our clients and they have assured us that we are indeed on that correct track.

In developing this year's budget, we asked ministries what their HR priorities were and how we could best serve them. They told us the business partner model was what they needed — well-trained HR professionals to guide and support them. With that in mind, we developed a budget that allowed us to retain our staff and remain focused on our priorities.

The focus of the PSC for 2018-19 is to continue to advance on its strategic plan, and we are on the right track. We are aligned with government direction and well positioned to help us meet our strategic goals.

As the Government of Saskatchewan continues its plan to balance, the strategic advice and guidance of the Public Service Commission will be important to ensure we have the right people with the right skills delivering the right programs and services to the people of Saskatchewan.

I'm proud of the PSC's accomplishments and confident in the work that is planned for the coming year. Our employees are strengthening programs and services 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 indeed build a life.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to any questions that you or any committee members may have. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister, and I guess I would just remind officials that, please state your name the first time when you speak. So anybody have questions from the committee? I recognize Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, committee members, Mr. Minister, officials. Welcome to the consideration of estimates for this year's budget for the Public Service Commission.

I'd just like to start off at the top by extending a word of thanks through the Chair and officials, the minister, to the public servants that do this, a lot of very important jobs for the people of Saskatchewan, and I'd just get that on the record.

I guess the second question I'd have is for the minister: did you pick the time for this committee meeting or did I, and what is the score in the Jets game? I'd guess that would be supplementary. But in all seriousness, apologies for the coincidence that this is taking place with the Jets, but such is the importance of the work before us here tonight and I'll certainly try to keep that in mind as we spend these hours together.

But I guess the first thing I'd like to ask, just for the record, is if you could restate the number of FTEs under consideration or under the purview of the Public Service Commission and the payroll that that involves and then what is the split between in-scope and out-of-scope positions.

[18:45]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well thanks very much to the member for the question. As far as his opening question goes, you know, I learned when I was minister of Environment, when they asked about environment and I'd say it's a shared responsibility with the feds and if it was a nice day, we'd take responsibility; if it was not so nice, it was over to the feds and to blame them. So I guess I will say that this particular time, you know, I was concerned that it was maybe a plot by the opposition member to get me distracted or something like that. But no, in all seriousness it's good to be here and thank you for the opening questions.

258 employees are part of the Public Service Commission. The payroll is 24.051 million. And out-of-scope employees would be about 180 of that number.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. And I assure you I'm not nearly that gifted to be able to pull something like that off. So obviously I stick to blaming the feds in this case.

In terms of the . . . The budget is the primary document in terms of priorities, accountability — you know, where good intentions are realized or not — and the way that the Public Service Commission as a central agency interacts with the budget exercise. The one thing that we were surprised to see this year, and I take the liberty of speaking on behalf of the official opposition in this case, was the absence of the full-time equivalent information in the budget document. When we asked the question, the answer provided was that it was in keeping with best practices or that the expenditure was more meaningful indicators to government activity.

But certainly this is a government that's promised to be more accountable, more transparent, and that number's always been quite useful in terms of understanding the distribution and allocation of the Public Service Commission. And we'll get into the different tasks that you have before you as a commission, but I guess in terms of not including that . . . what I think is a quite useful piece of information in the budget document, was the Public Service Commission canvassed as to their opinion as to whether or not that should be in the budget or not? And if so, what are your thoughts on that development?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well thanks very much for the question. And you know, we certainly strive to be as open and as transparent as possible and to also follow best practices as we look at what other provinces do across the country as well.

So the more relevant budget measure is indeed the compensation costs, not the FTEs. And most provinces, we learned, do not publish FTEs in their budgeted documents. Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador do not publish budgeted FTEs. BC [British Columbia], Alberta, Nova Scotia continue to provide budgeted FTEs. So we were in that latter group but now we're in the former group.

Focusing solely on budgeted FTEs can lead to less effective and more expensive decisions when attempting to find efficiencies. And that's something that's very important to this government, and we want to find those efficiencies. Budgeted FTEs are a proxy measure and aren't available for the entire organization. You know, the health sector, the education sector, the Crown sector, only partial information on budgeted FTEs has been provided in the past.

Since the transition to summary financial statements in 2014-15, we have been making improvements each year, and indeed this is the next step on that road. To ensure transparency and accountability, we continue to report on the level of actual FTEs in all of the ministry's annual reports as well. So it's something that's new. I'm told that it is a best practice and I guess we'll look at it and . . . But I take the member's comments at face value, and it's something I think that we can

look at in the future as well, to see if this is the best way to go or not.

Mr. McCall: — Well thank you for the answer, Mr. Minister, and certainly I would urge you to do that. Because again, as the accountability exercise that we're engaged in here tonight unfolds, that . . . Of course you're looking out over all compensation. But you're also looking at FTEs, and you're also very cognizant of the fact that those FTEs represent public servants, that you've got a lot of high-powered and talented people doing a lot of work to make sure that they're deployed as effectively as possible in the service of the people of Saskatchewan as can be.

So I guess I don't think it jives with the government's promise to be the most open and accountable government in the history of the province. So I would strongly urge that there be some kind of reinclusion of that data in the budget document. But anyway, the minister's committed to look at that and keep looking at that, and I appreciate the undertaking.

I guess in terms of the role of the Public Service Commission in the way that that overall compensation is allocated . . . Last year's budget there was of course a savings indicated on the part of then minister Doherty on budget day of \$250 million that would be found in savings from payroll. Could the minister report out on where that exercise wound up?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks for the question. You know, the goal of \$250 million in compensation was, you know, absolutely a very, very aggressive target, but it was something that we felt was necessary at the time to, you know, to reach out to unions and employers and talk about, you know, what we could do to ensure that we have that efficiency and again work towards our overall goal to balance the budget over a three-year period.

You know, we are on track to do that. We are on track to bring the budget to balance. But one area that was very, very difficult — and we worked very hard; I had the opportunity to be involved in a lot of those discussions — was to try to reach that goal. But we were not successful. And as the Finance minister outlined earlier, you know, we are not likely to achieve that and we weren't able to achieve it.

But it was a goal that we set out in the most recent budget. You know, we're looking at a 5 per cent reduction in overall compensation over two years to allow us to meet. And you know, we were more aggressive and exceeded some targets in other areas and didn't meet targets in certain areas. But overall, as it was outlined in the budget, we are indeed on track to meet that goal and to ensure that we are in a balanced situation next year.

That 5 per cent compensation reduction over two years will net about \$70 million including the Crown corporations as well. So again, not to the level that we first wanted to, but very significant nevertheless.

And of course in reaching those goals we're making sure that, you know, we're not doing away with the jobs that individuals are doing. We're just making sure that we can use attrition in the most aggressive way that we can and to ensure that, you

know, with technology and developments, that we can do more with less people. And you know, that's a commitment that we make to the people and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, to ensure that we invest every taxpayer's dollar in a way that we can ensure that efficiency.

So we're very comfortable with this 5 per cent target over the next two years, and I think, you know, granted, it's not as aggressive as we were last year. But we're in a better financial position than we were last year as well.

Mr. McCall: — If the minister could, though — and if I'm misunderstanding this, feel free to correct me — in terms of the 250 million out of total compensation, what savings were arrived at in terms of . . . I know that certainly the MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] lined up for their haircut; I think deputy ministers and agency heads offered up as well. What did that amount to and what other efforts were successful, as the minister has said, towards the goal of 250 million?

[19:00]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. As the member indicated, indeed MLAs were asked to, you know, take a leadership role and to show that they would be agreeable to a 3.5 per cent reduction. Deputy ministers followed suit as well. Ministerial assistants were asked to take nine days of unpaid leave in 2017-18 to meet the target from their perspective as well.

So Public Service Commission explored options with unions to achieve compensation reductions, but no collective agreements were settled in that fiscal year. So we don't have the exact dollar amount. I can certainly undertake to get that for the member. But indeed the groups indicated showed leadership and wanted to show that we'd be willing to match what agreements could be made.

Mr. McCall: — If memory serves, that amounted to about, I think, \$600,000 in total, leaving 249.4 million to go. In terms of what was stated as a three-year plan at the time, I understood that amount to be out of the base in terms of expenditure for government. So what is 250 million in the first year is 500 million the next year, 750 the year after that. Is that a correct understanding?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. The \$250 million is off the base on the one year, but it was offset through other efficiencies. So again, the next year, if you're going to take that 250 off the base, those efficiencies would offset it as well. So it doesn't accumulate to 500 or 750 if it was just an accumulation over time. But again, it was offset by other efficiencies through the budgetary process and through the Minister of Finance.

Mr. McCall: — So in effect, it was made up elsewhere in the budget, other cost savings or cuts or unanticipated revenues, but it's been made whole for the two years of the three-year plan remaining.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Yes, yes, correct. It has. And that's, you know, when I say that we're on track, we're looking

at this coming year reaching a balanced situation and continuing with those other efficiencies as well.

Mr. McCall: — In terms of the 70 million remaining that the minister has identified, certainly we've been through different attrition reduction efforts before, but bottom line is that you've essentially got the same public servants doing more work and for the same pay which, you know, I guess is another way to accomplish a take-away that is not to be accomplished at the bargaining table or other means. In terms of the \$70 million that has been referenced over two years, could the minister describe again the \$35 million in this year's budget: what the division is between executive government expenditure; what's under the purview of the Public Service Commission; and what has been allotted to the Crown Investments Corporation and what is the rationale for that division of anticipated savings?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. And you know, I would agree with some of what the critic is talking about but, you know, certainly what we have to be cognizant of is technology and the development of technology and the ability to do more with less number of people. And I think that's something.

You know, back in 2010, 2011 when we looked at reducing the footprint of government by 15 per cent over four years, I think that was a very fruitful exercise because as a minister I was able to talk to my deputy at the time and look at a long-term plan to ensure that we had a smaller footprint in government and that we were able to do more with less. And I think in tough financial times that, you know, governments have to have that commitment to ensure that we can look at every way to reduce the footprint of government, and at the same time making the commitment that services aren't lessened at all. So that is a bold commitment, and it's something I think we achieved over a four-year period of time.

You know, what we're looking at — 5 per cent over two years here — isn't as aggressive as it was in the past, but certainly we're going to be, you know, looking at efficiencies, looking at program improvements, looking at overtime reduction, ensuring that vacancies are managed in a professional way as well. And that will enable us to reach the target without having to have layoffs, or to ensure that, you know, as many people work for the government can continue to work for the government, but at the same time lessening that footprint.

Member asked for a breakdown between Crowns and executive government, and we're looking at close to a 50/50 split. You know, we would have to consult Finance to get more of that in-depth information, but roughly 50/50.

Mr. McCall: — So why 50/50?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well it's pro-rated on the number of employees and, you know, it works that way.

Mr. McCall: — So the number of employees are on total compensation, as per our earlier conversation?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Yes, it would be total compensation.

Mr. McCall: — Is there any recognition of the fact that the Crowns operate in a commercial atmosphere or commercial environment and arguably have a different set of pressures brought to bear on those various entities?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Yes, that is taken into account that, you know, some of the Crowns operate in a competitive environment. Others do not. But you know, more and more we're finding executive government, it's a competition for skills and for labour as well. So you have to ensure that you pay a competitive wage to have those talents, to retain those talents, and sometimes if you have to go out of province to attract those talents as well.

So I think the thought applies to both, you know, the Crown side and the executive side as well, that we have to try to maintain competitive salaries as well.

Mr. McCall: — I guess I wouldn't argue that in the sense that certainly I think public servants perform some very valuable tasks for the people of Saskatchewan, that there is a competition that goes on around the world for talent. And in terms of Public Service Commission being a central agency of government, having a particular view on the way that that impacts the different ministries and agencies of government, absolutely, there's a competition that goes on for talent.

In terms of the commercial competition that goes on though, in terms of what is paid for a DM [deputy minister] versus the balanced scorecard that the minister is very well familiar with as the former minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], how does that compare?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. So certainly, compensation in the Crown sector is governed by a balanced scorecard and is balanced by, you know, direct comparisons to utilities in other provinces and other parts of the country. So it's easier, I would give you that, to make those comparisons in the Crown sector.

In the executive government situation, we do try to look at similar work for similar value that is done in the private sector. And we also try to look at compensation that's provided by other public sectors across the country, by other provinces. And our goal is to be in the mid-range, to be, you know, somewhere in the middle. But granted, with the challenging financial times we have probably lagged a bit and slipped a bit as far as the compensation goes. But I think that's understandable in light of, you know, the reduction in resource revenues that we have in the province. And I think the overall long-term goal would be to try to catch up in that regard when finances allow us to do that.

Mr. McCall: — I guess one of the arguments that gets made is that certainly the public service was again asked to contribute a 15 per cent reduction in what were some of arguably the best times in the province's financial history. And you know, so in terms of already having been there to contribute and to make a sacrifice in the financial well-being of the province, arguably the public service has been at the front of that line for a long time.

So in terms of the competition that the minister is describing and the challenges that that poses, in terms of making sure that

we've got . . . I note that you've got a fair number of talent consultants and recruiters and coordinators and on. That talent is in high demand. And the job to recruit that talent gets all the more challenging when you're coming to the public service yet again to make more cuts. So at what point do the positions stop getting filled?

And I suppose that works on the attrition side of the ledger. But in terms of the tough job that the Public Service Commission has to do to get the people to do the important jobs for the people of Saskatchewan, is the minister not concerned that going to the public service yet again for more cuts isn't going to harm public services and their delivery in this province?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well I think it's fair to say that, you know, we are indeed concerned. We acknowledge that, you know, public sector employees have done their part, and that's what we as a government have asked all employees to do. And again showing leadership through MLAs and through deputy ministers and ministerial assistants and others, that when the revenues are not there that you do, you know, have to use that phrase, tighten your belt a bit. And we've certainly done that in Saskatchewan.

But we feel we owe that to taxpayers to ensure that we are showing leadership because many of them have had to do the same thing in their families and in their businesses across the province. You know, granted the direction is looking positive. We like what we're hearing from the economic forecasters and the evidence that we're seeing that the economy is continuing to grow and to build.

But we acknowledge that there has been a partnership and that the public service employees do that. But you know, as the Public Service Commission, we are cognizant of that. And that's why when we look forward to, you know, the 5 per cent reduction, we will do everything possible to do it through attrition, to do it through a way that affects the least amount of people and keeps as many as possible working but still meets those targets as well.

[19:15]

Mr. McCall: — Can the minister provide some examples of how attrition will be utilized to achieve whatever savings have been targeted for the Public Service Commission? I guess, what is that target for the PSC and what are the examples of, I'm presuming, unfilled positions at present or vacancies that will be abolished or work that will be turned over to technology? Can the minister or officials provide some examples of how that will be accomplished?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — As the member indicated, you know, attrition is at the forefront and technology as well. And as I indicated in my opening remarks, electronic timecards, it sounds very simple, but when you look at it across government, I think the numbers were about 30 positions that were able to be eliminated or transferred into other areas to better serve the public. So that's one area.

And we look at payroll processing and how benefits are calculated and implemented as well. Those are areas that are very technology intensive and areas where we can certainly

eliminate some of the positions and use that attrition, like I said, to ensure that the services are directed in other ways to people.

Mr. McCall: — So there are 30 pay clerks in the Public Service Commission that will have their positions abolished. Am I understanding the minister correctly in that regard?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So the number of 30 positions is indeed across government. And you know, what it does is enable us to take that work away from individuals, refocus them in other areas, but as a whole capture the 30 positions. And that's something that, you know, the PSC works really hard at, and to ensure . . . And that's how you focus on attrition and at the same time enable the people to continue to keep their jobs.

Mr. McCall: — What would be the vacancy level overall in executive government, in terms of the employees and the positions that are represented by the PSC?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So the attrition rate in government is about 7 per cent. So the vacancy would fluctuate at any particular time in the year above or below that, but would on average be about 7 per cent per year.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for that, Mr. Minister. In terms of the Public Service Commission, if you could, what is the amount of savings that has been identified for the Public Service Commission in terms of your share of the anticipated savings towards the 35 million?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks for the question. The salary reduction itself would be about \$242,000, and so that would be the anticipated savings within the salary reduction category by itself.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for that. Being aware of the time and all the interesting things that the Public Service Commission is responsible for, I guess I'd start at another sort of vein of questioning with the question, what's the most difficult position or positions to recruit for in terms of the Public Service Commission? And I'm aware that we're coming up on Central Services, and I know that there's been a chronic sort of challenge around tradespeople, for example, in that particular ministry over the years. What are the challenges?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. And you know, certainly the whole human resource side and the experience that is necessary in those positions is something that would pose the most difficult challenge, I think, for the Public Service Commission right now. So experienced HR consultants specifically within the PSC is something, you know, when you look across government and you look at other ministries as well. You know, actuaries for example, I know are very high in demand and very difficult to find here in Saskatchewan as well. So you know, some of those narrow areas such as actuaries, but when you look at the Public Service Commission, HR consultants as well, especially experienced HR consultants.

And you know, when you look at our demographics and you look at how we are asking people to do more with less, I think it's a little self-explanatory to see why HR consultants would be an area where . . . would be in high in demand.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for that, Mr. Minister. In terms of particular educational offerings or special bonuses or targeted recruitment efforts, is the agency undertaking anything in that regard to try and meet those challenges?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — In this area we're not able to offer bonuses. We don't offer bonuses. But certainly, you know, areas where we can do more and we find that areas that show benefits are certainly educating employees to become headhunters themselves, to be cognizant of people that are out there and be more proactive in keeping in touch; if people apply for a position and they're not able to . . . or if they're not successful, to ensure that we keep a better handle on where they're at and be more proactive about other openings and other positions.

So you know, I think that direct contact is something that can prove very fruitful and is something that the PSC works to do. And you can do that through social media as well. And you know, members of the Public Service Commission are ensuring that they're using all channels available to them that don't cost a lot of money, but to make that extra effort to keep in touch with those people who might be likely candidates in the future. So I understand from officials that that has paid some dividends and had some success.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for that. And certainly looking over the performance measures in the annual report and goals for the years to come, again this is probably, you know, stating the obvious, but certainly with different of the groups that are under-represented in the workforce — and I particularly think of indigenous people in the North and, you know, local population serving local need but for want of education and the kind of skilling up that needs to take place — I think that there are some real solutions that could be on offer there.

And again it needs . . . It's there in the commitment. It's there in the performance measures. But I'd certainly urge, on behalf of the official opposition, a redoubling of those kind of efforts.

I guess one last question I'd have is in terms of the Public Service Commission certainly playing a lead role in the public sector bargaining commission, or the committee of cabinet, or the . . . however that's constructed currently. The largest bargaining unit in government rejected a memorandum of agreement. What are the plans for the days ahead?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks. There's a series of questions there. You know, first of all, I can assure the member that it's a priority for me as well to ensure that we have minority groups, that we have First Nations individuals, that we continue to make it a priority to have them reflective of the population and to ensure that we do all we can to give them an opportunity to become part of the public service. So that's something that we address many times throughout the year and that I challenge officials on as well. And I know that they're trying their very best to ensure that we have that, and whether it's people with disabilities as well, and we're trying all the time to have a place and to encourage them to do that.

Yes, we play a leadership role when it comes to negotiating with unions. And you know, we were disappointed when the SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees'

Union] did not come out with a favourable vote as far as our latest offer. We were hopeful with that. We thought it was a fair compensation, but of course we believe in the collective bargaining process. We will continue to get back to the table and to negotiate in a fair manner and hope that we are able to come to an agreement in the near future.

Mr. McCall: — The minister have any timelines in mind as to when there might be more news on this front?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Yes, very difficult to say, but we continue to . . . We don't want to put things on the back burner. We want to be aggressive in getting back to the table and having those discussions.

We continue to be hopeful but, you know, most of all we're respectful and wanting to make sure that . . . I'm just giving some information here that, you know, as far as SGEU goes, bargaining dates are again scheduled from May 23rd to June 6th. So getting right back at it here within a couple of weeks.

[19:30]

Mr. McCall: — Just one last piece. How many individuals are represented in that particular bargaining unit, and how long has that collective agreement been expired?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — The member is correct. It is our largest bargaining unit of about 9,000 employees, and the agreement expired in September of 2016.

Mr. McCall: — With that I would again restate my thanks through commission Chair. Minister, officials, thank you for the work that is done on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, and to the hard-working men and women of the public service of Saskatchewan.

The Chair: — Thank you, Member, that we can now adjourn consideration of the estimates for the Public Service Commission. Did you have any final comments you wish to make, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much, Mr. Chair. Just to echo the thoughts of the critic, I'd like to thank him for his questions. They were thoughtful, they were respectful, and I hope we've provided the answers to you in a complete manner. Thank you to all members of the committee. Of course, thank you to the officials here that do their best job each and every day to ensure that we have an active and reflective public service, and one that in many ways can be considered a leader across the country. So thank you to all involved in that regard. And thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And just before we take a brief recess, I was going to offer a word of caution to you not to check your phone, but I think it would be okay to do that now. A half an hour ago, it wasn't.

Okay, we'll just take a brief recess and allow the minister and officials to reassess.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

General Revenue Fund Central Services Vote 13

Subvote (CS01)

The Chair: — Welcome back, committee. And we'll now begin the consideration of the Central Services, vote 13, central management and services, subvote (CS01). Minister Cheveldayoff, if you would like to introduce your officials and make a few opening comments, please.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well good evening, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much. The Ministry of Central Services has many highlights from the 2017-2018 fiscal year, as well as exciting plans based on the 2018-19 budget that I'm pleased to share with you this evening.

Before I share these, I want to introduce a number of officials who will join me from the Ministry of Central Services to help address any questions pertaining to their functional areas.

These officials are, to my left, Richard Murray, deputy minister of Central Services. Beside him is Nancy Cherney, assistant deputy minister of the property management division. Bonnie Schmidt, chief information officer of the information technology division, is with us; as well as Troy Smith, executive director of commercial services; and Rick Baylak, executive director of corporate services as well. Also like to introduce Michael Kindrachuk, who is the chief of staff in my ministerial office who also joins with us today.

The Ministry of Central Services has a diverse set of business lines. It offers central coordination and delivery of services, including government vehicle and transportation services, property management, IT [information technology] services and expertise, government's main website and digital programs, procurement of goods and services, records management, telecommunications, mail distribution, and project management services.

The Ministry of Central Services also serves a diverse group of clients. These include not only other government ministries and agencies, but also citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders. The ministry also has responsibility to oversee the important work of the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan and the enhanced Provincial Capital Commission.

In June 2017 the Provincial Capital Commission assumed greater responsibility for the management and operation of Wascana Centre. Through a board of directors that continues to include representation from the three partners — the city, the university, and the province — the province strives to ensure that Wascana Centre is well managed and available for use by a wide variety of citizens, users, and stakeholders. Through a new organizational structure, the Ministry of Central Services provides support services to the Provincial Capital Commission to reduce their administrative tasks and enable them to focus on operation and delivery of key programs in Wascana Centre.

The Provincial Capital Commission now has access to a wide variety of specialized experts and resources in the Ministry of Central Services and will benefit from the economies of scale

that come from alignment with the ministry and government as a whole. In addition to supporting all of its various business lines, including the new supporting services provided to the Provincial Capital Commission, the Ministry of Central Services has remained fiscally responsible and introduced a variety of efficiencies.

I will now share with you some highlights from the 2017-18 fiscal year. Central Services reduced the overall government CVA [central vehicle agency] vehicle transportation cost. This was done by moving vehicles to match areas of higher need, selling older and underused vehicles, using short-term private rentals in three communities, and using economies of scale to procure certain vehicle parts and items. At the same time, government realized added benefits like more flexible hours of service and more drop-off and pick-up locations.

In 2017-18, the ministry continued to care for hundreds of properties across the province. This work was important to ensuring government's services could be delivered to the people who needed them right in their communities. Progress was made on upgrade projects at the Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Regina provincial correctional centres; the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Kelsey campus in Saskatoon; the Walter Scott Building here in Regina; the Norman Vickar Building in Melfort; and the E.I. Wood Building in Swift Current.

The capital project to replace the existing Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford facility saw significant construction progress moving closer to completion. The new facility will provide therapeutic services to those with mental health issues in the province.

The legislative dome restoration project the ministry led to completion in 2016 continued to receive accolades throughout 2017. The ministry received a Lieutenant Governor's heritage award for architectural conservation, as well as a North American Copper in Architecture Award as well.

The ministry also saw success in its green building management efforts. The ministry's focus on environmental sustainability resulted in a BOMA BEST [Building Owners and Managers Association building environmental standards] Earth Award for the ministry's Saskatchewan Polytechnic Moose Jaw campus. This award recognizes buildings that rate the highest in a number of environmental best practices, including indoor air quality, energy and water conservation, among others.

[19:45]

As of July 1st, 2017, the ministry moved to private sector cleaning services for government facilities. As a result, there are 11 companies now providing these services, five of which are employee-based companies. Due to this move, the government will see an estimated \$3.5 million in annual savings. And that's annual in each and every year.

The 2017-18 fiscal year also saw increased engagement of the business community on the topic of government procurement. The ministry held a one-day event where business people could meet face to face with public sector representatives and learn how to bid on public procurement opportunities. This event drew a large turnout, with many local business people and

visitors from as far away as Texas and India.

In addition to engaging business suppliers, Central Services made big strides in the area of procurement, with the further adoption of Priority Saskatchewan's procurement transformation action plan recommendations and incorporation of best value into construction tender documents.

The ministry saved money in the wind-down of its executive air program. Following a decline in use, the ministry moved to the use of private sector air transportation for the users of the former executive air program, which saved the government over \$1 million in 2017-18.

Throughout 2017 as the country celebrated its 150th anniversary of Confederation, the Provincial Capital Commission led a number of initiatives within the provincial capital to mark this milestone. One of these initiatives was a living flag event, where 2,000 people wore a red or white T-shirt and stood together in the form of the Canadian flag. The Commission also worked to develop an educational board game for grade 8 students called It's Democracy! which is now in use in classrooms across the province.

Other initiatives in celebration of Canada 150 milestone included a featured museum exhibit on the experiences of Canadian newcomers displayed at Government House. Government House continued to serve as one of the top tourist attractions in Saskatchewan's capital city.

In 2017-18 the Provincial Archives continued to preserve important Saskatchewan historical records. Of note, the archives accessioned the records of the outgoing premier of Saskatchewan. This helps ensure preservation of the written and digital records for the former premier's full term of office for future generations as part of the rich democratic history of our province.

Central Services introduced a three-year project in the fall of 2017-18 to update government computers to the Windows 10 operating system. By the end of '17-18 approximately 750 of our government's systems were upgraded to the new operating system.

The ministry continued to make progress on its new IT service tool, ServiceNow. This tool will offer automation and IT self-service to government employees, with an online IT service catalogue for ordering of IT goods and services. IT self-service has already been introduced at the Ministry of Central Services and two other government organizations.

With regard to government's digital program, the ministry completed the migration of all website content for the Government of Saskatchewan ministries to the government's website, Saskatchewan.ca. As a result, government's digital footprint was reduced by 80 per cent from the old gov.sk.ca website. In addition, page views grew to more than 30.6 million in 2017-18. As you can see, significant work was carried out in 2017-18 fiscal year.

The work of Central Services over the past fiscal year once again demonstrates the ministry's commitment to providing quality and affordable service to citizens, clients, and other

stakeholders. Going forward, the ministry has also planned a volume of work to deliver quality service to these groups in 2018-19. I would like to share some of those with you now.

Central Services will expand the use of short-term private vehicle rentals across the province in 2018-19 following the savings seen as a result of the pilot projects. Savings and benefits are expected to extend across the province. The ministry will continue to sustainably manage and invest in government's building portfolio. An estimated \$41 million will be invested into facilities and properties located throughout the province requiring ongoing maintenance or capital upgrades. In addition, the major capital project under way to replace the existing Saskatchewan Hospital is expected to be completed this fiscal year.

This fiscal year, Central Services will make strategic investments into modernizing government's IT environment to ensure government's IT services are secure, reliable, and effective. The ministry expects to complete the introduction of the ServiceNow IT self-service feature to all government ministries within the 2018-19 fiscal year. This will streamline the way IT goods and services are provided to employees within government to better support employees to deliver citizen services.

With the migration of ministry content to Saskatchewan.ca programs and services now 100 per cent complete, the digital team will continue to work on the transfer of other online information . . . Saskatchewan.ca. Work will take place to decommission the old government websites, helping to make Saskatchewan.ca the single window to access government information.

Government's digital program will seek further work on the development of the My Government Online Services account for citizens and businesses. The ability to log in to and use such an account will be expanded to businesses this fiscal year, offering the same access that citizens have to accessing government services using online self service. Work with ministries to bring more government service offerings online will also continue.

Central Services plans to further enhance procurement practices and improve access to procurement opportunities. Work will continue to implement the remaining recommendations in the Priority Saskatchewan procurement transformation action plan. This work will support the modernization of government procurement practices to ensure a fair, accessible, and transparent bidding environment and best value for the province.

The Provincial Capital Commission will continue its work to support its mission to enhance the quality of life by creating community partnerships, promoting visitor experiences, and providing stewardship of the land and assets within the Wascana Centre and Government House.

There are many plans for the year ahead informing the work of the Ministry of Central Services. This work will be carried out in a fiscally responsible manner as government remains on track to a balanced budget. Some of the ministry's planned work for 2018-19 fiscal year is already under way. These plans will help

support the needs of Central Services clients, citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders. As the ministry carries out its business in 2018-19, I look forward to seeing these plans realized.

I would now be happy to address any questions, Mr. Chair, that you or any committee member may have about the ministry's business and plans. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister, for those opening comments. I would just like to remind officials that when they speak, just please identify yourself the first time you speak if you would, please. I would now ask if there's any questions from the committee. Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, committee members, Mr. Minister, officials. Welcome to the consideration of estimates for Central Services for this year's budget. First off, just to say thank you to the men and women of Central Services for the work that they do, which is absolutely central to the service delivered by the Government of Saskatchewan to the people of Saskatchewan.

I guess a question right off the top, Mr. Minister or officials, in terms of the interface between SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan and the work of Central Services. Can the minister describe for the record for the committee where the one ends and the other begins?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. And certainly, SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan are very important components of the delivery of services for the businesses in Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan. And Central Services has a very close relationship with SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan.

SaskBuilds and Priority Sask are responsible for procurement policies and the overall direction of procurement, and you know we work with them to carry out those policies. And I have a dual responsibility as well. I'm vice-president of the board of SaskBuilds, so I have an opportunity to ensure, through my interaction with the ministry officials and SaskBuilds officials as well, that we are continuing to move in the same direction. So we find that, you know, there's certainly many savings that can be achieved through procurement and design procurement to ensure that we're getting the best value for our dollar.

I think it's fair to say that SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan have . . . You know, that's their task. That's their whole focus of being, so each and every day they look to do that, and we look to work with them to carry out that direction. So it's a very good relationship.

Mr. McCall: — Just for the record, who's the current CEO [chief executive officer] or deputy minister responsible for SaskBuilds?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Ron Dedman is the acting president and CEO of SaskBuilds at the present time.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that. So this would be the same Ron Dedman who once upon a time was the deputy minister responsible for Central Services. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — That is correct. Mr. Dedman has had a long and distinguished career as a public servant, and one of his previous responsibilities was with Central Services, so another added benefit to have the knowledge of Central Services and to take that knowledge and move it into a different area that works very closely with us.

Mr. McCall: — And again, certainly I appreciate that SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan would work closely with Central Services, given the role that Central Services and its different iterations through the years have played in terms of project management, procurement, property management on the part of government.

I guess maybe to state it a different way, or to ask it a different way, can the minister explain to the committee what the differences are between the two entities? Between Central Services and SaskBuilds.

[20:00]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. And it is an important question. It goes to the, you know, the very reason of being of SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan. Priority Saskatchewan, SaskBuilds was tasked with the implementation of the procurement transformation action plan, which consists of 13 different initiatives.

Just to give members of the committee a little bit of a flavour, the Canada Free Trade Agreement that replaced Internal Trade, SaskBuilds ensures that we follow that. Consistent application of long-term value is the basis for government procurement: multi-stage procurement processes; an introduction of a procurement code of conduct; a full debriefing of vendors following a procurement; collaborative capital forecasting; definitions of Saskatchewan businesses registered under the laws of Saskatchewan; development of a fair and consistent vendor performance evaluation model; address the knowledge gap through development of a series of training modules and procurement guides, ongoing; and develop common procurement templates to be part of training as well.

So that's why SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan was developed. It stemmed from listening closely to business people in Saskatchewan who felt that government could do more to ensure that Saskatchewan businesses were successful in that procurement. So each and every day, every one of the employees that works at SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan continues to see, to address how we can get as much government procurement and as much procurement overall for businesses in Saskatchewan. So they're dedicated to that task.

Central Services conducts the actual procurement and, as I said earlier, follows the direction and the procedures as outlined by Priority Saskatchewan and SaskBuilds. So I think, you know, it works well together. There's certainly a symmetry that takes place there, and I think it's addressed the needs and concern. When I talk to business people across the province, they acknowledge that SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan has gone a long way to address their concerns about procurement in the province.

Mr. McCall: — I guess the question that I'm looking for more

understanding on, Mr. Minister or officials . . . Surely there would be agreement that there's a fair amount of alignment between the functions and the work between SaskBuilds and Central Services. And I see the minister nodding his head in agreement.

And I guess in terms of, you know, we've been through two years of fairly focused and wrenching change for a lot of people in government. And in terms of the redundancy that would seem apparent between something like SaskBuilds and the work of Central Services, I guess my question for the minister is, has there been any consideration of combining those two entities, to focus that work and to eliminate the sort of redundancies that I think the minister is describing to the committee?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well certainly I wouldn't say that there's a redundancy. I would say that there's a complementary relationship. There's a focus that enables SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan individuals to focus on the policies related to procurement, to look across government to ensure that those policies are in place.

So you know, I would not say that it's a redundancy. I would say it's a complementary and symbiotic relationship, and I think it works very well. And I think that there is a vision of the government to ensure that the entities work closely and I think that's why, you know, to be quite frank, that I was given responsibilities on both to ensure that coordination. And in the few months that I have been minister, I certainly see them working together well.

You know, at some point in the future could there, you know, could there be a combination and a bringing together of those entities? It quite may very well happen. But at this time I think the two groups are working well. They're working together. And as I said earlier, most importantly, I'm hearing from Saskatchewan businesses that they are accomplishing the goals that the businesses challenged us to do as government. So not ruling anything out, but I think they're working well together right now.

Mr. McCall: — Two years ago along about this time, the government embarked on the transformational change agenda. Was the combining of those forces given any consideration in that exercise? Is the minister aware of that?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. And you know, in looking at our previous conversation here the last few minutes, I think it's important to outline that there is an alignment between the two, and not an overlap. And then that's part of the job of a minister and the ministry officials to ensure that we have those discussions and we assure that there's that alignment and that that overlap doesn't take place. So you can work together very well, you can assign responsibilities, and ensure that there isn't that overlap in place.

The member talks about transformational change and it was an undertaking, you know, an initiative where we challenged everyone. We challenged deputy ministers. We challenged officials right through. We challenged MLAs. We challenged everyone to do with government to think about how we could do government differently, to come up with ideas, and to say

. . . And I think every once in a while as government you do get a little stagnant. You do have to ask yourself, are there things that we're doing that we shouldn't be doing? Are there things that we aren't doing that we should be doing? And that's what transformational change was all about.

You know, I looked at it when I was the minister of Parks, Culture and Sport at the time, and I had an opportunity to develop some transformational change with the park managers, for example, and to say, hey if you've got any good ideas . . . And we always like to say, not all the good ideas come from under this dome. And we usually have a little bit of a smirk and a laugh over that because we know it's very apparent that Saskatchewan people have a lot of those good ideas, and public servants have those good ideas that work across the province.

So that's what the transformational change exercise was really focused on, is to look at things that we were doing. Can we get away from doing some of the things that we've always done? Are there some new things that we can do? How did it apply to SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan? Well that was one of the new initiatives that was taking place at the time and, you know, has come to mature over the last couple of years.

So I think the two were different projects and different focuses, but again part of the job of SaskBuilds was to ensure that we could make sure that no stone was left unturned when it comes to procurement and procurement policies in Saskatchewan. So I think that, you know, we're accomplishing that and I think . . . There would be others I think that maybe would be more critical of transformational change, but I for one thought that it was a good exercise to challenge ministers and officials and people at every level of government to ensure that we're doing government better, and to ensuring again taxpayers' dollars are well spent.

I know it happens in the corporate culture, in corporations as well where they undertake those responsibilities, and we continue to do that in government as well. But SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan, their focus is on listening to those businesses and business people that drive the economy of Saskatchewan and to ensure that they're getting the best procurement that they can within our province and from outside our province as well.

Mr. McCall: — I don't want to belabour the point, Mr. Minister, but in terms of what you've described, how is that not the business of Central Services? In your opening remarks you referenced the Business Opportunity Expo, promoting the two-way conversations.

In terms of that listening exercise that you've described being more the work of SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan, again the bread and butter of Central Services, as I understand it, is procurement; it's project management; it's property management — all of which are things that . . . I don't see how those couldn't be even better delivered in a more focused way if the kind of things that were farmed out to SaskBuilds were more properly drawn to bear in the mandate of Central Services. So I don't understand what the difference is that requires two separate entities to be separate and apart from the work that should be fundamental, should be central to Central Services. Can the minister explain that for me?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well I'll try to do a better job of actually explaining the distinction. You know, Central Services conducts the actual procurement. So they're involved in that procurement on a daily basis, to ensuring they're working with all the different ministries to make sure that they're understanding what those procurement needs are, to interact in that procurement, to ensuring that the procurement initiatives are taking place. If you like, you know, what SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan is able to do is to take a step back to look at the long-term procedures and to see if indeed that we are procedurally doing things the proper way.

So Central Services is responsible for the everyday implementation, and SaskBuilds and Priority Saskatchewan is more looking over the policies, examining what happens in other provinces, seeing what best practices are, and putting those procedures in place that Central Services and other ministries can follow to ensure that we get the most business we can here in Saskatchewan.

So I hope I'm articulating that. I see a definite distinction but you know, I see many areas of complementary as well. And again, you know, I'm not ruling out at some point in the future of combining that entity. But I think those and within each area understand their jobs very well and they work in a complementary fashion.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Minister. I guess moving along in the subvotes, if you could, Mr. Minister, or officials, for subvote (CS01), in terms of the fairly stay-the-course expenditures that are anticipated there, if you could describe to the committee what's taking place under that subvote and anything that you'd like to highlight for the committee's attention.

[20:15]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question, and I've got the exact answer here. A reduction of \$351,000 in central management and services is a result of decreased billings from the ITD [information technology division]. This is due to the new IT recovery model and a reallocation of funding in government for IT services.

So you know, further explanation on that: under this subvote is the minister's salary, the deputy minister's salary, the corporate overhead, if you like, of the ministry. And through IT savings and others, we were able to reduce the expenditures there by \$351,000.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that, Mr. Minister. In terms of property management, subvote (CS02), I guess we'll start with the operations and maintenance of property where there's an increased amount entailed in the expenditure. Can the minister talk about the increase there and what that increase entails.

And just a quick word, Mr. Minister. Certainly the minister's a Jets fan by blood; I'm a Jets fan by marriage. And my spouse wanted you to know that they're up 4-3. Anyway . . .

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — If I may say, you married well.

Thanks very much for the question, and there's certainly a lot of

moving parts in this subvote so I'll try to explain it the best I can. In (CS02), property management, a reduction of \$715,000 in appropriation, and an increase of 11.369 million in recovered funding. Operations and maintenance of property was an increase of \$9.495 million. The reduction of \$715,000 in appropriate maintenance as a proposed saving initiative, this will be achieved through reprioritizing maintenance projects.

The recovered 10.21 million increase in operations and maintenance of property as a result of the operating costs for new buildings, partially offset by other operational efficiency changes. Now these consist of . . . And it's a large number so the member may be asking why such a large one, but that is the increase in operating cost as a result of the first partial year of payment for the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford facility, which now the \$10.429 million actually represents about eight months of the operation.

A \$412,000 increase is due to various operating, lease, and amortization adjustments in other buildings and a reduction of \$640,000 in salaries as part of the Central Services attrition and efficiency plan. And that goes to what we talked about earlier in the previous estimates of PSC. That's the 1 per cent reduction there. So overall, you know, that's how we come to that number for this subvote.

Mr. McCall: — Okay. So just in terms of the number under operations and maintenance of property, the 166.5 million up from 157 . . . In terms of annualized, what is the annualized amount for the Saskatchewan Hospital?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. The monthly operating expenses are approximately \$1.2 million per month over a 12-month period. You know, it would be in the neighbourhood of \$14.5 to \$15 million.

Mr. McCall: — So in terms of the allocation of maintenance dollars on the part of the ministry, that's a fixed amount going forward for the next 30 years. Am I understanding that correctly?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much. The member's correct that, you know, generally it will be in that range, but when we get into the components that make that up, there's three specific areas of components. There's the facility maintenance payment, there's the life cycle payment, and there's the capital payment. The capital payment certainly stays exactly the same. The facilities maintenance payments stays very much the same, but the life cycle payment does change, does increase as time goes on as the likelihood of replacing larger infrastructure needs are there into the future. So largely he's correct that it stays the same, but there is some variance in the life cycle payment model.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for that. In terms of . . . This is probably as good a time as any to say last Thursday there was laid on the Table here in the Assembly the list of 660 properties that the minister had referenced at the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities convention, I think a month and a half previous. So I thank the minister for that information.

In terms of the list itself, is there any . . . In terms of undertaking a review of the viability of different of these

properties or, you know, what should be in the purview of government, what shouldn't be, is there any sort of formal process that is being undertaken? Is there any criteria that is being employed by the minister or officials in making decisions about the future of the list of 660 properties that the minister has kindly provided the Assembly?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. As the member indicated and as we've had a chance to talk about, you know, on the floor of the legislature and in the public as well, 660 buildings is a very large portfolio.

The Ministry of Central Services tries to use the most up-to-date property management tools to ensure that there's the highest occupancy rate possible and to ensure the functionality of the buildings. There's a five-year plan, a rolling plan, where every building is looked at and monitored and assessed for its, you know, its structure and its ability to serve the tenants and to serve the government. So that's an ongoing model. It's one that's used in the private sector as well.

Officials tell me that, you know, what's changed very recently is an electronic property maintenance model where things are . . . Again being able to use technology to ensure that we're on top of each and every building and ensure that it's meeting the needs and function of the Government of Saskatchewan.

You know, we can go into how a building becomes surplus when a ministry's no longer using it and if no other ministry requires it, then . . . And if the government is unlikely to need it in the next, immediate future, then we would, you know, deem it surplus and go out to the public for a request for proposals for it as well. That's the formal process to do it.

But, you know, in ensuring that we again are using the buildings to their highest and best use, members will know that I, you know, put out an invitation to other elected leaders in the province to say, hey, if there's a government building in your community that you feel that maybe can be better used, let us know. Because we do a very a good job with the information we do have, but we also recognize that mayors and councillors and reeves and people may know those buildings and the possible use for them going forward.

[20:30]

So I think, you know, we all have a responsibility to ensure that this very large government holdings of capital are serving the purposes that they're there for, and as we go through it, I think for the most part they are. You know, when we talk about vacancy rates in the 3.5 per cent vacancy for typical office space, that's a good number for a whole portfolio. But within the portfolio there may be others that need attention and, you know, as minister I want to make sure that we're on top of all of that.

Mr. McCall: — So in terms of the minister's call to other levels of government, what response has that elicited?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — We have received some questions, I guess, some ideas from some communities, but as far as anything hard and fast and specific, we haven't got to that stage yet. You know, there were some concerns in the community of

Melville, for example, about a structure there. We're looking into it and we're working very proactively. And I have heard from I'd say about a half a dozen communities around the province to say, hey, you know, take a look at this building, or we may want to do something better with it as well.

Mr. McCall: — What does the minister or officials anticipate in terms of a timeline for the normal process that would have different of these properties moving to an RFP [request for proposal] process coinciding with expressed interest on the part of the public or other actors as regard certain of these properties?

And again, in terms of putting out the number of 660, that's a big number and it encompasses a very wide array of properties. And it sort of begs, you know, what's the rationale? If 660 is too much, why is that so? If there are arguments being anticipated or considered around vacancy or end of use or any of that, you know, fair enough. But that should be stated as such. And again in terms of what the minister has outlined, that would seem to be already part of the process in the work of Central Services.

So I guess, if the minister could tell us what's new about this call for expressions of interest and how that is going to be played out in the days and weeks and months ahead as regards these public assets.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well I think it's fair to say there's not a lot new with that. You know, what I wanted to do was to highlight that for the audience to know that . . . you know, for them to know that we certainly . . . I think sometimes there's a perception if the government owns something, the government's going to own it forever, and people may be discouraged from coming forward with good ideas. And I just wanted to make sure that they felt comfortable, that if indeed there was a government building that they felt could be taken to a higher and better use, that we would certainly welcome their ideas and their thoughts or their expressions of interest.

So it doesn't change the formal process at all, but I think what it does is highlight the fact that, you know . . . I guess it goes back to my fundamental belief that government should be using their resources for health care, education, and social services, and that ministries like Central Services should be working on efficiencies to deliver the services for government in the best possible way, but to do so in a way that is cost efficient and to ensure that those facilities are operated in a way that is the highest and best use. And if that doesn't take place, I think that, you know, having the opportunity to sell it.

You know, I outlined for you that there is a formal way that space is deemed surplus, and that's sort of from within the ministry. The ministry is no longer using it. No other government ministry wants to use it and will not require it over the immediate future. But again it just goes back to my philosophy of ensuring that we use the minds that are out there, that the elected officials and the knowledge that they may have that we don't have, that we can use that to ensure that we are using these facilities to their best and highest use.

Mr. McCall: — One of the properties in question, of course, is the sound stage. And the minister is well familiar with that

particular facility from a number of perspectives, as a former minister for Creative Saskatchewan, having been around when the reports or the review on the future of the sound stage had been conducted and received by government. And you know, it was a long time in the coming.

And I guess one of the things that that report talked to, you know, a lot of different people and a lot of different folks that have an interest in that facility. The report came back that the government needed to redouble its efforts to rejuvenate and to revitalize the film industry and to make sure that this purpose-built facility was doing what it was built for in terms of making film and television.

And I guess, is that still the plan? Is the government, having received that report — and I have no indication otherwise that there are other plans for it — is it the plan to still use the sound stage as it was intended to be used and to build on that foundational institution? Is that the intention of the government and of Central Services going forward, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. And certainly the operation of the sound stage itself falls under the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, and the exact operation of it and the plans for the future would be better answered by that minister. But I do want to give the member a full and complete answer from my perspective and what I can offer.

You know, when we went and talked about every government building that the government has responsibility for and the Ministry of Central Services, the government either owns or leases, I was asked the question by the media, does that include the sound stage? It does, and that is one of the buildings on the list that the member received. And you know, from that, I think it heightened certainly the profile of the sound stage.

But we have, you know, we recognize that the sound stage isn't being fully utilized. We know that Parks, Culture and Sport and Creative Saskatchewan are doing all they can to ensure that we continue to utilize the facility. But there's no plans to dispose of it. But certainly, you know, we'll do everything we can to work with Parks, Culture and Sport and Creative Saskatchewan.

And the member knows that there's a component of it that is rented by commercial entities such as Creative Saskatchewan. There's a hub in there as well, and that portion of it is doing well. And so we continue to work with Parks, Culture and Sport in this regard and with other ministries, with other buildings. Of course we work with Corrections on correctional facilities and all of that. So that's really where our involvement extends to. And so I think that gives you an overall idea of how we are looking at it and what our ministry is looking at it.

Mr. McCall: — Well if I'm hearing the minister correctly, I'm glad to hear that. And certainly, as the minister well knows, there's a significant amount of work undertaken to consult broadly on the future of that institution. And the minister is well familiar with the answer that came back on that.

So if I'm hearing that there isn't a plan under way to sell it off for something it was not intended for, that all that investment not be stranded, that the work will continue with the industry to

see that we can't recapture something of the industry when it was at its height. If I'm taking too much from what the minister is saying, you know, tell me where to get off.

But if I'm hearing the minister correctly, I think that's a great answer, and certainly one that we'll be looking to be built out in the days ahead, in terms of making sure that the sound stage is realized as that anchor institution for the film and television industry in this province.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Where it stands now from Central Services' point of view, it's one building in our portfolio. We will continue to work with the ministry that's in charge to ensure that it's fully utilized. And anything we can do to help that ministry, we'll certainly do that.

So again if it's a corrections facility, we'll work with Corrections. And with the sound stage we'll work with Parks, Culture and Sport. And we'll do all we can to assist them to ensure that that facility is used to its best and highest use.

Mr. McCall: — Thank the minister for that. I guess it would logically beg a question of what is to become of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre? And can the minister update the committee as to the status of that particular public asset?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. It's a topical question, as it came up in question period today. The facility has been sold to the Buffalo Narrows Economic Development Corporation. I understand, as the member knows from the answers given in question period today, that the Minister of Health and the Minister of Remote Health have had discussions with the mayor of Buffalo Narrows and are awaiting a proposal from the community.

And I think, you know, certainly all of us, knowing the importance of mental health and the concerns and the want to do all we can, I think that that proposal will be very well received. And as the minister's indicated in question period today, they are open to discussions and looking forward to the proposals and hoping that good things can come of it.

Mr. McCall: — Thank the minister for the answer. Just for the record, Mr. Minister, or officials, is it possible to state the amount that the property was sold for?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — The community asked us not to make that public, so I would want to get their okay to do that. I know that was part of the question in question period today. But you know, as you know, keeping our word with the community, we will defer to them. And I'd probably leave that to future discussions.

Mr. McCall: — Fair enough, Mr. Minister. And I guess in terms of the annual report — pardon me, the annual plan; I get my plans and reports mixed up here, Mr. Minister — in terms of page 11 of the plan for 2018-19, in the highlights it states that the ministry "Leases or owns 690 buildings located in 151 communities across the province with a replacement value of \$4.69 billion." You know, the difference between 690 and 660 of course is 30 buildings. Would those be leased buildings, Mr. Speaker? Can the minister explain the discrepancy in terms of the figures that have been used in the discourse?

[20:45]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. And I have to admit that I had the same question for officials in my briefings because, you know, when you get into the number of buildings, which is it — 660, 690? And of course it's all in how you define things.

And you know, as we look at changes, like Valley View for example, several buildings there. As we're looking to dispose of that facility, for our purposes now it's counted as one entity. And the same with the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, multi-buildings now counted as one facility. So that's, you know, when it's counted as a multiple number of buildings, that's how we get to the higher number, to the 690. And then when it's reduced to one entity, that's how it becomes the 660.

The second part of your question, owns and leases, 466 buildings account for the ones that Central Services owns or about 80 per cent of the total portfolio. We lease space in about 224 buildings across the province, accounting for approximately 20 per cent of the portfolio.

Mr. McCall: — Can the minister or officials describe for the committee the rationale that goes into deciding whether to own outright versus leasing?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much. And it really has to do with demand and the availability of space in a particular community as well. So it's how big a demand that we have in a particular community and what the needs are of a specific ministry, for example. So if it's a brand new initiative, it depends on how many government employees are located there and what the goal is with the immediate need of those facilities for those employees. So that would dictate, based on need and demand, whether we needed an entire building or a portion of a building, which of course would then be leased.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much for that, Mr. Minister. In terms of the head office incentive program . . . And you know, I'll ask the question here because it would seem to fit here as well as anywhere else. Previous ministers have had some interesting things to say about that particular program and the relationship of Central Services' managed assets alongside it.

Can the minister or officials describe for the committee the way that Central Services interacts with the head office relocation incentive program and whether or not expenditures associated with that are anticipated here under the expenditures under question.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. You know, the member refers to it as the head office incentive program. I think it was, you know, it's better defined as more of an offer or as a philosophy. And I know Premier Wall challenged each of us as ministers to ensure that when we're talking to people from around North America to end our conversation by inviting them to come to Saskatchewan and to have more people locate here. You know, that was something that we very much wanted to do throughout the course of our government. And there has been some success. You know, we look downtown at the skyline of Regina with the Mosaic

building and the Hill Towers and the occupancy by Mosaic and the employees that were brought here from Minnesota and other jurisdictions. I think it's worked in success.

So you know, rather than it being a formal program, it's more an offer and a philosophy that if indeed an entity wants to bring a corporate head office here or wants to relocate individual employees, that the government would consider in a manner to incentivize that. So there's no money that's been set aside in our budget for this but again it's part of the philosophy that indeed we are very welcoming to any corporate business or any other entity that wants to locate in Saskatchewan. And if there is need for a negotiated incentive, we'd be open to those discussions.

Mr. McCall: — Does the government, through Central Services, utilize leases, you know, for blocks of space within various of the towers the minister's discussed? And could the minister describe the terms of those leases, the dollars involved, the space involved, and any other details that he could provide for the committee?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So the current leased portfolio is about 20 per cent of all property used by government or approximately 1.935 million square feet or 180 000 square metres. So about 20 per cent is leased, to answer the member's question.

I believe the member's asking for, you know, specific information on . . . I mentioned Mosaic and their occupancy in the Hill Towers, and I understand he would like to get some information. What we do provide is the square footage. Of course we don't provide the dollar value. You know, that is commercially sensitive. But the Hill Centre Tower I occupies 83,000 square feet. Hill Centre Tower II, 3,400 square feet and Hill Tower III, 55,000 square feet. So there is significant occupancy in those three towers, more so in Tower I and Tower III than in Tower II.

Mr. McCall: — Thank the minister for the information. In terms of those leases, when do they expire? And you know, what are the . . . Are they at a set rate or is it a floating rate or, you know . . . You'll forgive me if I view this through terms of, say, my mortgage. Is it a fixed term or is it floating? How does that work, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So through the 2018-19 year and the 2019-20 — so the next two fiscal years — agreements covering nearly 37 per cent of all leased space in the ministry's portfolio are set to expire. So that coincides with the ministry's goal of typically a five-year lease in that regard. So you know, if you like to equate it to your mortgage, it would be a five-year mortgage. But of course, you know, the portfolio here is designed in such a way that a certain percentage of those leases would expire each and every year. So in the next two years we see 37 per cent and then the overall goal is a five-year lock-in.

Mr. McCall: — So that would be the average term of a mortgage is five years, or the lease, a five-year term?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Yes, that's the typical amount and, you know, of the . . . We can get into how many of the leases will expire in each fiscal year, but really, you know, the

numbers that I've given you I think show that the 37 per cent in the next two years is in keeping with that five-year plan.

You know, sometimes in a newer facility they'll want you to go to a 10-year plan, but as an overall operating principle we like to keep it to five years.

[21:00]

Mr. McCall: — I thank the minister for the answer. In terms of the remainder of this particular subvote, is there anything else that the minister would care to highlight for the committee at this time?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I'm taking a glance through. I think that we've covered the most pertinent parts of the subvote, and I don't see anything that stands out at this time.

Mr. McCall: — Then thank you for that, Mr. Minister. Moving on to subvote (CS05), off the top we've got vehicle services. So the minister had referenced off the top a savings of \$5 million in terms of the use of CVA. Could the minister clarify how much of that savings was due to moving from utilizing central vehicle authority vehicles to private rentals and how much of that was due to improved procurement practice, bulk buying with other jurisdictions, and the like.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So overall the decrease in CVA expenditures is \$5.155 million, and it's due to a reduction in cost as a result of a decrease in the size of the vehicle fleet. And the cost savings is a result of moving to private daily rentals. And, you know, to get into the specifics of it: repairs for passenger vehicles are down \$490,000; vehicle and operating expenses are down \$1.824 million due to the reduced fleet size; amortization expenditures for the CVA vehicles are down \$2.6 million.

So within that is the pilot that we have with Enterprise Rent-A-Car and, you know, we'll be looking for further savings as we expand that pilot into other communities. So we really believe that this is the right program at the right time to reduce expenditures and to use that partnership with the private sector to ensure that we get the best quality vehicles at the lowest possible cost. And it certainly seems to be working well at this time.

Mr. McCall: — Over the past, say, six to eight years, has the ministry conducted any focused studies in terms of the cost comparison between going with a private rental versus CVA? I would imagine that's part of the ongoing work of the ministry year to year, but has there been any focused work done in that regard over the past six to eight or ten years on the part of the ministry?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I want to make sure that I got the member's question correctly. But you know, when we talk about private vehicle leasing versus CVA purchase, you know, we don't have any formal studies but certainly examinations have been done and CVA purchases were able to be conducted at well below market rates because of preferable purchases that we're able to do. So it made it more advantageous than private vehicle leasing.

As far as private vehicle rentals go we found that that is very cost efficient for the ministry. And that's why we went into the pilot project and are expanding the pilot project and finding that we're able to save a lot of money by just engaging with the private sector and using vehicles only when needed and having those available at a moment's notice, really.

Mr. McCall: — So again though — and I'm referring to a release dated April 10th, 2018 from the minister's agency — and again the three pillars identified which have been touched upon here: the fewer government-owned vehicles, smaller fleet; strategic procurement; and short-term private rentals.

The short-term private rentals, according to the release, account for \$275,000 in travel savings. So that, you know, would presumably leave the remainder of the 5 million left. So \$4,725,000 would be attributable to the other two measures. Am I understanding that correctly?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. And, you know, what we have here is really a double bonus, a double benefit to government. So the pilot itself saved us, the pilot program saved us \$275,000 and will be expanded. And projected savings are 4 to \$500,000 through that pilot. But enabling us to . . . By working through this pilot we were able to reduce the size of our fleet. So there again there's a savings and a reduction there of a substantial amount of money.

You know, as I indicated earlier, vehicle and operating expense is down \$1.8 million. Amortization expense is down \$2.6 million. And, you know, something outside of this as well is the procurement, the New West Partnership that we have, that we're able to procure vehicles at a lower rate as well. So, you know, there's sort of three areas that are contributing to it, but they're all working together and that's why we're expanding this partnership with the private sector on short-term rentals. It's allowing us to reduce the size of our fleet and still serve our purposes. And then those vehicles that we do need to purchase are being purchased at a lesser cost.

Mr. McCall: — But again, am I understanding correctly that roughly 4.7 million of the 5 million of identified savings on the part of the ministry doesn't have to do with the private rentals? Am I understanding that correctly?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I want to be clear though. The 4 or \$500,000 savings that we will anticipate with the expanded program here are a definite, direct benefit from the new operation. But also it allows us to have a smaller fleet. So we are able to access those needs through the partnership. It allows us to have a smaller fleet, and that's where you have substantial savings by the reduced size of that fleet.

So, you know, there's two ways to meet those needs, either by, you know, owning vehicles, or having this partnership and allowing them to be used on a short-term rental basis. So we see these three areas working together, and that's why we're seeing a big, big savings and we're hoping to see increased savings into the future as well.

Mr. McCall: — So again the question on any particular focused work on the cost-effectiveness of the CVA over the last decade: is the minister aware of any focused reviews that were

carried out by the ministry?

[21:15]

If it's helpful for the minister or officials, I guess I'm . . . This is brought to mind having been in attendance at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] one year when the ministry was then headed up by Minister Campeau. She got the CVA question from the bear pit and provided what seemed to be a fairly reasonable answer about the relative cost-effectiveness of the approach to CVA at the time versus moving to private rentals. So I guess I'd be interested to know what she was referring to in particular, and what has changed to, you know, throw that approach off.

Mr. Murray: — Maybe just for clarification, as compared to private rentals or as compared to leasing vehicles? Could you clarify the difference?

Mr. McCall: — As compared to private rentals.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I think to answer the question, and you know, I have been approached by other private-sector rental companies to say that they have an interest in doing business with the Government of Saskatchewan. And you know, they inform me that their business models, their margins have tightened up in the last number of years substantially, so they're having to offer a better rate to clients such as the Government of Saskatchewan, and I think that we are the beneficiary of that. And you know, my understanding is that ministry officials, you know, prior to my time as being minister, looked at that and said, let's do a pilot here. Let's just see. I think they had the intuition to see that we could save some money here, and in fact they were correct in the pilot.

And you know, the other thing that it offers for government employees, and it kind of goes hand in hand with the, you know, fact that we reduced our air fleet, is that we're able to offer one-way rentals as well. So if the member was to fly up to Prince Albert and then he had to be in Saskatoon and, you know, the most cost-effective way would probably be contacting the vehicle partner and arranging for a short-term rental from Prince Albert to Saskatoon without any drop fee. So that's where we're seeing a lot of savings as well.

So indeed there was a pilot that was undertaken. It's been very successful and now that pilot is going to be expanded. And in the numbers themselves they're showing that there's a substantial reduction in the cost to Central Services. And we will continue to monitor clients and ask employees if they feel they're getting the service that they were getting before. And the initial response that we've got from asking those questions is very favourable and very positive so it's, I guess, a way of keeping abreast of what's happening in the industry and, you know, allowing those cost reductions to be passed on to the government.

Mr. McCall: — I thank the minister for the answer. Could the minister or officials undertake to provide the review that had been conducted to the committee, that then minister Campeau was referring to, just so that we've got the parameters of the comparison clearly in mind.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — You know we will undertake to look for it. I've just asked officials here and it predates anyone that's here with us today. It goes back 10 years or more and the market certainly has changed. But we will make a best effort to obtain that document.

Mr. McCall: — I'll resist the temptation to make, you know, length-of-service jokes about anyone in attendance, but I thank the minister for that undertaking and look forward to that information being provided.

In terms of moving through the subvote, with mail services for example, in terms of the delivery of mail throughout government, is there any consideration under way on the part of government to contract that service out? Has there been any analysis done in terms of is that the cost-effective way to deliver this important service for government?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — All right. Mr. Chair, let the record show that the member is encouraging us to privatize mail services in every way. We haven't undertaken to do any of this, but at his suggestion and his encouragement we will certainly — no, I'm just kidding.

You know, the mail service is something that of course has changed over time. At its peak we delivered some 20 million pieces of mail, and right now it's about half that, about 10 million pieces of mail. You know, we contract out with Purolator and the private sector as far as delivery between cities, but we still use employees for the distribution within cities as well. But now that's something that, you know, we continue to monitor. And we know that times are changing, but we are comfortable with the model that we have now.

Mr. McCall: — I thank the minister for the answer and the straight answer of course. In terms of the work that is done by commissionaires throughout government buildings under the watch of Central Services, where does the expenditure for commissionaires show up? Would that be more properly under (CS02) or is that in services allocated to ministry under transportation and other services?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. It would be under (CS02) building services and maintenance, I believe. Is that correct?

A Member: — Yes, buildings.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Yes. And the way that that works is that the ministry would enter into negotiations and a contractual arrangement with commissionaires and then that would be billed to the tenants in the particular facility as well.

Mr. McCall: — Is there any active consideration of forgoing the work that is done by commissionaires in favour of some kind of private security delivery?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much. So indeed, the commissionaires are a private operation. So they bid, as other entities do, on specific tenders. The commissionaires were successful in the last tender, and we're pleased with the service that they provide.

Mr. McCall: — When does that contract wrap up? And again, one of the great things about commissionaires is that there's a skew to those that have served our country in the Forces, and that's, I think, a great feature of the wonderful service that is provided by the commissionaires. I know that that service has been forgone in other parts of the government. Out in the Crown sector there have been various Crowns that have ended their relationship with the commissionaires, which I think is a shame.

So again I appreciate that there's a competitive bidding process, but certainly that bias towards those who have served in uniform and the work that they do with the commissionaires, that's got to earn them some points in "pick your bidding process."

So I guess I'm looking to gauge the minister's interest in, again is there consideration of when that contract comes up to going with something that is, you know, on the dollars, less expensive, but in terms of the service that has been ably provided by the commissionaire corps, what recognition is there made of that value on the part of this ministry and this government?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well I think I'd have to agree with the member that, you know, any interaction that I've had with commissionaires has been very positive, and they certainly bring a great deal of experience and qualities to the job that they do.

Again for our process, it is an open tender. It has been an open tender. But the commissionaires have been very competitive and have been able to offer that service at a cost. But you know, I would agree that there's certain intangibles there that commissionaires bring to the work being done. So you know, all things being equal, I certainly would say that we should take a lens to that. But again, I can only comment on the process that is in place and the success of the commissionaires in winning that competitive process in the past.

Mr. McCall: — Just for the record, when does that contract expire?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I was about to say you stumped us. You got one here that they couldn't answer, you know, but then a yellow sticky appears. The contract ends March 2019 with an option to extend to 2020.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Minister. I'll endeavour to keep trying to stump you. But I know that won't happen given the, you know, high-powered minds you've got arrayed around you there, Mr. Minister.

In terms of . . . This is as good a point as any to ask the question about . . . If the minister or officials could get on the record in terms of what has happened this year around the cleaning staff. What has been paid out in severance? And in terms of the change from the formerly in-scope members of the public service that diligently provided that work for, certainly this building and many others throughout the province, what has become of those 200-and-some individuals having been terminated by government? And what are the private offerings that have been taken up post that termination?

[21:30]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. So 158 severance packages were issued as a result of the transition to the private sector cleaning services in government-owned buildings. The cost of those severance packages was \$1.755 million, so an approximate average severance of \$11,000 per employee.

New cleaning service contractors hired 49 of those former employees. And five of the companies that are now doing — of the 11 companies — that are supplying cleaning service to government buildings are owned by former government cleaning staff. So you know, there are the numbers. And, you know, the encouraging part from our point of view is the five companies that are owned by government and certainly we made every effort to encourage companies to extend an offer to former employees. Forty-nine of them were successful. And you know, at the end of the day, it saved the government \$3.5 million in costs as well.

Mr. McCall: — So on average, what was the length of service for the individuals terminated?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I'm informed that, you know, the range was very extreme. You know, it started with temporary employees or those that have worked less than a year to extending right to those who have really made it their career as a custodian in government buildings, some 35 years of service, for example. So it was really a range across that amount of time. So an average or a mean would not really be reflective of that, other than to say that there certainly was a wide range of years of service.

Mr. McCall: — So for those that were terminated, severed out, and invited to apply for their old jobs back at presumably a lower rate of pay by the numbers the minister's giving, why were they not . . . In terms of other occupations, there would be such a thing as successor rights under the employment Act. How was it that cleaners were exempt from successor rights and the protections afforded them by being able to organize collectively? How are they exempted from the employment Act?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So you know, in these transactions, there was not a sale of a business, for example, that would trigger succession rights. Employees were, I think, encouraged to start their own companies and to use their skills to undertake to apply to government to take on those responsibilities. So they weren't invited to apply for their old jobs per se, but certainly there was a recognition of the talents they have. And you know, we're very pleased to see that five of the companies are owned by former government cleaning staff. So I think that's very successful.

You know, I'm assured by ministry officials that all provisions of collective bargaining were certainly adhered to and all parts of the labour Act were followed to the T as well. So it was done in a careful and concise manner to ensure that it was fair and appropriate and that collective bargaining and all aspects of the labour Act were followed.

Mr. McCall: — What's the difference in the average wage paid

for a cleaner previously to now?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. As government we're not privy to the amount that each employee is paid. The extension is . . . The contracts are extended on a cost per square foot basis, for example, so that would be how it is administered. So you know, we don't have the exact information. And again, some of the people would be owners operating their own companies. Others would be employees of others, but we don't have the exact information on that.

Mr. McCall: — I thank the minister for the information. I'm not sure if this falls under (CS02) or where it might fall, but again in terms of the order in council 95/2018, approved and ordered 1st of March 2018 whereby the Cafeteria Board was disestablished and then placed under the purview of Central Services, can the minister talk about what's happening with the folks here in the legislative cafeteria and what is to become of them?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So the Dome Cafeteria located in the Legislative Building remains one of the only government-owned cafeterias still in operation. The cafeteria operated at a loss last year of \$39,000. An order in council was approved to dissolve the Cafeteria Board to simplify operation of the cafeteria. Government plans to engage the private sector through a request for proposal process to explore the possibility of having a private sector company operate the cafeteria. If the private sector company was engaged, it would allow government not to subsidize the operations any longer.

So staff was notified that this was the intention of government and that indeed that there could be changes going forward based on the result of the applications received under the request for proposal.

Mr. McCall: — When was the RFP opened, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — The RFP hasn't been opened yet. In fact it opens tomorrow.

Mr. McCall: — When will the process close?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — The process takes four weeks. May 31st will be the closing of the request for proposals, with an additional two weeks to adjudicate those proposals. So we're looking at a six-week time period.

Mr. McCall: — So again, for the current employees, what is to become of them?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So the staff has been fully apprised of the government's intention to go for the request for proposal, but it's not determined what will happen to the employees. It really is dependent on the results that government receives for the request for proposal.

Again we want to do what makes sense. And we want to analyze the proposals that we receive, and then a determination will be made in the appropriate time. But the staff has been made aware of the government's intentions, and we will endeavour to keep them apprised as quickly as decisions are

made.

Mr. McCall: — I guess, in terms of the fairly rapid succession of moving to disestablish the cafeteria board and the announcing of proceeding to an RFP proposal, again these are questions that are perhaps better addressed to the cafeteria board, but they've been disestablished and this is Central Services' responsibility.

[21:45]

But can the minister or officials describe for the committee what sort of work was undertaken with folks at the cafeteria in terms of addressing the question of the shortfall over years? What sort of possibilities were examined in terms of the allowance or disallowance of outside caterers into the building, or how any of that worked so that the valuable service that again these long-serving, modestly paid, hard-working public servants have provided here in the Legislative Assembly . . .

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So the cafeteria board was established in 1945 when we were, you know, when there was a very different culture and very different needs. At that time it operated, I believe, seven to eight different cafeterias in government, so hence the need for a board. You know, the second-last closure was at the T.C. Douglas building, and then this Dome Cafeteria became the last entity that was operated as a cafeteria. So you know, we had one board operating to oversee one cafeteria. So it just made sense to dissolve the board and to look at various options.

You know, over the last five years I'm told that efforts were made to try to reduce the government's subsidy, the losses that were occurring. But you know, catering can be profitable, but in the instance here it was profitable to a certain extent but limited in what it can do.

So you know, efforts were made, but again we weren't able to negate the loss that takes place each and every year. So you know, the thinking here is to look at a different means, a different operation to see if there are others out there that feel that they have ideas that can operate to allow them to operate without a subsidy.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Minister, I struggle with how to say this right and to be respectful. If there is a way, and I'm not asking like . . . This sort of writes itself in terms of, you know, self-interested politician looks to defend the lady who serves him lunch or the chef who, you know, oversees all of this. And I also want to be respectful to the individuals involved in terms of various of the struggles that those people are facing.

But if there is a way that this decision can be revisited by government, particularly in light of the circumstances that are known here — and for respect for the folks involved, I'm not going to talk about them outright — but if there is a way that that decision can be revisited by this government, I would hope that it would do so because the service that is provided . . . If it's about the subsidy and that need be made clear to the folks who depend on the great work that those men and women do for us, then let that be made clear and see if that can't work.

But for various reasons, Mr. Minister, you'll well know that this

couldn't come at a worse time for certainly leader of that kitchen. So I don't want to say any more than that for fear of being disrespectful. And I also know we're all humans here and we've got big hearts and sometimes it's about seeing the humanity in the situation and seeing if there isn't a way where a \$39,000 shortfall on this past year's budget can't be improved upon in years to come.

And I guess I will . . . I know that these are folks that are in our prayers and our thoughts and we wish them strength and we wish them solace in the days ahead. And if this could be one thing that is sorted out for them, Mr. Speaker, I'd implore you to exhaust every means possible to sort that out.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well thank you for your comments, and I certainly understand the passion in your voice. And you have to understand, when this decision was made, information that has come to light in the last little while, I was not privy to. And you know, whenever you try to make decisions as a minister, you try not to . . . You know, it's not about the individual or the people because I interact with those individuals as much as you do and other members do, and they're wonderful individuals that have done a wonderful job.

I would put forward, you know, it's the business model that may be broke and it's not the enthusiasm or the commitment or the work that has been done by these individuals. And when they were informed of government's intention, it was done so in a way that was very respectful and very acknowledging of the work that they have done.

But you know, I will take your comments under consideration and have a look to see if there's indeed anything that can be done at this particular time. But you know, the wheels are in motion, the RFP is going out. But as far as the hearts and the respect of this government, we certainly, we are there and we wish each and every employee in government . . . and will do all that we can. But I will take it on to examine if there's anything that we can do to make this situation less cumbersome for the individuals involved at this present time, in light of certain circumstances.

Mr. McCall: — I thank the minister for that answer and I'll leave it at that for now.

And carrying on through the subvotes, Mr. Minister. In terms of information technology, certainly there's some reduction in terms of coordination and transformation initiatives but I guess if the minister or officials could talk about how this work is being provided in terms of the human resource complement that this requires. In past this has been an area of government that has relied significantly on the employ of consultants certainly, you know, with various projects attached to it, with different of those batches of work. But can the minister let the committee know what's happening in terms of making sure that human resources complement is there and where we're at for system-wide initiatives to come.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Central Services hires external consultants for skills that are difficult to recruit for, where the work is temporary in nature, or where specialized expertise is required.

Many of the projects in Central Services currently under way require a variety of technical resources, the majority of which are employees. In some cases specialized resources are required from the private sector. Contract resources are being used in such areas as application development, IT, and construction project management. Many of these areas are highly technical and difficult to recruit for.

That being said, over the past five years the ministry's consultants costs have gone down by 57 per cent. The need for consultants depends on the work that is done in the ministry, and the use of consultants will continue where it makes sense. You know, from a minister's point of view, you want to ensure that you're able to contract with those that can provide the skills to make the projects run efficiently, but at the same time your costs can get away on you very quickly. So it's something you have to watch very closely, and that's what we've done as a government.

In 2013-14 we spent \$17 million on 86 consultants. In 2014-15 the number of consultants was reduced to 65, and there was \$14 million. In '15-16, \$10 million for 47 consultants. And in '16-17, \$7.7 million for 36 consultants. And in the last year, '17-18, \$7.5 million for 36 consultants. So there has been a real want to reduce the number of consultants if necessary, and to reduce the dollar value spent. There's always a want to encourage employees to gain the skills necessary so you don't have to go out to outside consultants, and that's something that the ministry has worked very hard towards and has had some success. So I think we're at a level here that is very manageable and a credit to those that are monitoring this very closely.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much for that, Mr. Minister. In terms of the lifespan of the technology as deployed throughout the system, what big sort of renewal moments are coming up and what plans are being undertaken on the part of government to prepare for that?

[22:00]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Since August of 2015, there have been . . . The IT portfolio includes 47 major projects renewed by the information technology governance committee, estimating cost about \$230 million. So you know, at any one time there's several projects that are under way, and I mentioned in my opening remarks, talking about Central Services and the digital program, the focus on the single My Government account for citizens and businesses.

And you know, this is something that Central Services is working towards to secure online self-service with a modernized technology foundation. So you know, within the Ministry of Central Services itself, the government online services and the business sign-in and notifications are a priority for us right now. We're looking at the completion of that in the next few months.

So you know, that's just one example. We can get into others or into the specifics of what they're doing, but generally what we're trying to do is empower employees to use technology to service their own accounts or to access information that they need in a way that they don't need the help of others, that they can do it on their own. And we're having success with that and

I know, you know, as MLAs we're finding out some of those changes ourselves and getting involved in that, as well as each and every government employee. So that's an overview. There's no major threshold on the horizon, but we do see a number of programs in place in different ministries, and I've highlighted the one that's in Central Services.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that, Mr. Minister. In terms of the security and stability of the IT infrastructure of government overall, could the minister or officials describe for the government how the past year has gone, what sort of attacks have been sustained and presumably repelled by government, and what the confidence level is generally on the part of government for the security of the IT function of government of which ITO [information technology office] has oversight.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So again, you know, when I was provided with this information from senior ministerial staff, it really, really surprised me. Over the last year, IT division has prevented 34 million network intrusion attempts, blocked 1 million spam messages per week from being delivered, blocked 9 million infected emails from reaching user desktops, and deleted another 50,000 infected emails and files at users' desktops. So certainly the numbers are staggering but if you, you know, talk to anybody in the private sector, you know, relative size, this is something that every corporation, that every entity, that every government, you know, makes it a priority and has to face.

And those, as we've heard, can be from far-reaching places and take it upon themselves to challenge public sector and governments as well. Fortunately we have not had a breach that has resulted in a loss of data, you know, and I don't say that with any bravado because, you know, something could change at any time. But people are working to make it an absolute priority that data is as safe as possible. But there are those forces out there that are making it their job to try to invade or to circumvent a lot of the areas that we have in place.

So again, you know, we have not had a breach that resulted in the loss of data. If a breach were to occur we would notify and work collaboratively with the various organizations such as the federal government's Canadian Cyber Incident Response Centre, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] cyber security division, and the Privacy Commissioner's office. So we try to ensure that our employees are up to date on the latest ways of combatting this, and so far so good. And I certainly encourage that we keep this as a top priority for government.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much for that, Mr. Minister, and certainly I second that emotion. It's something that has been interesting to observe over years, just the way that that whole aspect of the valuable public infrastructure that we have and count on has been thrown into . . . has these different challenges thrown at it. So I'd just like to say thanks very much to the public servants doing this work and keep it up. And you know, the future only gets more and more interesting. It's unending. But thank you for that.

I guess moving on through the subvotes, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker? Mr. Chair, moving to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . no corners on your hat. But just for the record, (CS07), the significant drop in the land, buildings, and improvements

expenditure from 160 million to 41.1. Can the minister or officials characterize the cause for that on this point in particular?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question, and, indeed, the member is correct. There is a substantial reduction in the land, buildings, and improvements allocation. The Saskatchewan Hospital, North Battleford, we are in the final phase of completion of construction. Last year, for example, we spent \$155 million, and that entailed the completion of 92 per cent of the hospital. What we're looking at here is expenditures this year of \$34 million. So 155, take away the \$34 million that will be spent this year to take it to 100 per cent completion. So certainly that is the reason for the reduction in expenditures, as outlined in the subvote.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much for that, Mr. Minister. Carrying on in the subvotes (CS13), the Provincial Capital Commission. In terms of the — I guess we'll move bottom to top — the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, their budget has been flatlined. This year saw the last publication of the *Saskatchewan History* magazine, which, as a once upon a time history student, had to read a lot of very interesting things in *Saskatchewan History*. Anyway, that that has come to an end is remarkable. But could the minister describe to the committee what led to that decision?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. And certainly, you know, the member has indicated that at points in time in his studies, in his career, he's had a chance to use the *Saskatchewan History* magazine, as I think we all have at some point. And the publication . . . It was very well done and has served its purpose for a long period of time.

As the member indicated, the allotment given to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan was flat. It was not decreased. It was \$4.363 million. And you know, the operations of the Archives are governed by a board. In operation it's, you know, ministers and ministerial do not make those decisions. But you know, the Archives board has decided that they would cease publication of the magazine. And you know, vis-à-vis other good work that they do, they felt that this would be in the best interests of their operations going forward.

I don't have any other additional information. I share the sentiments that it was a good publication that was well served and, you know, now vis-à-vis other things that they do, the decision was made to cease publication.

Mr. McCall: — I thank the minister for that answer. In terms of the Provincial Capital Commission and Government House — I guess jumping up to the top — operational support has gone from 2.1 million to zero. Could the minister describe what has happened there?

[22:15]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question. As the member will see under the vote 13, there's the line item operational support, 2.12 million, and Provincial Capital Commission and Government House under the line item, and then under the estimated 2017-18 category, 3.816 million. If you total those two up, they come to 5.936 million,

and the line item for the Provincial Capital Commission is 5.836, so a reduction of a hundred thousand dollars.

And again, the way that this is depicted is because they were operational programs to begin with and now there is an allocation, a grant, for the Provincial Capital Commission, so that's the best way to show that accounting measure. The \$100,000 decrease represents the transfer of a former Wascana Centre human resources services staff to the Public Service Commission. The PSC assumed responsibility for HR services for the Provincial Capital Commission, so the \$100,000 was reflected in a move to the PSC. So it is a wash when you look at all entities involved. And it's shown this way to accurately depict in accounting fashion what has happened there with the Provincial Capital Commission.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Minister, in terms of answering that. And sometimes things are as they seem to be and sometimes they're not. I'm glad to hear that it is as it seems to be.

I guess the broader question of development in Wascana Centre Authority, this is the first budget where we have sort of full implementation of the new model whereby the province took over numeric control of the board. They've got a working majority whereas before it was that tripartite arrangement between the province, the university, and the city. I guess I'll say the minister of the time that, you know, I've got a historic sort of interest in . . . There have been different sort of things intimated in terms of the agreement by the city of Regina and the university with the new numbers on the board, which again placed the province in a majority.

I've yet to be provided with proof of their ceding to that approach. So as far as I know this has been something that the province has just gone ahead on. So I don't know if the minister's got anything different to provide in that regard. But if the minister could explain for the committee, who's on the board right now for Wascana Centre Authority or for the Provincial Capital Commission?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — So with the proclamation of Bill 50 on June 12th, 2017, the process to transition operations within Wascana Centre under the Provincial Capital Commission was initiated, while working to ensure that operations and services continue to be provided throughout the park for the benefit of many users and patrons. Central Services have been actively working on establishment, more efficient administrative, and service delivery processes.

And indeed we've seen that happen, that the ministry has the expertise within to operate the Wascana Centre, and it's been working very well. A new organizational structure was developed where support functions like financial management, communications, and facility maintenance and operation are now being provided through Central Services through a shared services model. As a result of the various transfers to and from executive government and the former Wascana Centre, the Provincial Capital Commission is directly responsible now for the 59 staff.

A significant benefit to the new model is that Wascana Centre now has access to a broad range of professionals and resources

that the Ministry of Central Services has to offer. For example, infrastructure engineers, maintenance and groundskeeping staff, facility management expertise, communication professionals and government financial management, procurement, contract management, and human resource management systems.

Attention has also been directed to the partnership between the city and the university and the province. Each partner is responsible for the costs of maintenance and management of their own lands and structures, subject to common architectural engineering and landscaping standards to be detailed in a memorandum of understanding or similar agreement.

The board of directors continues to have representation from all three partners and has been overseeing the transition period and the work of the Provincial Capital Commission overall. So we have three engaged partners. They have the city, the university, and the province. The board of directors is very functional and is working very well. And I think each partner ensures that they are represented at the board by every meeting. Members also have a formal alternate that will take their place if indeed the member is not able to attend the meeting.

Comprising the board currently: the Chair is Mr. Richard Murray, DM of Central Services; and the members are two MLAs, two government MLAs, MLA Laura Ross and MLA Warren Steinley. The member for the University of Regina is Mr. Dave Button; his alternate is Mr. Dale Eisler. So they ensure that representation is there at each and every meeting. And Councillor Mike O'Donnell represents the city of Regina, and his alternate is Barbara Young.

I understand the board is making great progress and is functioning very well, and all three partners are respected and working towards the continued improvement of the Provincial Capital Commission.

Mr. McCall: — Can the minister describe the chain of decisions that have taken place around plans made public for the CNIB [Canadian National Institute for the Blind] building?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much for the question from the member. The CNIB and the discussions that started to look at the design of a new facility started in 2012 when a conceptual idea was brought forward by the CNIB indicating that their building was getting old and needed to be refurbished, and they were looking at different options. You know, too, I'm looking at extreme detail of what happened sort of month-by-month in each year. I'll try to summarize.

In 2014 a submission was made. CNIB talked about, you know, the concern of the lack of funding, and the opportunity to reach out to certain partners. In 2014 Brandt Developments was brought in as a partner to work with the CNIB to continue to put forward the development. Expressions of interest happened in 2015. There's been constant interaction with the Ministry of Central Services over that time.

[22:30]

Again just to summarize, in 2016 a public meeting was held to listen to concerns of residents and to address those concerns; 2017 a summary of the project proposal was provided. Final

drawings and presentation to the Provincial Capital Commission board took place in 2017. And then moving into 2018, a MOU [memorandum of understanding] was agreed to and redrafted and sent to all partners for review. And in April of '18 a review and board approval of final details of design. So a very complete and a very interactive six years of operations entail where we are today with the CNIB building.

Mr. McCall: — In terms of the last point that the minister talks about, the . . . In terms of the legislation itself for the Provincial Capital Commission, section 7-3(b), it talks about the powers of the architectural advisory committee recommending “. . . the approval by the commission of the proposed building on the ground that it is consistent with the master plan.”

Has that . . . If the minister could describe who's on that advisory committee. Have they met to consider this proposal, and have they provided their approval for this proposal?

Ms. Cherney: — Nancy Cherney, assistant deputy minister of property management division. So the architectural advisory committee is comprised of two architects who are part of the DTAH firm that has completed the master plan and the various revisions and updates to that. So it's the same company that provides the architectural advisory review process or oversees that.

And so they have reviewed the detailed design for the CNIB building and have approved that from their perspective in terms of its architectural integrity and its alignment with the principles of the master plan and fit within the park. So then that recommendation from the advisory committee comes to the board, and it was that approval that was provided in, I believe, April at that meeting.

Mr. McCall: — Could the minister or officials please table that with the committee? I'm presuming they provided that assessment in writing.

Ms. Cherney: — So the assessment would have been a recommendation to the board, and so the board who reports it is accountable to the minister. I'm not sure that I can speak to how much of that is released or be able to be tabled, but we can review that and determine if we can share some of their recommendations.

Mr. McCall: — Why wouldn't that be readily available to the public?

Ms. Cherney: — It was recommendations to the board for their review, and I'm just not, off the top of my head, sure about the ability to share that information publicly. It was for board advice really.

Mr. McCall: — So why wouldn't that advice be available if it's the basis of, you know, something that's contingent on direction in the Act? Why wouldn't that be available?

Ms. Cherney: — So that, as I said, was for comparing the architectural design for, you know, integrity and consistency with the master plan, and all I'm suggesting is that we would take a look at that, consider, you know, how that fits within our ability to make that available to you and provide that if we're

able to.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I will undertake to review this and to get you as much information as soon as possible as we can on this regard.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister and officials. As much as it pains me, I think we've reached the hour of conclusion in terms of the agreed upon time for consideration of these, these estimates. But certainly there are conversations that arising from this that we'll be sure to continue.

But with that I would thank the minister and officials, and through them to the public servants doing the work in Central Services and its various branches on behalf of myself and the official opposition. And certainly thanks to my colleagues on the committee and to you, Mr. Chair, for this work tonight.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. McCall. And with that I'll adjourn consideration of the estimates for the Ministry of Central Services. Mr. Minister, do you have any closing comments you'd like to make?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much, Mr. Chair. Just very quickly thank you to the member for his questions. He's obviously given it a lot of thought and asked some very good questions. Thank you to my officials for providing the answers to each and every one. I think there's a couple of undertakings that we'll attempt to get to the member as quick as possible. And again thank you to all involved for what they do each and every day at the Ministry of Central Services as we provide services to all government employees, a very important job indeed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you for that. And I would also just like to add my thanks to the member opposite for good questions this evening and for the responses. I'd also like to thank the committees branch staff for staying with us tonight. We appreciate that.

And that concludes our business for this evening. So seeing that we have no further business, I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment. Ms. Heppner has moved a motion to adjourn. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — This committee stands adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday at 5:15.

[The committee adjourned at 22:36.]