



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

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE**

Mr. Greg Lawrence, Chair  
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Mr. Buckley Belanger, Deputy Chair  
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Cannington

Mr. Ken Francis  
Kindersley

Mr. Delbert Kirsch  
Batoche

Ms. Laura Ross  
Regina Rochdale

Ms. Nicole Sarauer  
Regina Douglas Park

[The committee met at 15:31.]

**The Chair:** — Now being 3:30, it's time to get started. So first of all I'd like to welcome our members to the committee. We have myself as Chair. We have Mr. McCall substituting for Mr. Belanger, and we have Mr. Kirsch and Ms. Ross.

Welcome to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. This is the first time that the committee has met since the Assembly adjourned on March 17, 2020 due to COVID-19.

Before we begin, I'd like to make a statement about how the committee will operate when we meet in room 8. As you can see, things look a little different here. First, due to the size of the committee room, our committee is meeting with quorum today to ensure that the guidelines for physical distancing are adhered to. Quorum for the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice is four.

Because some of the committee members are unable to attend the committee meeting due to COVID-19, committee members now have the option to vote by proxy if they cannot physically attend a meeting due to COVID-19. A proxy form must be filled out and delivered or emailed to the Speaker's office 30 minutes prior to the Assembly's daily proceedings.

Secondly, you will see that the minister and his or her deputy minister are on opposite ends of the witness table, and most of the seats in the gallery have been removed to ensure that we are practising physical distancing. We have asked extra witnesses and officials to wait in the hallway until they are required to answer questions. There is a microphone and podium at the back of the room for officials to use.

Third, often the minister needs to confer with his or her officials. To ensure that the minister and officials have adequate space to confer, room 4, the media room, is available for private conversations.

Lastly, I want to advise the committee that we will need to take periodic recesses to allow the Legislative Assembly personnel time to change over and sanitize their workstations. So please bear with us and the employees of the Legislative Assembly Service. If you have questions about the logistics or have documents to table, the committee requests that you contact the Clerk at [committees@legassembly.sk.ca](mailto:committees@legassembly.sk.ca). Their information is provided on the tables at the back.

I would like to advise the committee that pursuant to rule 148(1) the following estimates and supplementary estimates were committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice today, June 15th, 2020: estimates vote 73, Corrections and Policing; vote 30, Government Relations; vote 91, integrated justice services; vote 3, Justice and Attorney General; vote 27, Parks, Culture and Sport; vote 88, Tourism Saskatchewan. Supplementary estimates for '19 and '20: vote 73 for Corrections and Policing; vote 30, Government Relations; vote 3, Justice and Attorney General; vote 27, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**General Revenue Fund  
Tourism Saskatchewan  
Vote 88**

**Subvote (TR01)**

**The Chair:** — We have a very busy agenda today. This afternoon, we will be considering the estimates for Tourism Saskatchewan and the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. Tonight, we will be considering five bills. We will now begin our consideration on vote 88, Tourism Saskatchewan, subvote (TR01). Minister Makowsky, if you'd please introduce your officials and make any opening comments.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to be here and talk about what's happening with Tourism Saskatchewan. My officials with me this afternoon are Mary Taylor-Ash, Kathy Rintoul, and Jonathan Potts. I just have a few opening comments. I know we don't have a lot of time, so I'll get through these as quickly as I can.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought tourism in Saskatchewan and right around the world to a near halt. Destination Canada is reporting that losses in 2020 will amount to at least 35 per cent of all domestic tourism spending or approximately 36 billion for domestic and international travel. Saskatchewan could see losses ranging from 730 million to 1.5 billion in tourism spend.

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, Saskatchewan's visitor economy was maintaining steady growth numbers. Expenditures exceeded \$2 billion annually. As of August 2019, the industry employed more than 71,000 Saskatchewan citizens. That's around 12 per cent of the workforce. Tourism annually injects 723 million in export dollars into the economy.

The restrictions on travel and the downturn in the industry will see revenues decrease substantially in the near term. The negative impacts are widespread, affecting major employers in transportation and accommodation industries, attractions and events, and small-business and seasonal operations.

One of those is the outfitting industry, and restrictions on travel from the US [United States] have certainly had their impact. The situation with outfitters was a factor in amendments to the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan, particularly the changes ensuring northern outfitters and seasonal businesses were eligible for the Saskatchewan small-business emergency payment.

The Ministry of the Environment has also taken additional actions, and I'd let Minister Duncan talk about those specifics. Despite some of these measures, the picture remains challenging for many northern outfitters whose US clients are not permitted entry into Canada. That is a very lucrative market for that sector.

And certainly we've talked about before the fallout from COVID-19. Airlines have grounded flights and drastically reduced their workforce and flights into Saskatchewan. And this will again compound that, particularly the northern outfitters who rely on those US flights, but all in general.

Hotel occupancy rates have declined to 14 per cent across the province with layoffs at properties. As phases of the Re-Open

Saskatchewan plan unfold, there has been increases to occupancies but it could take months to reach pre-COVID levels.

Cancellation of popular and much-anticipated events has been another blow to the tourism industry. It's certainly understandable. Large-scale celebrations are not compatible with safety practices that are currently required. More than 700 events throughout Saskatchewan have been cancelled or postponed. Their absence will have consequences, of course. Things like annual outdoor festivals, sports showcases such as the 2020 Grey Cup, and events hosted throughout the province bring profile to Saskatchewan and inspire residential pride. Their role in maintaining a robust visitor economy is substantial.

Tourism Saskatchewan has responded to the pandemic outbreak that occurred in March, aligning with Destination Canada and provincial-territorial marketing organizations. Issues confronting the tourism sector were similar throughout Canada and a coordinated, unified approach was implemented. Spring activities and campaigns were halted and priorities shifted to focus on the immediate needs and concerns of the industry.

On the marketing front, plans for attracting more international travel, travellers were immediately suspended. Working with Destination Canada, Tourism Saskatchewan adapted its marketing approach to focus on local travel. Emphasis is placed on encouraging Saskatchewan residents to enjoy and support local businesses and discover what's in our own backyard, practising safe social distancing and respecting health guidelines.

The campaign encourages travellers to reintroduce themselves to Saskatchewan, to embrace the changes as opportunities to not only keep our province open and safe but to make new discoveries, create new stories, and experiences that Saskatchewan has to offer.

Some of the basic budget highlights I'll note. There has been a fall-off from some of those large events that we talked about earlier and a \$500,000 increase for marketing initiatives that will be implemented.

So there's challenges I've raised today, but it's certainly inspiring to see examples of people adapting and moving to what has definitely hit this industry. So I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and look forward to any questions the committee members might have for Tourism Saskatchewan.

**The Chair:** — We will now begin our consideration of vote 88, Tourism Saskatchewan, subvote (TR01). And does anyone have any questions?

**Mr. McCall:** — One or two, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — I recognize Mr. McCall.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, officials, welcome to consideration of these estimates. I'll try not to keep pace with the minister's rendering of the opening remarks, but I will try to keep it snappy.

In terms of just off the top, if the minister and officials could, through to the men and women of Tourism Saskatchewan and the folks that do the tremendous work around this province, if you

could extend our thanks and best wishes for them in this trying time. In so many ways, there's a tremendous job that is done showcasing this beautiful province that we have, both by Tourism Saskatchewan and by your partners throughout many different sectors, and we know that that this is a hard time for all those people.

So we just want to state off the top that we're thinking of them alongside with you, Mr. Minister, and certainly whatever we can do to be constructive in making sure that we get through this in as fine a fashion as we can and get back to the better days that are sure to be ahead. So if the minister could do that for me on behalf of the official opposition, I'd appreciate it.

I guess first off, again in terms of quantifying the hit that the sector has taken and the way that that plays out in terms of cancelled stays or cancelled trips or visitors to the province, this is like nothing we've ever seen before. So I guess in that, fully recognizing that, I guess I'm looking to gain some sense of what is the plan in terms of best focusing the resources that we have to bring to bear as a province, to make sure that . . . I'm sure, you know, "staycation" as a battle cry is a tough one to get across, but so it goes. And certainly there'll be questions that will, I'm sure, sort of pop up in different ways in the next segment of estimates around culture, sport, and parks.

But critical infrastructure for tourism, and this is something we've discussed previously, concerns certainly airports and flights that connect with Saskatchewan and has a tremendous, tremendous impact. What sort of contribution or coordination is Tourism Saskatchewan undertaking with our two main airports and the secondary airports throughout the province and with the air transport industry to make sure that we're not going to be closing doors on assets, never to see them come back again? What work has been undertaken?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Well thank you, Mr. McCall, for those initial statements. And you're right, these are unprecedented times, and we thank so much the folks in all our sectors. But the tourism sector has been hit particularly hard. And they're great, resilient folks that work hard, and they've built a business for many, many years. And now it's, you know, it's tough times and we all feel for that. So thank you for those words.

[15:45]

In terms of the airports, I know Minister Harrison has been working on this, pre-COVID, quite diligently and trying to get more of those direct, daily flights into Saskatchewan. And we, during this COVID situation we find ourselves in, I've certainly been relaying our concern to the federal minister and there's things that they've done, and I'll get Mary to expand on that. So we're always advocating, and I know the CEOs [chief executive officer] of the two airports, they've been working on this for some time. And, you know, that's an important link to our tourist economy. And I will turn it over to Mary for some more substantial comments.

**Ms. Taylor-Ash:** — Access is a basic for developing the tourism industry. So we have always worked closely with the airports in our province, you know, the two main airports. It is an issue right now that is much larger than tourism though. And so the minister has mentioned the federal-provincial-territorial table, and that's

where it has come up quite a bit. There's been a very collaborative effort from tourism entities across Canada right now because this is a global . . . Like tourism is affected globally, and so globally, nationally, and of course it affects us here, and regionally.

So it is something we are concerned about, but it is larger than tourism when your airports . . . when you don't have air access. We are particularly concerned with the flight out of Saskatoon, Delta's flight to Minneapolis, because once we have the outfitting, once the borders are opened again . . . Most of our travellers from the US are coming here to hunt and fish and that was a huge connection for them. That made a difference. It made us more competitive because they could fly through Minneapolis. So that is something that we will be watching closely.

**Mr. McCall:** — What's your sense with the two main airports, how they're going to weather the storm over the immediate term and then the long term? Are they going to have HR [human resources] problems for years to come, or how does this all work?

**Ms. Taylor-Ash:** — Yes, there are grave concerns. I think at the very beginning it was mentioned that this is a global pandemic. None of us know what's really going to happen or, you know, none of us have experienced this before. So the airports are very, very concerned, you know, hearing just some of the situation they're in with very little reserves to carry them for a long time. So it is of course concerning to us, you know, overall that they are in that situation. But they are right across the country. I mean again, it comes back to more than a provincial problem, you know, in that right across our country, right around the world, we're seeing this.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — I was just going to add, yes, unfortunately there have been layoffs at the two major airports, and I guess the market will decide as that comes back. I mentioned before some of the federal things that have immediately been done. They've waived ground lease fees, which is roughly 10 per cent of the cost of flying in Canada. So in Regina and Saskatoon, those have been waived for now. And so it's something we had called for at the FPT [federal-provincial-territorial] table.

**Mr. McCall:** — Are there any specific financial resources that the province is bringing to bear in this equation?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Nothing specific for that sector from the provincial government.

**Mr. McCall:** — Okay. I guess backing up and focusing more broadly across the sector as a whole. Major events, as the minister had referenced earlier . . . Just for the record if the minister could explain, are there any sunk investments, sunk costs that were accrued with something like the Junos? What's happening with the Grey Cup? If you could just state that for the record.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — So the two specifically the events you had raised, Mr. McCall. First of all, the Junos. The government pledged \$950,000 split between Parks, Culture and Sport and Tourism as part of their event hosting funding for attracting that event. It was cancelled essentially on the eve of the event. It was a few days before the main event. There was a few smaller events

scheduled during that week. I can't remember the exact day it was officially cancelled.

But a lot if not most of the expenditure had taken place, and so within Saskatoon, the hotels had received their money and the events had received their money. And that had taken place, so I guess there was some economic benefit as part of that. Obviously not being able to have 20,000 fans in the seats, etc., was not certainly what we were looking for. So that was the Junos.

And then the Grey Cup. As you know, if there is a CFL [Canadian Football League] season, it will not be the typical Grey Cup we expect. So the Grey Cup has been moved to 2022 in Regina. And so it was a \$3 million commitment for that event; one and a half million dollars has been expended to the Grey Cup organizing committee at this time. We'll make a decision in, I guess, short order whether . . . We'll work with the organizing committee and see if they . . . or if we want to just move that 1.5 over to the 2022 event or restart completely and based on their business plan for the 2022 Grey Cup.

**Mr. McCall:** — Okay. Thank you for that. In terms of working with the sector broadly through hospitality and the hotels, as the minister had referenced, with outfitters, with the work that's done around . . . I think of STEC [Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council] and all the great work they do, the festival circuits. What's the minister's sense of the landscape? Is there one part of that equation that's in bigger trouble than others, or is it pretty tough across the piece?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Well certainly with the non-ability to gather in large groups, that effectively shuts down the events, and so I think that has probably been the sector that's been hurt the most. And you know, they relied on those fans in the seats. And obviously those fixed overhead costs, they continue, and so that is an ongoing concern and might take the longest to recover based on how long we are with the restrictions.

Some of the other sectors have been able to have some life in terms of . . . I'm sure we'll talk about later on the tourism side and the camping business and folks getting out. That's part of what we do. I imagine there is some, some sort of outfitting. Not folks coming across the border from the States, but you know, there might be some activity in that area from locals. But you know, just those events being completely shut down, it has a big effect.

**Mr. McCall:** — What's the minister's sense of how income supports have been brought to bear from either the federal or from the provincial government throughout the sector? There are different supports on offer, and are they getting through and are they being subscribed in a way that is having the intended effect of tiding folks through the worst of the storm?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — I think in our country, the tourism sector is a seasonal business. We're trying to expand into that shoulder season. That's some of the things we've been trying to do. So I think in terms of provincial supports, we were able to listen, and from data collected by Tourism, some of the data we collected that the small-business support payment, the grant, didn't take into account of it being a seasonal business. And so that was a change that was made by our government to make sure that those folks that rely on seasonal business were able to get

those payments.

On the federal side my understanding is, through stakeholders, that some of the banks haven't been as flexible as the feds had hoped they would be in terms of deferring or helping out with the financing, particularly in the hotel sector, and so that is something we've raised as well.

I think something we've recently done provincially on the halting of commercial evictions for landlords that are interested in being a part of the federal program . . . And so anecdotally I've heard that's been well received within the business community, and of course that entails those tourism operators.

And so again, I think shifting that marketing as we talked about off the top, I know the chambers of commerce with help from the provincial government have focused on that buying local. I'm sure you've seen the commercials here in Regina for sure about that: buy local and stay local. And so those are some of the things I think we've been able to do for the sector, and you know, hopefully keep as many folks employed as we weather our way through this pandemic.

[16:00]

**Mr. McCall:** — Just as a supplementary to the start of the minister's response, is there any ability to quantify what the uptake has been from the sector for provincial resources? Like dollar figure or number of cases, any sort of quantification that moves it beyond the anecdotal?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Tourism wouldn't have that broken down at this point. Minister Harrison or Minister Harpauer in Finance might have a better sense of the scope of the money that's been put out and what individual sectors have been meted out to. So we don't have that in Tourism yet.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks for that, Mr. Minister, Just one last question, recognizing the precious fleeting time that we've got with you and Tourism Saskatchewan. In terms of the craft brewing industry in Saskatchewan — and again a file that I know the minister's got interest from a number of angles on it — is there any thought been given to, in aid of that sort of eating and drinking, means of baiting the hook for the staycation?

We've certainly got a great craft brewing industry in the province, and it would certainly put a nice ribbon around people staycations or touring about the different offerings that we have, you know, here in the prairie province of Saskatchewan — buying local, staying local, and maybe hoisting one local.

I know that the industry has an ask around different of the taxation that they are subject to. Is the minister involved himself on the file? And can the industry look to the minister as a champion to advance the great case that they're making?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Yes, thanks for that question. It's an important one. And you know, I think the craft sector on the spirits and the wine and the beer side has grown in Saskatchewan, and it's certainly a great story. And on the culinary side, you know, I think it's very interesting when you take a product that's grown right here in Saskatchewan in a wheat field and a rye field and it turns into this meal on your plate and this brew on your

table. That's pretty cool. And it's all about that value-add. And it's great to see that will be part of the local marketing campaign, and that is going to be part of that staycation part of it. And I know the experts will market that.

In terms of, I think you're talking about the production levy, we are always in contact. We're always listening to the craft sector. I know in 2016 we made substantial changes, SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] did on improving and changing some rules and getting rid of some red tape to help that sector grow. And we certainly have seen that.

And there's an ask in to myself as the minister, and we're certainly listening to that. And we'll take that suggestion very seriously about the different taxation levels that producers face in Saskatchewan and sort of take the lens that these are great local companies and how it fits all into the entire budget and the money coming into the GRF [General Revenue Fund]. But we've made changes before, and we'll look to see what we can do in the near future for that sector.

**Mr. McCall:** — I'll keep watching, Mr. Minister. All right. I think I've possibly reached the end of the time allotted for consideration. If not, I can keep going.

**The Chair:** — Well, if there's no more further questions on tourism, we can take a short recess to change out our officials and go on to Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Mr. McCall:** — Maybe just one quick question. I note with interest that you've got the chief of Flying Dust on the board for Tourism Saskatchewan, which I'm very glad to see. I think the Indigenous tourism sector . . . I'm sitting across from the member from Batoche who of course is not going to be able to style any jigging this summer at the Back to Batoche Festival. Perhaps he'll fill the void at home. We'll see how that goes. But now I'm getting myself into more trouble than I anticipated.

But in terms of the sector, and I think about what the summer means in terms of the powwow trail, and again the different Indigenous operators that we have throughout the province and the way that they're impacted by these COVID times. Is there any specific outreach or work that Tourism Saskatchewan is undertaking with the Indigenous tourism sector?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — For sure. I'll start off with a few comments and then Mary can add to those. So yes, we work closely with ITAC [Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada] and Mr. Henry, and there's great potential in that sector and great work already happening. If you think of Wanuskewin, you think of Dakota Whitecap, and there's a lot of optimism and momentum. I know Tourism signed an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with that organization earlier this year. And again, loads of potential, and may be sidetracked a little bit with the situation we're in, but I'm excited about it. And there's lots of good leadership in the province that are wanting to leverage that. But, Mary, go ahead.

**Ms. Taylor-Ash:** — Yes. The minister said we've signed a memorandum of understanding with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, and we have a very good relationship with them. We have also developed an Indigenous tourism . . . or they have developed, with co-operation from us, they have

developed an Indigenous tourism strategy for Saskatchewan. It was just released like, you know, March, some point in March when everything of course changed due to COVID-19. However we have been talking with them. We have a partnership around education and training. We do programs together there. We do development programs. We have also a program where we assist individual Indigenous tourism operators.

And also marketing. Jonathan Potts is one of the officials here and he's our executive director of marketing, and he's working with them as well on how we can support that sector jointly through our marketing campaign.

So yes, I'm pleased to say, especially in the last couple years, we have really started to work much closer with the Indigenous sector in our province, and largely based on there being a strong national association.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks for that, and thanks, Mr. Chair, for the extra question. Thank you, Minister, and officials.

**The Chair:** — Okay, we'll take a short recess and allow us to change out our officials. And we'll be back in 10 minutes? Five, five minutes? Five minutes is enough time? Okay.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**General Revenue Fund  
Parks, Culture and Sport  
Vote 27**

**Subvote (PC01)**

**The Chair:** — Good afternoon. We will now begin our consideration of vote 27, Parks, Culture and Sport, central management and services, subvote (PC01). Minister Makowsky, please introduce your officials and make any opening comments.

[16:15]

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you again, Mr. Chair. It's great to be here in front of the committee and to answer questions, potential questions for the estimates of Parks, Culture and Sport. In the room with me today is Twyla MacDougall. She is the deputy minister. Jennifer Johnson, parks division; Candace Caswell, stewardship division. And if we need to go into the bullpen, there's some officials out in the hallway because of the situation we find ourselves in with social distancing. So a few brief remarks to start out, Mr. Chair, if I could.

So our direction in the budget for '20-21 is focused on growth for better quality of life, fostering a strong economy, creating strong communities, strong families, and therefore a strong Saskatchewan. There is no doubt this fiscal year started off like no other with unprecedented challenges and uncertainties. Our government, like many others, is feeling the economic impact of the global pandemic. The world around us has changed. Big events for our province that we talked about just a little while ago that we were proud to support, such as the Junos, were cancelled. The RSM, Royal Saskatchewan Museum, has closed its doors. And the start date for camping in our provincial parks was postponed.

COVID-19 quickly altered the way we live and work in our province, and people are resilient, working hard to flatten that curve. The ministry of PCS [Parks, Culture and Sport] will continue to be a vital part of the recovery efforts in our province. Spending time outdoors is important for our health and mental well-being, particularly during these times. There's, in my opinion, not much better place than our provincial parks.

Under phase 1 of our reopen plan, provincial parks did open with a number of restrictions to ensure visitors and staff remain safe. Already some of those restrictions have been removed, and we'll continue to monitor and follow the advice of health officials as we make more and more amenities available. This year will be different. I think it'll be a memorable one for those attending our parks. Judging by our reservations so far, roughly 27,000, it's clear residents are eager to get out and experience the beauty that our parks have to offer.

Visitation satisfaction remains strong. Over the past 10 years, visitation has been increasing, and I'm pleased to say just under 4 million visitor days were recorded in 2019. As visitation continues to increase, providing a high-quality experience remains a priority. We want to ensure provincial parks' facilities and infrastructure systems meet the growing needs of our park visitors.

The ministry's capital program aligns with government's plan to invest in services, programs, and infrastructure that Saskatchewan people value today and into the future. Since '07, more than 127 million has been invested in capital, maintenance, and upgrades in our parks, and the '20-21 budget includes a further investment of 13 million for capital and 1.6 million for maintenance.

Some of the planned improvements include completion of the swimming pool at Buffalo Pound, campground service centre replacements at Pike Lake and Good Spirit, interior renovations at the Cypress Hills pool building, improvements to campground service centres, boat launches, and trails throughout the province. With further improvements, we look forward to continuing to enhance the visitor experience while ensuring safe and reliable park infrastructure.

As part of the recently announced stimulus funding, we are investing 3 million of the 13 million this year into renewal projects across the park system as part of the government's two-year capital plan to stimulate the province's economic recovery from the COVID-19 impact. Over the next few years we will build exciting new facilities for park visitors as well as renew existing facilities to improve campgrounds, water systems, visitor centres, roads, and day use facilities. Many of the planned stimulus projects will focus on improved access to park facilities for all visitors, including picnic sites and campsites, and improved facilities for visitors in day use areas. These investments support the government's mandate to enhance quality of life and grow tourism in our province.

I would note there are no changes to camping or entry fees in 2021. A basic camping holiday remains very affordable in our province.

Visitation is also on the rise at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. In '19-20 visitation was the highest in over four decades, with

over 175,000 people visiting. That's significant growth, up from 140,000 the year before. People came from near and far to see a new world-class exhibit featuring Saskatchewan's own Scotty. The home of the world's largest T. rex opened in May of last year.

In '20-21 the RSM will receive an increase of \$300,000 to support the development of a major new exhibit and to maintain facility and service levels in response with increased visitation.

While COVID-19 put a pause on the RSM's ability to deliver in-person experience, the RSM has continued to keep the public engaged with interesting, fun, and educational online programming. The RSM team has developed a long-term proposal to assist with improved care of sacred, culturally sensitive, and natural history collections. World-renowned scientists continue to impress at the RSM, and they really do important work on behalf of the people of our province.

We are investing \$120,000 new money in '20 and '21 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the client services branch provided by the heritage conservation branch. This investment will improve service to the various development sectors such as oil and gas and mining, while supporting the protection of heritage-sensitive sites.

On the arts, culture and sport and recreation side, flexibility is key and we are adjusting plans as needed. We're continuing to work with stakeholders to understand the support required to assist with COVID-19 recovering plans as well as the impacts on businesses due to potential future restrictions.

Since casinos closed down due to COVID-19, estimated profits are down significantly. To help we're providing a one-time emergency support payment of \$5 million to the Community Initiatives Fund.

We're working closely with Sask Sport to deliver federal emergency funding to provincial sports organizations. We will continue to advocate to the federal government as gaps in emergency funding are identified.

I'm pleased to say we will maintain the same funding levels for our institutions in these challenging times. We're providing advance funding to our revenue-generating organizations such as Wanuskewin Heritage Park, the Science Centre, and the Western Development Museum.

We're proud to continue supporting Saskatchewan's creative artists and artist organizations through our annual allocations for '20-21, which remains unchanged from the previous year. The ministry will again invest 6.6 million in the Saskatchewan Arts Board to keep our artist community alive and strong. We'll also continue to support Creative Saskatchewan by providing 7.3 million in '20-21. The investment will help grow the creative economy in our province, helping entrepreneurs and small businesses support product development, market development, and innovation.

As outlined in the growth plan, we'll also continue to work with Wanuskewin Heritage Park on their application process to become a UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] World Heritage site.

We're continuing to strengthen collaborations with our lottery partners. In '19-20 we partnered with Sask Sport to launch a joint marketing campaign to promote a healthy, safe, and respectful environment for all participants in amateur sport. The goal of the campaign was to help create awareness of valuable tools available to help coaches, athletes, and parents. The campaign was primarily online, but also resulted in the distribution of posters to 725 schools and 19 urban recreation departments. We'll continue to support the implementation of the Common Vision for physical activity in *The Framework for Recreation in Canada* through engagement of the provincial stakeholders.

Part of the FPT bilateral renewal agreement is continuing to support Indigenous communities, support development of Indigenous coaches and officials, and the Dream Brokers program through shared investments. The federal share through Sport Canada provides 2.2 million and the provincial share of 6.6 million is contributed by the lottery fund over a five-year agreement. The purpose of the funding is to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by responding to the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] Calls to Action around sport and reconciliation, numbers 87 through 91.

Program initiatives will increase sport opportunities for youth within the Aboriginal community. Aboriginal leadership will be strengthened, and coaching and officiating and community sport development will be enhanced through programming and to introduce new sports skills to children and youth.

We're renewing our funding of \$100,000 for a second year to support the important work of veterans service clubs across Canada. First launched last year, the service club support program provides grants to support much-needed repairs and upgrades to buildings and equipment. The program has been well received by the military and service clubs.

Francophone affairs branch will continue to be a liaison between the government and the province's francophone community. During the last few months, the branch has worked to translate information on COVID-19 into French, making it available to Saskatchewan citizens via the Government of Saskatchewan website. This supports both public health and the vitality of the francophone community in Saskatchewan.

While we continue to navigate these unprecedented times, the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport will be important to the pandemic recovery efforts as we continue to offer programs and services that contribute to a high quality of life for Saskatchewan residents.

With that brief introduction, I turn it over to the Chair, and we will be happy to answer any questions the committee might have.

**The Chair:** — Mr. McCall, I'm guessing that you have some questions.

**Mr. McCall:** — Excellent guess, Mr. Chair. We'll see if we can get anyone up at the podium for this round as well, you know, just to put that out there.

Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, officials. Welcome to the committee for the consideration of these estimates. I guess a first question is begged, and again, it's summer in Saskatchewan. I



grew up going to parks all across this province, and I'm sure I share that with a bunch of folks in this room, so my thoughts of course turn to the beach at Echo Lake and all the great things to do there. But in terms of the prohibition on beaches under the public health measures that were taken ushering forth from the COVID-19 efforts on the part of the government, it brings up to mind a broader question, which is how has the minister and Parks, Culture and Sport interfaced with the different measures that have been arrayed to fight COVID?

And what's the sort of feedback loop in terms of, I think of beaches for example, where other jurisdictions were at different places with the prohibitions that were in place or the opening up. And again, I appreciate that Canadian federalism being what it is, we've got all sorts of different regimes flying around. But how does the minister, how do officials interface with the COVID efforts? How is that structured?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Yes, thanks for the question. Good question. And so we essentially, just as every other ministry and essentially everyone in the province, we follow the health guidelines that come from the chief medical health officer and the medical experts within the province. And we have a list here of what is required of our staff within the parks to help keep folks safe out there.

And so we're always listening to feedback as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and park staff. We're always hearing back how things are going. But those basic guidelines that come from the medical community to keep us safe is what's most important as we go forward.

But I think I'll ask Jennifer to maybe talk about some of the things we've done in terms of the facilities within our parks as we comply with those guidelines.

**Ms. Johnson:** — Sure. Thanks. As the minister was saying, we have worked closely with health officials and followed the advice of health officials. We've also observed and followed what other jurisdictions were doing and provided that input into the entire feedback loop. And we've been working with TED [Trade and Export Development] and the business response team as well to seek feedback and also provide feedback so that we can continue to adjust our practices as needed.

Right from the very start, as you know, this is unprecedented and we were learning sort of day by day. But the safety of our staff and the safety of our visitors was the most important thing. And so right from the start we did things like we put those plastic shields up, both in our entry gates and in our park offices. We did enhanced cleaning everywhere.

We have signage up throughout our parks. So if you go to Echo you'll be able to see lots of signage. And we're asking our visitors to also help us, take responsibility, and follow all of the public health orders, etc. and just keep our parks as safe as possible.

And I can go through a lot more detail if you want on all of the various steps, but that's the gist.

[16:30]

**Mr. McCall:** — Well thank you for that. And congratulations, I think you're the first one on record to utilize the podium. So you know, nicely done.

But I guess one thing, you know, you think of beaches and then of course you think of the nice pool at Cypress Hills provincial park. And any sort of thought on when that might be opening? And then some broader questions about the staffing complement throughout Parks as a whole. And we'll certainly get to the rest of the ministry as a whole. Don't worry; we'll get there yet.

But if you could, what's the thinking on pools as relates to provincial parks?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. McCall, you mentioned at Cypress Hills provincial park, the pool facility. But I know the Chair will know very well about Buffalo Pound and the new facility we want to open this year to kids and families to be able to enjoy a dip in the pool at that provincial park. And I know many are looking forward to that.

So that will be in phase 4.1 and that has not been determined at this point. And of course based on work with again the medical community, when that date will be on and what parameters will be around that, I'm sure there'll be a lot of detail at that point as to what is going to be required if we get to that date, hopefully sooner than later. But what protocols will be needed, Parks will certainly follow those guidelines as we hopefully get there.

**Mr. McCall:** — Okay, thanks for that. In terms of the staffing complement that goes with parks, Parks traditionally has had a big seasonal component, and alongside that a big summer student component. What's the status of those jobs? How has that played out this year?

And again I think about it in terms of, you know, today's budget day. We've had a lot of pretty bracing news about the employment situation across the province, and that is true in spades for young people. So I'm sure those summer student jobs are all the more precious than ever. Any sort of information you can provide the committee on that front?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — So with the parks being delayed opening, that was delayed as well. We didn't have our full complement up to that, you know, not as early as we normally would. And so that part of it was delayed. So we ramp up and ramp down with the seasonal staff, as you talked about. But we're getting fairly close to, you know, what we call a normal contingent of folks working in the parks.

We talked about the pools. Lifeguards wouldn't be hired yet and we're waiting on that go-ahead to go with that. So I would say fairly close, but again we'll get Jennifer at the podium to maybe fill in some more details.

**Ms. Johnson:** — Yes, we were fortunate. You know, May long is traditionally when our camping season starts and that was just delayed to June 1st. So we did push back the start dates of most of our labour service staff just by the 10 days or so. And they come in waves, and so each wave we pushed off by about a week or 10 days depending on how many people we felt like we could bring back safely in the parks and all working alongside each other and have those safety protocols in place and time. However,

as the minister said, now we have almost our full contingent of staff back.

We are short a few interpreters because we aren't allowed to do large-group interpretive events or large-group just events. And we haven't hired back a full contingent of lifeguards yet because we still don't have a date for pools reopening. We had hired just a few and reassigned them to different duties just, you know, in case. We wanted to be prepared for whatever this season brought forward to us. But right now we are nearly at a full complement or contingent of staffing comparable to past years, and we'll bring back a few more too if we see more and more things reopen.

**Mr. McCall:** — I guess on the one hand there's the staggered sites occupation and then on the other hand, as you've well described, there are a lot of very labour-intensive activities that come with the new regime. So is that about balancing itself out on par? Or how's that going?

**Ms. Johnson:** — It seems to be. Although there's maybe less people total in the campgrounds themselves, we are doing enhanced cleaning, so cleaning the washrooms more often regardless of how many people are using them, cleaning picnic tables or high-touch surfaces, garbages, water fill stations, etc. So all of that is more work than it was before, again regardless of how many people are in the campground itself.

We're also putting up a lot more signage and then reviewing to make sure that signage is still up. You've seen what the wind has been doing lately, so you have to do campground checks pretty regularly to make sure all those signs are still up and in place. So it's been a pretty comparable workload despite having less people at this point in time in the parks. Although I will say, you know, there's probably not that many less people for this time of year. Often June isn't at full capacity because usually kids are in school and our parks are only busy on the weekends in June. So it's similar — you know, even occupancy — to past years at this point in time.

**Mr. McCall:** — Perhaps I've misunderstood something. But in terms of . . . How are visitors being deployed through the park? Are you, like you know, one site occupied, one site vacant? How's that . . .? That's how that's going. So what impact has that had on visitor numbers compared to the annuals?

**Ms. Johnson:** — So right now at this point in time, our occupancy is a little bit lower than past years. We just compared overall reservation numbers to previous years and we're down a little bit. However as we get closer and closer to July, we know with our 50 per cent occupancy, a lot of parks are right now over 90 per cent reserved in terms of what's available. So they will be very busy, although if we stay at the 50 per cent inventory, then we will be down from past years in terms of overall visitation by the end of the summer. But it seems, you know, it's changing weekly, so we're monitoring that.

**Mr. McCall:** — It's budget day and we're here for estimates, so I've got to ask you about the impact to budget and revenues that would be coming from the visitors. What is that anticipated to do, and how will that be reported out?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — So it's very difficult with a very fluid and moving situation, as to how much of an impact . . . Obviously

it's going to have an impact. As Ms. Johnson had mentioned, as we go into the peak seasons of July and some of those long weekends in July and August, if we're still at 50 per cent, you know, with the similar or same overhead cost, it will have an impact on the commercial revolving fund for sure.

And so hopefully, you know, that can be mitigated by having more folks stay into September a little bit more this year. But so much is up in the air at this point, I don't think we can put a number on it at this time. But no question, having a later start, although the numbers haven't been impacted massively to this point, but there's no question that there will be an impact. So I don't know if officials had anything to add on that, but that's something we'll have to deal with.

**Mr. McCall:** — As ever, we'll be watching and waiting to see how that goes. But thanks, Minister, for the rundown on the different capital projects off the top. A bit of a different spin, and again, we're glad to see those investments into these valuable public assets. Are there any assets slated for sale, anything being looked at for divestiture or privatization?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Of course we've used private lessees in the parks for decades and decades and under several governments. But in terms of selling any public assets, no, no plans for that.

**Mr. McCall:** — I've not got a great deal coming up on a dock in Middle Lake or anything like that or . . . Okay, all right.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — I guess you've got a 1 in 1.2 million share of it.

**Mr. McCall:** — There we go. That's the right answer. Over the years there have been different new parks brought forward. Are there any plans for new parks in the offing? How's the work that was undertaken around Pelly? How is that coming together in terms of consolidating some resources up there? Is that to bed? Is there anything new being anticipated? And then I'm spiritually obligated to ask you about Churchill River. But anyway if the Minister's got any insights on those matters.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — So I would say nothing planned in terms of new parks in the near future. Of course since we've been government, we've added Great Blue Heron Provincial Park around Prince Albert National Park, and the Porcupine Hills, as you mentioned, in eastern Saskatchewan there. And last year I was up at Porcupine Hills and as always, our provincial parks are so beautiful. It's unique space. I would say very little, if any, development has occurred there.

Each park in our system offers different things. Some are more recreationally focused and some are just peace and quiet, kind of leave things as they are. I would say Porcupine Hills would fall in the latter, and again not a lot of, if any, capital improvements that I can think of at this point.

**Mr. McCall:** — Just very quickly to that, Mr. Minister. In terms of back and forth with The Key First Nation, Cote First Nation, and Keeseekoose First Nation, there were different concerns that were being mooted if memory serves correct. Have those been satisfied? What's the status of that part of the file?

[16:45]

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — So yes, as part of my look-see up there, we had meetings with the First Nations you have mentioned, and they will be invited to be part of the park advisory group, I'll note, with the Great Blue Heron Provincial Park that's been put together by the government. But the park advisory group has . . . My understanding is it's worked well and so we envision working with those local stakeholders and moving that forward with an invitation to be part of that park advisory committee as we go forward. So always willing to work and listen and move that project forward together.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks for that, Mr. Minister. And Churchill River, specifically in and around Missinipe, Grandmother's Bay, the Otter Rapids — I know there's park sites on Devil Lake — it's a great spot. Great spot for sure.

But in terms of the broader question of stewardship and the way that some of these resources don't have much in the way of facilities . . . and it's sort of been, you know, like have at it in terms of the way that the resources are utilized. So when you have X number of wilderness campers and canoers going into a place like Barker Lake, which is just adjacent to Devil Lake up from Otter Rapids, that tends to pose some interesting challenges for having that many people in a place without resources.

I know there had been local efforts around better stewardship and provision of facilities. Different times there have been different answers on the part of the province in terms of involvement with those efforts. Could the minister provide an update as to where all that is at?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — I'll ask Jennifer Johnson, ADM [assistant deputy minister], to answer that.

**Ms. Johnson:** — So . . . pardon?

**Mr. McCall:** — Your first, second, and third time at the podium. Congratulations again.

**Ms. Johnson:** — We're keeping track. Thanks. We actually have a couple of new facilities up along that canoe route. They're called urine-diverting toilets. And I love working for Parks because you get to talk about bathrooms all the time. But these are actually an eco-friendly type of facility that diverts the urine and also diverts the other waste and so that it composts and goes back to nature more quickly. So those are two things that we did, two different toilets on two different areas. That's something that we did up for that area.

And we also have local maintenance contracts with some of the First Nations for some of the more remote sites also along those canoe routes. So it's important to us to keep the Churchill River and that entire area clean and usable and usable for back country campers or for people on canoe routes. Does that answer your question?

**Mr. McCall:** — In terms of involvement of Lac La Ronge Indian Band as the main involved First Nation, there's a community at Grandmother's Bay, there's a community at Stanley Mission. What sort of involvement do those communities have with the park advisory group as referenced earlier? Or is there any sort of

formal structural involvement on the part of those communities with parks Saskatchewan?

**Ms. Johnson:** — You know, I don't have all of those details with me, but I know we have different contracts with each of those that you've mentioned actually, depending on . . . And then we also in some cases hire them on, you know, short-term or one-off contracts. Like even when we go, say to Nistowiak Falls, we will work with the local First Nation and some of the people there that offer the tours or the guided boat tours to get through the rapids to the falls and that sort of thing.

We also, like I said, have local maintenance contracts. I don't have the details of each of those though. We could provide more on that if you need it afterwards. And they are also always included in the park advisory group; whether it's meetings, we send them invites and work with them on a number of local issues. The park manager for Lac La Ronge Provincial Park has a really good relationship with surrounding communities and local First Nations and works with them regularly.

**Mr. McCall:** — I guess lastly, if you get the minister up there shooting big Stanley Rapids or anything like that, just let me know. I'll come see. I'll come see all the looks he's got.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Yes. I'll find some extra-large water wings maybe for the adventure.

**Mr. McCall:** — I like your odds, Mr. Minister. Thanks for all of that, I guess, Culture and Sport and moving on through the portfolio. Again, glad to see that mainly it's been a hold-the-line approach through these times. There are different questions that are sort of begged to be asked about how the touring fund out of Creative Saskatchewan is being subscribed at this time. But you know, I guess we'll get to that soon enough.

But with Creative Saskatchewan, could the minister tell us with the committee what the heck is going on there with the CEO search? And how the leadership is being sorted out for that organization?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — So currently the leadership is being done by two internal candidates who have been there quite some time. That job competition has been posted and it is going through the process. And hopefully relatively soon the board will choose somebody.

**Mr. McCall:** — Okay. What's the sort of reporting back with the Arts Board, with Creative Saskatchewan in terms of, you know, where funds are being better utilized? Maybe where they're sort of sitting in the window, and nobody is really able to access them. What's the relationship between the ministry and the third parties in terms of making sure that these things are being best deployed?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — The ministry has always been involved with those decisions and what's happening with the Arts Board and Creative and, you know, looking at the expenditures and making sure things are done according to legislation and proper procedures. And those entities have had to adjust. You had mentioned there's not much travelling going on these days, and so they've moved some things and redeployed some things, you know, to be nimble with the current situation we find ourselves in.

So I would say quite a strong working relationship with the ministry. And as minister, I talk with the board chairs in a regular manner.

**Mr. McCall:** — So is the minister making suggestions or giving direction in terms of internal reallocations? Or is that, you know, the envelope of funding is provided and those decisions are left to the best insights of the organizations?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Yes. So the board, and with work from the CEO, they make those decisions. And of course there's guidelines in the legislation, I believe, so they follow those as to what they can grant those monies out to. So that's not the minister's purview. That's left to those institutions.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks for that, Mr. Minister. One thinks of the great work — and you know, we've touched on this a few different ways now — in terms of the Junos and the great showcase that afforded for particularly an organization like SaskMusic. There are parts of the creative sector that are harder hit than others. What sort of recognition is there in terms of trying to marshal supports? And are there any plans that are forthcoming for parts of the sector that are harder hit than the others so that you can have artists continue to make art and come out the other side of this not having had to turn their back on their vocation?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — You're right, artists have been impacted by this pandemic we find ourselves in. You know, I think the ministry and those two institutions we had talked about earlier, Creative and the Arts Board, as you mentioned before, received their full funding allocation. And so that will help that sector in getting, front-loading some of the money out the door to help when things were really shut down.

I know a lot of artists are entrepreneurs, and they find a way to adjust and, you know, fight their way through it. I've seen online concerts. And you know, Saskatchewan Country Music Awards going through online. And so they're resilient, as I had mentioned before, on the tour side. And so they'll adjust the way they go through their careers and how they get through it with funding from the government through those granting agencies. I'm told some of them will be able to apply and receive the small business payment as well and helping them through some of the federal programming.

There's a \$500 million grant to organizations on the sports side but also on the arts and culture side. And we'll work to advocate to the federal government to make sure it's flexible. And some of the issues that we have been running into, for example on the Sask Sport side, not all of the organizations have a CRA [Canada Revenue Agency] number I'm told, and so Sask Sport does the payroll for dozens and dozens of organizations. And so that becomes a bit of a thing to be able to get those federal dollars flowing down, right down to the front lines. So we'll continue to make that case at the federal level.

But you know, you're right. That sector's been hard hit. But again, keeping those two institutions whole, I think, will go a long way.

[17:00]

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks for that, Mr. Minister. And I guess one thing I'd be interested in . . . and I wish the minister well with the efforts around, you know, CRA numbers and better connecting with, you know, federal offerings. We'll be interested to see what the uptake is on the small business loan program.

But I guess, like as a coach and as a former athlete, any observations on how this is impacting team sport right across the province and amateur sport? I'm thinking about as well, you know, the pushback with the Olympics and athletes and teams, that this should be some of the best time of their lives, and the sort of heartache and heartbreak involved in having those dreams put off.

Now I know that there's nothing that the minister can do about that, but is there any sort of recognition of that dynamic on the part of bodies like Sask Sport and any sort of conscious efforts being undertaken to do everything we can to . . . And you know, some of these sports, you don't get those years back. And the clock's always ticking, God knows.

But I guess any general observations on the way that the ministry can partner alongside all the different minor sports organizations, amateur sport, professional sport. Any observations that the minister might have on that front, we'd be interested in.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Well as you mentioned, Mr. McCall, this is certainly near and dear to my heart. I've been involved with sports since I was a youngster and I was fortunate enough to be involved with sports for a long time in my life and now I'm a coach for my kids. It's so important to our communities and our province, and to be able to cheer on our kids is, well, something I live for and to see them compete.

And I'm sure it has a toll, anecdotally you know, kids wanting to be out with friends and competing, and that's just what kids do. And so I know it's very frustrating. It's very difficult. It's heartbreaking when those athletes who train so hard — I think of the Canada West football season and all those athletes with the Rams and the Huskies — and they and the coaches have put in so much work.

This pandemic has a lot of — what's the word? — tentacles in all aspects of our lives, but this is one of them. And as you mentioned, you're right, athletes only have so much . . . It's such a short window and it's done in a blink of an eye, you know, doing a thing you love. And it seems to go very, very quick.

So I know so many athletes are very anxious to get going, to at least have some training. So with the opening of the gyms I think there's been some level of that being able to go ahead, and that's great. And, you know, maybe not competing against other teams, and we may be a ways off on competing against teams in other provinces and interprovincial travel and national travel and all the rest of it, but at least being out practising your sport is something and something to be had and something that helps those kids in particular. And just being out there, you know, training is something that's so important to those athletes.

From the ministry's perspective, of course we have the lottery fund which is the, in my opinion, one of the best things we do in government, and I know it's envied across the nation. There's not that political involvement or ad hoc grants from year to year. It's

just set aside.

And there's wonderful things being done on the sports side and also the culture side and from the parks and rec department as well. Those cultural camps and those band camps and all the rest of it have been affected. So I naturally think of the sport angle for obvious reasons, but you know, I've been to so many events where it's not sports. It's kids in band; it's kids in, you know, art camps and all the rest of it. I've certainly grown to appreciate that being in this role. So these are all affected.

And you know, the lottery fund, Sask Sport, there's been a decrease, a little bit of decrease in the amounts available based on lottery play. That has been down roughly 10 per cent. The trustees have done a wonderful job in having a reserve fund, so that hopefully the programming in the months and years to come will be sort of levelled out as we go along.

But I know Sask Sport has been giving guidance to those individual sport groups — the Football Saskatchewan, the Basketball Saskatchewan, the Baseball Saskatchewan — listening to those folks and getting information, giving information, and working with those and trying to work on those guidelines with the business response team and those agencies trying to come up with a safe return to play.

And so I appreciate your comments and those . . . We'd love to see sports back as quickly as possible, keeping in mind the health of our athletes and doing things in a way we can all be safe out there in our province.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks for that, Mr. Minister. On the Community Initiatives Fund in particular, what is the minister's sense of how it's operating right now? And are they taking application for grants? I was provided a response from the CIF [Community Initiatives Fund] around one of the music camps, as the minister referred to, where they're not taking applications right now. Does the minister have anything to get on the record regarding the current operation of the Community Initiatives Fund and when that might be slated to return to normalcy?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — We'll ask Candace Caswell to get up to the podium so there's not just one official at the podium to talk about the CIF.

**Ms. Caswell:** — Candace Caswell. The CIF has been doing a lot of work to adjust their granting programs. So they do two intakes in February and April that run through a lot of the summer season.

Their April intake they adjusted slightly to take in less grants, knowing that there would be less demand because of the COVID restrictions because it would cover a lot of summer camps. And they wanted to make sure that there was enough money available in the next intake, which would be October.

But they were also looking at overall, without the additional funding of the \$5 million, they probably would have had to reduce October's intake. And then looking at the next February intake might be eliminated because they don't have enough reserves to cover off both of those intakes without any casino revenue coming in.

**Mr. McCall:** — There's a whole series of questions about the emergency payment to sort out, in part, the loss of casino revenue. But perhaps I'll save that for SaskGaming or perhaps for SLGA and get my SLGA critic to bootleg it in through the GFA [gaming framework agreement] or something like that. But anyway, thank you for the answer.

And I guess I've also got a question on behalf of music teachers in terms of the restrictions on in-person teaching for voice, brass, and woodwind studios, now that piano and string teachers have had the go-ahead. Minister, have any insights on those matters?

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Unfortunately Mr. McCall, no immediate answer on that aspect. Of course just like anything else, you know, we'll look at it and maybe bring something back. But of course, guidelines come out based on, you know, as we go through the pandemic and try and get answers out. For every, you know, guideline you put in there, there's always changes as we go through it, and maybe something you hadn't thought of before, and you have to think about that as well.

So as we go along, this is kind of the — what's the right word? — stickhandling we go through on some of these parameters and guidelines that will be ultimately guided by the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] and the medical community. And so we will endeavour, if we can, to get an answer for that particular part of our youth activity sector.

**The Chair:** — Seeing we're at the end of our time, Minister, would you have any closing comments?

[17:15]

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Sure, I would. Thank you, very briefly thank you for all the hard work that many in the public sector have done with certainly no road map. We haven't been through this before, and all the hard work and the agility to make changes and work through these unprecedented times is very, very much appreciated by the government and the ministers. And thanks for your diligence as we go through this. And I would like to say to those folks that are not running on this committee again, thank you for your service to the people of Saskatchewan, if I don't get a chance to say it publicly. So thank you. Thanks for the committee's time this afternoon.

**The Chair:** — Mr. McCall, any closing comments?

**Mr. McCall:** — I think that's me.

**A Member:** — That is.

**Mr. McCall:** — I think I'm the only one, process of elimination being what it is. But thanks for that, Minister. And thank you for this time we've had here together. And officials and, of course, through you to all the great men and women doing the work for Parks, Culture and Sport, making this province go around. So have a good day.

**The Chair:** — I'd like to also add my thanks to all the officials that were here, the minister and the committee members as well as Hansard and our Legislative Assembly staff. This now, we will adjourn . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We're recessing till six? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay. Our committee will now

recess until 6 p.m.

[The committee recessed from 17:16 until 18:00.]

**The Chair:** — Welcome back, committee members. Any substitutions? I guess we have . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, she's a member of the committee. Okay.

This evening we will be considering five bills: Bill No. 187, *The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2019*; Bill No. 189, *The Coroners Amendment Act, 2019*; Bill No. 195, *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*; Bill No. 196, *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019*; and Bill No. 194, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019*.

**Bill No. 187 — *The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2019/Loi modificative de 2019 sur l'administration des successions***

**Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — We will now be considering Bill No. 187, *The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2019*, a bilingual bill. Clause 1, short title. Minister Morgan, if you could please introduce your officials and make your opening comments.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am joined tonight by Maria Markatos, senior Crown counsel, legislative services branch; Darcy McGovern, director, legislative services branch; and Clint Fox, my chief of staff.

I want to thank the building staff, I want to start out, for the work that they've done trying to accommodate the distancing processes that we've been having to go through. I know it's a lot of extra work to measure, clean, and do everything else. So I know it's not an easy process to go through. All the people in the building, I want to say thank you.

I'm pleased to be able to offer opening remarks concerning Bill 187, *The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2019*. This bill implements recommendations made by the Public Guardian and Trustee. The bill amends *The Administration of Estates Act* to repeal the official administrative provisions, which were moved to *The Public Guardian and Trustee Act* in a separate English bill.

The bill also adds two provisions. One provision is moved from *The Public Guardian and Trustee Act* and requires that executors and administrators notify the Public Guardian and Trustee where a minor or dependent adult has an interest in an estate. The second new provision sets clear guidelines for when an executor or administrator may be removed.

The bill also implements changes recommended by court services, including to amend the wills registry provision to permit but not require the local registrar to accept wills, and to update application fees to recover the cost of processing probate applications. The review of fees associated with the administration of estates is the final part of the court fee review project.

Mr. Chair, with those opening remarks I welcome your questions respecting Bill 187, *The Administration of Estates Amendment*

*Act, 2019*.

**The Chair:** — Are there any questions? Ms. Sarauer.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Minister, for your opening remarks. I just have a few questions for you. I understand a lot of these changes flow out of recommendations from the Public Guardian and Trustee's office. Was there any other consultation that occurred with respect to these changes?

**Ms. Markatos:** — Thank you for the question. Maria Markatos, legislative services. A consultation document was circulated to interested stakeholders, including the Canadian Bar Association, Saskatchewan branch of the Law Society, Regina and Saskatoon Estate Planning Councils, credit unions, trust companies, the Canadian Bankers Association, and individual lawyers who have expertise in this area.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Ms. Markatos. How many responses did you receive to that consultation request?

**Ms. Markatos:** — We received, I don't remember the exact number, but between five and ten.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. Were there any recommendations made by the Public Guardian and Trustee office that aren't included in this bill and, I suppose, what would be the accompanying bill that had already been passed, *The Public Guardian and Trustee Amendment Act*?

**Ms. Markatos:** — All of the recommendations made by the Public Guardian and Trustee are either incorporated into this bill or Bill 188.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. This bill is repealing and replacing the definition of capacity. Can you speak a bit as to why this is occurring?

**Ms. Markatos:** — Sure. Capacity is already defined in *The Administration of Estates Act* in two sections. It's defined in section 20 and also section 50.1, and the definitions are very similar. They cover the same scope. The reason that the definition is now being repealed from those sections and added to section 2 is because new section 4.1, which talks about notice to the Public Guardian and Trustee, requires notice where there's an adult who lacks capacity or appears to lack capacity. So to make sure that that one definition applied to the entire Act, it's being moved to the beginning.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — So just so I understand, the replacement, this new definition of capacity, is the same as the old definition of capacity. It's just moving to a more appropriate portion of the legislation?

**Ms. Markatos:** — Yes.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — The changes in or the addition of section 4.1 that you had just alluded to, how were the interests of those who lacked capacity dealt with prior to this change?

**Ms. Markatos:** — So this is an existing provision in *The Public Guardian and Trustee Act*. It's section 42, and it requires that the Public Guardian and Trustee be given notice where there's an

application for letters, and there is a dependant adult who might have an interest in that estate. A dependant adult is defined in that Act to mean an adult for whom the Public Guardian and Trustee acts as property guardian.

But in practice the Public Guardian and Trustee receives inquiries all the time, anecdotally: we think there's somebody who might lack capacity. Should we give you notice? Are we required to? And they're always given notice in those cases.

So the recommendation from the Public Guardian and Trustee was to move the provision to this Act of general application so that if there is a layperson who's applying for letters they would see it instead of having to dive into *The Public Guardian and Trustee Act*.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — So in a sense it's to make it more visible for the public?

**Ms. Markatos:** — Yes.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Section 14.1. Is this a codification of what is already being done?

**Ms. Markatos:** — Well the court has the power under this Act to revoke letters, and under the common law they have the power to remove an executor or an administrator if that application is made. But it isn't actually spelled out in this Act, and the court has been relying on a now-defunct provision in the old trustee Act to remove executors. So that there's no question that they can do so — and there again is somewhere for people to turn and look to and say, okay how can an executor be removed and in what sort of circumstances — the recommendation was to add this provision.

And it's in line with all of the other jurisdictions. Most other jurisdictions across Canada have a specific provision about the removal of an executor or administrator.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — So it's not that executors weren't being removed up to this point. It's that courts sort of had to struggle to find . . . This just provides more clarity to the power that they have. Is that correct?

**Ms. Markatos:** — That's right, yes.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Now this bill is moving the fee structure from the regulations to the Act. Could you explain why that's occurring?

**Ms. Markatos:** — The fees right now that are set out in the Act are the probate fees, or the levy that's required to be paid on the value of an estate. Those will continue to be in the Act. They're in section 52 right now. They'll be in a new section 51(2). The new addition will be that every application to the court for letters probate or letters of administration will have an application fee attached to it to cover the court expenses of going through that application and filing it.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Right. So 51(2) is the probate fees?

**Ms. Markatos:** — As existing, yes.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — As existing. 51(1) is the new application fee.

**Ms. Markatos:** — Yes.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Okay. How much is that application fee going to be?

**Ms. Markatos:** — The application fee will be prescribed in the regulations which we're working on right now. And we'll have to consult with court services, but it'll be in line with the other types of application fees for a statement of claim or — I don't know if a notice of application requires a fee — but a notice of application. But the court services, they want their fees to be reflective of the actual costs of providing the service, so it will be based on cost recovery.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Could you give an estimate as to at this point in time how much fees are, for example, notice of application and the like?

**Ms. Markatos:** — I don't have those numbers. There is an application fee right now in the regulations for a small estate application, and that's set at \$30.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Okay.

**Ms. Markatos:** — I don't know if there will be an increase to that or not, but that gives you an idea.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Has the ministry looked at how this might impact access to justice, this addition of an application fee for this sort of matter?

**Ms. Markatos:** — I know that court services is looking at that. This is really their piece, and I don't want to pass it off to them, but we were limited in the number of people we could bring today. But I could certainly find that out and provide that information.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. I have no further questions.

**The Chair:** — Seeing no further questions, clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 18 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2019*, a bilingual bill.

I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 187, *The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2019*, a bilingual bill, without amendment.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont so moves. Is that agreed?

2019.

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 189 — *The Coroners Amendment Act, 2019***

**Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — We will now be considering Bill No. 189, *The Coroners Amendment Act, 2019*. We will begin our consideration of clause 1, short title. Minister Morgan, please introduce your officials and make any opening remarks.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am joined this evening by Neil Karkut, senior Crown counsel, legislative services branch, Ministry of Justice and Attorney General; Darcy McGovern, director of legislative services branch; Clive Weighill, Chief Coroner, Saskatchewan coroners service; as well as my staff in the office here.

[18:15]

I will offer opening remarks regarding Bill 189, *The Coroners Amendment Act, 2019*. This bill will update *The Coroners Act, 1999* to implement recommendations from the review of the Office of the Chief Coroner that was completed by Mr. Weighill in 2018 together with further improvements that have been identified by the Saskatchewan Coroners Service. The proposed changes will grant the Chief Coroner authority to appoint coroners rather than the minister. The changes will also allow an inquest coroner to make recommendations at the conclusion of an inquest in concert with a jury. Both sets of changes are based on recommendations from the review.

In addition to these legislative changes, numerous recommendations were implemented through policy, including creating a mass-fatality plan, initiating regular training for community coroners, and holding regular meetings with organizations such as the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police.

In addition to changes arising from the review, the Coroners Service provided a number of further recommendations that are included within this bill. Some of these changes include allowing family members of a deceased to request a review by the Chief Coroner of a coroner's decision not to hold an inquest, allowing coroners to reopen investigations in certain cases where new evidence arises, allowing for the appointment of a deputy chief coroner and regional supervising coroners.

Mr. Chair, at this time I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Mr. Weighill for carrying out the review of the Coroners Service and for his ongoing service as Chief Coroner. I might add that he conducted a review of our Coroners Service, made a number of detailed recommendations including hiring a new full-time Chief Coroner and then promptly applied for the job himself. So in spite of the fact that it's clearly a made-to-measure job for him, we thank him for his very good service on this.

Mr. Chair, with those opening remarks, I welcome any further questions respecting Bill 189, *The Coroners Amendment Act*,

**The Chair:** — Ms. Sarauer.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Minister, for your opening remarks. Minister, you spoke about this bill being reflective of some of the recommendations that came out of the review of the Office of the Chief Coroner. Could you provide some detail as to why that review occurred?

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — We initially engaged Chief Weighill to do a review. It was commissioned by Gordon Wyant when he was the minister, but it was as a result of concerns raised that the process to determine whether an inquest was to be held or not held was not made or made at, sort of, the right parameters in mind. So we felt it was appropriate to create powers around that individual.

The other factors that he looked at were the staff and resources around the technical facilities, the lab facilities that are used by the Chief Coroner. And I understand that those have been addressed or dealt with and the Chief Coroner is now able to, I think, carry out his functions in a manner that the public would have a greater deal of confidence than they might have before.

I don't have a lot other to add. I don't know whether former chief Weighill wants to add anything to that or not, but . . .

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Because of specific events that occurred that required this recommendation, you had mentioned that there were some concerns from the public around whether or not an inquest was being or not being ordered.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — It was before my time in the portfolio, but I think at that time people raised issues in the press or in the media that there should or should not be inquests being held. And it was a matter of wanting to have a better or more thorough process in conducting the inquest. But I couldn't point to a specific one.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — I'm not sure if Mr. Weighill has more information.

**Mr. Weighill:** — Clive Weighill, Chief Coroner for the province. Just to follow up to the minister's answer, with one of the amendments that's before you tonight, we'll bring forward that if a family is not satisfied with the result of not having an inquest, they can have a formal review done by the Chief Coroner. And the Chief Coroner must within 60 days in writing reply to the family why or why not they're going to have an inquest.

So I think we've been trying to answer that question in a real open and transparent way to the families.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. Would you say, Mr. Weighill — sorry that you were walking away from the microphone and I'm talking to you again — that that was the . . . as someone who we have the pleasure of someone . . . The person who conducted the review and the Chief Coroner is also here in one person. Since you also conducted the review, would you say that was the main concern you heard from members of the public when you were doing your review?



**Mr. Weighill:** — There were different concerns as we still run into, you know, once in a while now. We're going to do an autopsy on a person and the person says no, I don't want my family member to have an autopsy. Or we've run into the reverse — we don't think we should do an autopsy, and the family wants an autopsy.

So we're running into those situations where we're trying to deal with families. And we've hired a family liaison consultant to work with families now so that when we have these small disagreements, we have somebody that can meet with the family so they don't have to come up against a big bureaucracy to try and get their issues solved.

And also with inquests, a lot of people don't understand the reason for an inquest. They're looking to find fault. And so once again the family liaison consultant will work with the families and be with the families right through the inquest, leading up to the inquest, so the family understands what they can expect and what may be expected from the inquest.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. As you have already mentioned, there have been a number of changes to that office over the past few years. Are there plans on any further changes? Or is this legislation the conclusion of the work and the recommendations?

**Mr. Weighill:** — Would you like me to give you a quick rundown of some of the changes?

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Love to, yes.

**Mr. Weighill:** — Okay. We've reached an agreement with the Saskatchewan Health Authority. They run the Roy Romanow Lab. We don't have a forensic laboratory in Saskatchewan to do our toxicology; most provinces do. We now have an agreement thankful to the funding that we received in last year's budget where we'll be upgrading the toxic day lab to a forensic toxicology laboratory at the Roy Romanow Lab.

We had requests for additional training for our community coroners. We have about 75 lay coroners around the province. The training for them was inadequate. So we have a learning and development coordinator we've hired, and we're running sessions of training for our community coroners now.

We've hired another additional forensic pathologist. In fact he just flew into Canada from the United States today and got cleared for his visa. He'll be starting up in Saskatoon with us in the first week of July.

I mentioned the family liaison consultant.

We've hired a policy researcher. All our policy was on paper, so it will be upgraded now and be put on electronic version so that our community coroners can access from wherever they are in the province for up-to-date policy.

Identifying clothing for our coroners when they're at the scene so people, police, and the family know who the coroner is.

Any recommendations that we have from inquests now were put on the website, and the people or agency that are named in those recommendations are asked to give their answer back to us. And

that's put on the website as well too, to see what they're doing with those recommendations.

The amendments for *The Coroners Act* we're here for this evening.

A mass fatality plan has been created and run out to all our community coroners.

We've done a lot of Indigenous education training for all our staff.

And we have a fee-for-service inquest council that conducts all our inquests for us now and runs our inquests so we have that continuity now when we have inquests.

So those are probably the big building blocks that we have right now.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. A lot of good work done over the last little while here. Moving forward, are there more plans that you have for changes to the coroner's office?

**Mr. Weighill:** — The biggest change coming up would be in our pathology area. Right now we share resources with the Saskatchewan Health Authority. Our pathologists work out of hospitals in Regina and Saskatoon, and we use the Saskatchewan Health Authority staff for administration, for the pathology assistants that helps to do the autopsies, and admin stuff.

So that's putting a real burden on the Saskatchewan Health Authority now with their budget because we're using all their resources. And as we use their resources, they're not doing the clinical medicine they should be doing, looking at cancer biopsies and things along that line.

So we're trying to work out. I've had a review done of our pathology services. I asked the Chief Coroner, Matt Bowes, from Nova Scotia. He came in and gave us a review of our whole pathology services. I've just shared that now with the Saskatchewan Health Authority and we're looking at about a four- or five-year stage to equalize their services within pathology.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. Are there any further recommendations out of the review that still need to be implemented in legislation? Or is this the conclusion for the legislation?

**Mr. Weighill:** — These will be the ones for legislation. There will be some regulatory changes. All the payments for coroners and for transportation and all those things are all within the regulations. So once we get the Act passed, we'll be putting some recommendations forward for the regulations as well too.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Okay, thank you. Are there any plans to implement any measures to ensure that recommendations from inquests are followed through? Other than the addition to transparency on the website and the request that they respond to the recommendations, is there any plans for ensuring that those recommendations are in fact implemented?

**Mr. Weighill:** — Not at this time. I think as most of us are aware,

there is no legislative authority for us to mandate that they do the recommendations. We're hoping by us putting them on the website which would then create an atmosphere where they should respond to our recommendations, so that it's all in the public as well too.

And I have to say, for every inquest that we've had since I've been here, every recommendation that we've put on the website, we've had an answer back from those agencies on what they're going to do with that recommendation.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Does your office have the . . .

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I could reply to that in a little bit more detail if you like. We make a distinction between the role of the coroner's office and the role of the legislature. The role of the coroner's office is to make the recommendations. The recommendations are made public. They're posted online and often accompanied by a news release. We don't think it's within the proper purview of the coroner's office or the Chief Coroner to make rulings that would be either judicial rulings or be legislative rulings.

So we think the accountability comes once the recommendations are made, and then it's up to government to ensure that they're mandated. And I think what you heard tonight was that they invariably have been so far, and our expectation is in most cases they would be.

But it's certainly a possibility that a recommendation might come that, for whatever reason government wouldn't want to, and then that would be a government accountability issue.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Minister. And I will be sure to hold you and your government accountable for the recommendations that Mr. Weighill's office makes. I'll keep that in mind for estimates on Wednesday.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I'll expect nothing less.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Weighill, does your office have the capacity to follow up? Like you said, all of the recommendations that you have made have received answers from various, typically, ministries as to how they're going to follow through with those recommendations. Does your office have the capacity to then check back, essentially, in a few months to see if those recommendations and the response that you've received has actually been followed through?

**Mr. Weighill:** — No, we haven't checked back. We're relying on you getting a minister or the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] or a police service that says they're going to do something. We don't go back and check to make sure they've done.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. Now I want to ask specifically about clause 19, subsection 37(1), which is repealing that section and replacing it with new verbiage which is, as you know, making it a little bit more difficult for third parties to be able to participate in inquests. Can you provide some information as to why this change is being made?

**Mr. Karkut:** — Neil Karkut, Ministry of Justice. So in recent

years they've seen a number of inquests that've drawn significant public attention. And while it's recognized that the results of the inquest can have an important impact on many of those groups, that needs to be balanced with the inquest process and ensuring that it focuses on the individual who is deceased and those who are connected to the deceased, such as the family members.

This change, which follows through with what some other jurisdictions have done, achieves a balance between ensuring that those individuals who are connected with the deceased — and I'll touch on that a little bit too — have an opportunity to participate in the inquest while, I guess, balancing out an overly, very time- and cost-intensive process.

I know that there's been some concerns raised and I just want to note that groups that . . . We use the language "a substantial and direct interest." Groups that have demonstrated specialized knowledge and expertise that is relevant to the inquest — so for example the John Howard Society of Saskatchewan or the Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan — would still be expected to fall within those standards and would still be expected, ultimately at the discretion of the coroner, but they're meant to be included within that standard and would still be eligible to play a role in the inquest within their respective specialized expertise.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Do family of the deceased receive access to free legal counsel for the inquest?

[18:30]

**Mr. Weighill:** — Clive Weighill from the Coroners Service. We're the only province that pays for families. We're the only province that pays for families to come to an inquest. We will provide funding for them if they have to travel. We pay mileage. We pay their hotel and meals while they're at the inquest, for two people from the family. And if they can't afford a lawyer, we will pay some towards a lawyer to prepare for standing for them, to prepare before the inquest and to be with them during the inquest. Once again, we're the only province that does that voluntarily.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — How much do you provide financially for that lawyer?

**Mr. Weighill:** — We pay \$100 an hour for three days' preparatory time, and \$100 per hour for every hour they're at the inquest. That's the same amount of money that's paid for the inquest counsel and the inquest coroner.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Who are automatic parties to inquests?

**Mr. Weighill:** — There are no automatic. An inquest is similar to a trial where the coroner is a judge, and so the coroner has complete authority over that inquest. So the people have to come forward and request standing, and the coroner will then grant standing. Usually for a family that's done all the time. That's not a problem at all. We like to have a family have standing if that's preferable for them.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Do families sometimes not get standing?

**Mr. Weighill:** — Sometimes families don't ask for standing.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — They don't ask. But if they ask for it, they are granted?

**Mr. Weighill:** — If they ask for it. And we always tell them up front that if they need help for standing, we'll help them out with that.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Have there ever been instances where families have been at inquests and aren't able to obtain counsel? Are they representing themselves?

**Mr. Weighill:** — In my tenure as the Chief Coroner that has never happened. We've always, I think, almost everyone has had standing. Anybody that has asked for standing has received it.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Okay. As you had alluded to, Mr. Karkut, this section in particular has raised concerns from the Elizabeth Fry Society and the John Howard Society who have done a lot of work on many inquests in the past and are very concerned about the restriction this could impose on not only their organizations, but organizations like them because we don't know what sort of organizations will be needed and created in the future.

I want to read a portion of a letter that was provided to your office, Minister, by Pierre Hawkins of the John Howard Society, dated November 22nd, 2019, just for the record, expressing the concerns that the John Howard Society has with respect to this provision. And from what I understand in speaking with the Elizabeth Fry Society, although they haven't provided a similar letter, they are very supportive of the concerns that have been stipulated by Mr. Hawkins.

And in this letter, he says:

The John Howard Society of Saskatchewan is concerned that the proposed language, which restricts the coroner's discretion to grant standing, will reduce the perspective, expertise, and assistance available to the coroner and jury in discharging their responsibilities under the Act. Restricting the coroner's discretion to grant standing could therefore reduce the effectiveness of coroner's inquests.

And that's the end of that quote from the letter.

Could you provide some detail as to why you would be adding language in the legislation that could possibly reduce the perspective, expertise, and assistance available to the coroner and jury in discharging their responsibilities under the Act?

**Mr. Karkut:** — Okay, I'll start with that, and Mr. Weighill may weigh in as well. And as I noted before, an organization that has demonstrated that they have expertise and knowledge in a specific area — and as we noted, the John Howard Society and Elizabeth Fry Society would be two good examples of that; not necessarily the only organizations, but two notable examples — the intention is that those organizations would still be able to take part and have standing in the inquest process.

And this is where Mr. Weighill might be able to step in, where you may see organizations that aren't necessarily, are a little bit more on the fringe of what the topic is actually about, or where we want to make sure there is some standards for who can receive standing in that type of situation. And I don't know if you would

like to . . .

**Mr. Weighill:** — Sure. Clive Weighill. When we were doing our research across Canada and specifically in the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia, we've seen a trend where very left or very right wing organizations are requesting standing. And they really have nothing to with the specifics of the case, anything substantial with the case, and they're grandstanding and holding up the inquest for their own political gain and their own political message. That's the reason that we've asked for that, so that doesn't happen in Saskatchewan.

I met personally with Mr. Pierre Hawkins, who is the legal counsel for the John Howard Society, and worked with correspondence to the Elizabeth Fry Society to assure them that this will not affect their standing one iota. They're a very well-recognized organization within the province of Saskatchewan and Canada, and they do have a part to play in this. This has nothing to do with the effectiveness of them assisting us with an inquest.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I think in fairness where the landing spot on this was chosen to be was that you didn't want to have it wide open so that anyone could appear. And I appreciate the reasons for wanting it to be open and have anybody that's got anything meaningful. But if it is completely wide open, the process may be coming to the point where family members or people that have got personal issues with the process may lose them because it may be something that goes on for weeks or months because of a rider. And I don't want to criticize those that might or those that might not seek standing.

Mr. Karkut mentioned specifically the good work that's done by John Howard and EFry, and I certainly agree with that and support that. And there may be a number of other entities or institutions that come along. But if you left it wide open, you don't know where it's going to go to. So the proper entity that determines that should be the coroner that's conducting the inquest and make the determination. Yes, these would be the ones who we would allow. This one would be virtually something that you'd see as an automatic or close to an automatic one. But you would in each case say okay, you know, go through the process that's there.

So when the letter was written I met with Coroner Weighill and I think I spoke to, I think, member Sproule and just had sort of a brief discussion as to, you know, where we wanted to go with it. And I think after the discussion I had I was satisfied that leaving the discretion with the coroner was the right decision. And I understand people may differ and want it to be wide open, but we just don't . . . I'm just not there.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — I know in speaking with the John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society they are appreciative of the conversation, Mr. Weighill, that you have had with them in assuring them about the support of the work that they do and the continued involvement that they will have in inquests. They are concerned about, still, about the wording "direct and substantial interest," as it's stipulated in this legislation, and the impact that it could have in the future in not just the work that they do, but other organizations.

They're also concerned about the assurance that the legislation

won't necessarily . . . not that the legislation won't apply to them, but that they will be granted standing in the future and the concern about how the legislation could perhaps be interpreted in the future against them if we have, for example, a different Chief Coroner, a different Minister of Justice.

And I think my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Centre, has said once, when you're writing legislation you should say what you mean and mean what you say. And I think that's appropriate in this conversation that we're having as to ensuring that organizations like John Howard and Elizabeth Fry are still able to do the good work that they do, along with potential organizations in the future, and then that is clearly made available to them in the legislation. They're also concerned about the extra burden this might be for them as well as a non-profit organization who operates on very limited, as you know, Minister, budgets.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I appreciate the point they're raising to try and catalogue or include people specifically, or the entities that are there would have the effect of excluding others that aren't there if another entity comes along that should be there. So I think it's appropriate and right that the coroner make the decision at that time.

I think on this point we may have to agree to disagree on it. I would hope that the work that's being done by the coroner doesn't result in a chambers application for judicial review or alternatively where it becomes a political issue. The purpose of having the coroner have that jurisdiction rather than politicians is so that it removes it one step from this building, that we try and select people for a coroner so that they're able to make those decisions. And hopefully they would be decisions that we believe in and support. And so far that's taken place, and I'm hoping that whoever Mr. Weighill's successor when he retires in 35 years is somebody equally as capable.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — I agree, Minister. We'll just have to agree to disagree. But I think we can both agree on the points that — and we'll leave it on a point of agreement — that the coroner's office does very important work. The coroner's inquests are incredibly important, and the work that the John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society do are also very valued and incredibly important as well. Just for procedure, I won't be supporting this clause, but I have no further questions.

Thank you for your answers today.

**The Chair:** — Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 18 inclusive agreed to.]

#### Clause 19

**The Chair:** — Clause 19, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**An Hon. Member:** — No. Recorded division.

**The Chair:** — Those in favour of the motion say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Chair:** — Those opposed to the motion say no.

**An Hon. Member:** — No.

**The Chair:** — The ayes have it . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay. A recorded vote has been requested. I'd like to inform the members for the process for voting with proxies in this committee. First I will ask for members that are present and in favour of the motion to raise their hands. And then I will ask members if there's any proxy votes in favour of the motion. We will do that process a second time for the opposed to the motion. Any questions about the process? No.

[18:45]

All those in favour of the motion please raise your hand. Okay. Do any members have voting proxies in favour of the motion? Okay, Ms. Ross and Mr. Kirsch have designated me to cast their vote by proxy. Therefore I vote in favour of the motion for the members. All those opposed to the motion, please raise your hand.

Do the members have voting proxy opposed of the motion? No. We do it again. Those in favour of the motion? No . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We're good? Ok, we're good. I declare the motion carried.

[Clause 19 agreed to.]

[Clauses 20 to 28 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Coroners Amendment Act, 2019*.

I would ask a member to move that we forward Bill No. 189, *The Coroners Amendment Act, 2019* without amendment.

**Mr. Francis:** — I so move, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Francis so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. We'll take a five-minute recess.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

#### Bill No. 195 — *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*

##### Clause 1

**The Chair:** — We will now be considering Bill No. 195, *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*. We will begin our consideration of clause 1, short title. Minister Morgan, please make your opening comments and introduce any new officials.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair and to colleagues from both sides of House. I'm joined tonight by Darcy McGovern Q.C., director, legislative services. I'm pleased to be able to offer opening remarks concerning Bill No. 195, *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*. This bill will amend *The Lobbyists Act* to address recommendations made by the Registrar of Lobbyists in his annual report.

The proposed provisions will make it an offence for lobbyists to provide gifts or personal benefits to public-office holders. Gift or personal benefit is defined to include money if there is no obligation to repay it; and a service, hospitality, or property, including the use of property that is provided without charge or for a charge that is less than its commercial value. An exemption is made for gifts or personal benefits that are part of normal social conventions and worth less than \$200.

The bill will also remove the exception from registration for all non-profit corporations. A limited exception from registration for non-profits will continue for non-profit organizations with a charitable mandate and less than five employees who lobby for a total of less than 30 hours per year. Small charities operating through volunteers will continue to not be required to register. All non-profits without a charitable mandate will be required to register.

Finally the threshold for registration will be reduced to promote transparency by requiring more individuals who lobby to register. The proposed provisions will reduce the threshold for registration as an in-house lobbyist from 100 hours spent lobbying to 30 hours, which includes times spent on preparation and travel for lobbying efforts. This will ensure that the activities of more individuals are captured by the legislation without requiring registration of every casual encounter with a public-office holder.

Mr. Chair, with those opening remarks, I welcome your questions regarding Bill 195, *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*.

**The Chair:** — Are there any questions? Mr. Forbes has the floor.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to ask a few questions. I know this is one that the commissioner has been lobbying for, in fact, if I may say that. And I would take a moment right now just to acknowledge the good work that the commissioner has done. He'll be retiring on, I think July 1st is his last day. So he's been with us for some 10 years and has done, I think, a pretty outstanding job. It's pretty hard herding a group of people like us some days, and we all interpret things . . .

**A Member:** — Cats.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Cats is the word I was thinking of. But I just want to take a moment and acknowledge Judge Ron Barclay and his good work that he's done for the province of Saskatchewan.

So obviously now I'm looking back on what he wrote. And the question was to remove the 100-hour threshold for in-house lobbyists, and he asked that it just be simply eliminated. But Justice has come back with the idea of 30 for in-house. Why 30?

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I was remiss in my earlier remarks for not

thanking outgoing Commissioner Barclay. I think, as you and I are both aware, he served the members of the legislature extremely well and was always somebody who was available that you could go to for advice and questions so you could plan your affairs accordingly. So for that I think all of us should thank him.

You asked the question about the reduction from 100 to 30 hours rather than 100 to zero hours. We looked at other provinces and other pieces of legislation, and some were zero, some were at 50, and we felt that this was somewhere in between.

We wanted to be able to specifically avoid situations of casual contact where you run into somebody at a social event or sit with somebody or possibly phone somebody, where the contact was initiated by the member, where you would contact somebody to ask their opinion on something. You might phone somebody at Credit Union Central and say, what do you think about this issue on insurance or what do you think about that? And at that point are you consulting with them as an MLA, seeking their advice, or are they lobbying? And certainly, you know, during those conversations that you have they might well say, well I think you should do this. I think you should do this; this suits our business. And that may be even how you approach that question.

So it became an increasingly difficult one for *de minimis*, the very small ones. And it became challenging for members reaching out, and then for smaller entities just the cost to register, log hours, or whatever else.

So there is no intention to hide or deceive. It became down to what was appropriate and what were the interests of the public. Somebody that was spending 100 hours was actually spending a significant amount of time in preparation, travel, whatever else. So it was right for somebody in that category, that probably at 50 or 70 hours they're serious and the public would have an interest in knowing.

But by the time it got down to 30 or down to relatively small numbers . . . And I can't say why it wouldn't have been 25 or 30, but it seemed to be a reasonable number. And when we did some discussions around public relations firms, other MLAs, and looking at others, it seemed to be a reasonable landing spot.

And I think this is the type of thing that, as time goes on, you review it on an ongoing or periodic or regular basis. The whole idea of having a registry and licensing of those individuals, you want to make sure that you look at it on an ongoing basis because the nature of how they do business changes. The perception or the needs of the public, I think, change over a period of time. And we think, given where we are currently, it's a reasonable landing spot. And I know some people think it should be less. And certainly Commissioner Barclay's position, starting position was zero. In consultation with him he said that 30 was, he felt, an acceptable number.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes, he made a couple of, I think, pretty strong arguments. You know, the first one is you're creating a two-tier system: those who are in-house and those who are professional lobbyists. Is there a reason that you treat them differently?

[19:00]

**Mr. McGovern:** — Darcy McGovern with the Ministry of

Justice. The distinction that's drawn between in-house and consultant lobbyists is something that's done in most of the provinces across Canada. And I think it was something that was recognized, as you recall, by the committee itself.

The all-party committee in the House, when it came forward, identified the distinction between having employees within your organization as a corporate body who are, as part of their employment, occasionally performing that function. This was viewed as a different in kind than a lobbying consultant — someone who hires themselves out professionally as having the type of contacts and the type of expertise that they feel that they can be paid specifically to trade on that. And it was understood that in every case of a consultant lobbyist, that in those circumstances that's the individual's undertaking. And that's an individual who every time would be required to register.

But I think that the distinction with the difference was that in some corporations, you know, if you are a muffler company and you are looking for a particular change for whatever reason, that you don't have a lobbyist in your company. But given a particular topic you might have quite an interest and once you get a certain amount of hours in, that would tip you into a public interest position as opposed to just a corporation that says that, as the minister has mentioned, who occasionally might bump into the minister and ask what's going on.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes. You know, I have stated I have some concerns about that because I just feel like, you know, we all run into people wherever we are, and it's just a matter of that you do have to have that discipline. And I know the minister has that discipline of saying there are things I can't talk about and we'll just have to talk about other things. So I'm not as deeply concerned about that.

But I am concerned . . . And this second point I think is really valuable. Now I'm not getting into the internet here. Do we have folks from the lobbyists registry here with us tonight or is it just Justice? I shouldn't put it just Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — No, I don't believe we do. And as you're aware, the onus to register and to comply is not on the member; it's on the lobbyist. So when we went through the process, I know I phoned some of the lobbyists and said, what's reasonable? And their concern was the small conversations or the casual conversations. If you end up going for supper with somebody that's a neighbour that happens to work for a charity or does this or that, you know, where does the social interaction stop and the lobbying begin even where, you know, you may have taken them for supper or invited them over? The whole issue became just too difficult to try and identify where it started, where it stopped.

And I don't think it was a matter that anybody had an intention to hide, conceal, or deceive anybody. It was just when you had somebody that's in that business, either on a full-time basis for in-house within an entity or that may represent three or four other people, it becomes difficult. And I appreciate the point that you're raising.

So anyway, this was the choice to strike a balance on it. And we certainly . . . It wasn't a decision taken lightly, even though there isn't a mathematical principle to get to that time.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes. I would just caution, you know, that kind of explanation, because in this day and age — and we've seen within the whole sexual conduct, the Me Too movement, the racism issues that we're dealing with now — it just doesn't cut it to say "I don't know" anymore. We all have to work really hard to define our parameters and live with it.

And so when you're going out for supper with somebody, somebody brings something up they shouldn't, you have to be pretty firm. In the past I think that maybe social norms would allow you some latitude. But that latitude isn't there anymore.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Yes. I'll beg to differ with you on the idea of it. Having a 30 hours is not to try and hide what your obligations are; it's to avoid ones where there's small amounts, there's grey issues. And the *de minimis* principle, it's a matter . . . If you borrow somebody's pen and you don't return it right away, are you guilty of theft? No, you're guilty of not returning something. And it's the same thing: you have the conversation over a fence and whatever else. I don't think anybody wants to put a lobbyist in a bad or difficult or an awkward position.

So this was the number that we came to, not with the idea of trying to deceive. But if you take the point that you're making where you need to be careful all the time, you don't know when somebody is a lobbyist or is required to register or not. You strike up a conversation; we have the people that come here every year in 218. You know, we have them almost every night during session.

So I don't know whether those people are registered; I don't know whether they aren't. A lot of them are in charities; it's the one-off that they do every year. So we could say to those people, oh, well you're lobbying, therefore you will, all of you, each of you that were here, even though you may be the mother or father of a disabled child that's here to lobby on behalf of whatever supports that child might need, then you're going to have to say to them, you can't. You're lobbying. Or alternatively if they come to you on an individual basis, at what point are they lobbying or what point are they not?

So that's the idea is to try and allow for the normal relationships that a member might have, without imposing the idea of creating and having them go through the process of registering, logging their hours, etc. We don't ask them those questions. We assume that they know and it's up to the commissioner to determine whether there's compliance.

I don't know of any situations where there hasn't been compliance and would like to avoid that issue where somebody would say, I met with so-and-so from a particular union. Oh, well were they lobbying me or were they raising a legitimate issue in my capacity as an MLA? And those are where you . . . And I'm not saying it's shades of grey; I'm saying that's where your duty as a member is to listen. I think on that we may have to agree to disagree, but I think that's the reason for it.

**Mr. Forbes:** — I mean I think in terms of the last example you had — and you know, I was talking to some of the folks out front — it's pretty clear in the Act what happens when you're actually engaged in something with the government and when you're trying to gain a benefit, so I think the Act is fairly clear on that. And I think you're kind of making this point that the

commissioner's making.

The second reason was that although some in-house lobbyists register immediately to demonstrate transparency or because it's easier to register than to account for lobbying hours, while other in-house lobbyists in the same industry will not register because the legislation does not require them to do so. So you have people who are unclear about what the legislation is.

So I did a little Google search here, just actually just now, because I was looking at this today. And I was looking at, so who has been lobbying me? And the one that's come up — and they probably have you and all the members here, because I was quite surprised — the Florida Department of Citrus, somebody named Kristin Baldwin. And I'm thinking, what is that all about? I am pretty sure I have never seen any correspondence or a letter or anything to do with the Florida Department of Citrus.

So that's why I'm just feeling it's too bad that . . . And I'll raise it with the folks from the registry tomorrow, because there almost has to be an auditing of this because . . . Okay, I get some of these because, you know, I know that I've gone to meet with them or I've talked to them. But there's a lot that I don't think I've had too much to do with. And I don't know about the Florida Department of Citrus. Now they may call me up and remind me of this, but I don't know.

But I just feel that this is where we have this problem, where we've kind of got a big loophole that 30 hours . . . People say, well I should register because then I'll be okay. And then you have people who aren't registering because they're betting that they're not going to make the 30 hours, so they're not in the list. You're missing the ones that should be in the list and you're getting people like this who . . . Now probably she's a professional consultant and maybe has done this right across Canada, named every MLA as a safety blanket. I can see that scenario.

But it really is meaningless because if all of a sudden I had somebody come up and one of my constituents who have been trying to grow oranges in Saskatoon Centre, wanted to know what am I doing with hanging out with these folks. What do I say, you know? I don't have any kind of defence but they've registered. They've said they had some contact with me.

So I think that there's a . . . You know, to address the problem about the uncertainty that you face as a minister, that's the training, and we know we have to do more and more of that. And we just have to be more professional at the jobs we do. And you know, I trust so many of the people who are in the Executive Council that they can do their job well. I don't have any doubt about that. But I feel that we're creating a problem that we're going to be back here revisiting anyways because when I see this kind of thing, I really have a question about how effective is this the way it is now.

**Mr. McGovern:** — Mr. Chair, through the Chair to the member, just to give some context in terms of where this places Saskatchewan in terms of having moved from 100 hours to 30 hours, that puts Saskatchewan at the second lowest in the country to my knowledge, with respect to the threshold for these types of lobbyists. In addition, of course, in Saskatchewan the threshold, as you recall, the count that we have here includes travel time,

includes prep time, includes conversation time as well. So Alberta recently moved from 100 to 50, Manitoba we know is at 100, and Ontario is at 50. So the choice to go from 100 to 30, you know, I would submit is a significant step.

The issue that you've raised in terms of saying, drawing a line between overcompliance, where someone says sign me up across the board across Canada and sign me up with every MLA because, you know, I'm not sure if that'll work. You know, that's a problem and my submission would be that that's exacerbated by going with a low number where people say, well I might trip over.

And it'll be interesting to see if you did go to a zero number or lower number, if you don't have people who just say, cover the waterfront. Make sure that I'm covered. I'll list everybody and if I don't, so that if I happen to see Mr. Forbes walking into the building and I lobby him with respect to a particular issue of the day looking for legislation, whether I'm properly registered in that circumstance as a lobbyist out front of this building. But I think 30 hours is a time frame where just to, as they say, set the context, it's a significant change. And it'll bear some watching. And I think as the minister mentioned, you know, as we move forward with this it'll be interesting to see how it applies. And I don't know that we can't view this as incremental over time.

But we've gone from not having a registry in Saskatchewan and we're going to now go to having the second-lowest threshold in Canada, with the only other changes having occurred recently. So I think in that regard this is stepping up. As you know, there's other recommendations from the registrar in this piece that are met and met squarely. As the minister said, we've gone from 100 to 30 but it doesn't go to zero. Not yet.

**Mr. Forbes:** — And I would think this is the . . . You know, I mean, essentially there's two recommendations and this is one of them, but I think this is the biggest one. I could be wrong on that; maybe there's three. But at any rate, I feel that I appreciate your comments on the speed on which this legislation took to come about. I don't have the dates of the timeline of when people start talking about lobbyist registries in Canada and where we are now. I know this has been a big topic for quite a while, so I wouldn't say that we are, you know . . . It's taking us some time to get to this point.

But back to tracking lobbyists, you've mentioned that some people . . . You talked to some people, you reached out to some people — did you take notes of who you were talking to? Do you have a list of the different groups and what they said about this?

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — As I indicated, we don't know who is a lobbyist or not. We know that there's businesses like Earncliffe and Hill+Knowlton. And I talked to people like Kaveri Braid and said, what's this? And they said, well you know, if we, you know . . . She used to work in Executive Council one time. So in her case it was, you know, you'd have a chat with them. Her kids chum with my nephew, so we cross paths, you know.

[19:15]

You know, that's the nature of things. So I don't know what she reports or doesn't report. I don't ask. I don't keep track. I know in the discussion I had with her and two or three others it was,

they wanted to see something somewhat above zero and that's what it is. So I don't have a consensus to say that's why it is. I've looked at my own on there, and I think that there's a need to drop the threshold because you and I know that we've been lobbied by people that didn't show up. I'm feeling somewhat inadequate because I wasn't lobbied by the citrus group from Florida, and I like orange juice. So I'm concerned by that, and I'm thinking of writing a letter.

Now the reason why it likely showed up on your list would be because it's the aggregate of everybody they talked to. So if they talked to half a dozen people for 20 minutes at a time, you know, they're starting to approach that. So they may have done more than they might need to. You know, we don't look at that. That's not the role of us as MLAs. I do have on my list the association of realtors. They came wanting changes, some of the ones that we made during the last round of things, and so I think that's quite proper.

Now there's others that lobby all of us — firefighters, you know, that are lobbying on behalf of presumptive coverage for certain cancers. Well that's probably going to show up in subsequent reports. So you know, we want to be careful about the onuses or the things that we set up as barriers to people wanting to come and see us on behalf of a church group, charity, or whatever else that they might belong to or be acting . . . And I mean it's a discussion to have with the people.

And what I'd encourage you to do when you talk to people is ask them if they have registered. And if you find somebody that has, ask them how onerous it is to comply. I have only had very few conversations about that with one or two people.

Anyway I'm not going to convince you, nor will you convince me. But anyway, the comments you make, I appreciate and respect, and you know we'll certainly want to watch them as we go forward.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well and I appreciate that because this is all a learning experience that we go through every couple of years. We get a half an hour to chat about this and hopefully we all get better at this and we all get to learn. And I appreciate the opportunity to review the lobbyists legislation, understand it, take a look through the registry and understand it further. Because at the end of the day, you know . . . You've said this in your opening remarks in the House and your second reading speech. You know, the trust and credibility of the government is critically important.

And when we get elected here, people, you know, so often people say, you've been elected to the government. And I have to make a distinction: well no, I'm not part of that government; I'm a legislator, not a government member. But that gets . . . Then you're explaining stuff and that doesn't really matter. They see us as government, and they see us down here doing work. To them, you know, we're all in the same boat together, which is fair enough, you know. So it's important that we take time to really, really reflect through this because I think it is critically important.

And now it's interesting we were talking about . . . The other group that I happened to look through, which was interesting, was the Federated Co-op. You know, I don't know how they popped up. You know, and ironically they've lobbied 10 of my

colleagues but not me, you know. And I thought, well is that . . .

**A Member:** — You're not a member.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well I think I am a member. I've been given the gears about that a few times in the House.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I suspect they probably looked carefully at who else was lobbying you and said oh, citrus growers. I don't know. I can't speak to that and they're not on my list even though I meet with them several times a year for whatever. So I can't say who is or who shouldn't be there. That's up to them to make those determinations and it's for that reason, the points you just made, that I think you need have some kind of a threshold above zero. But in any event, it's a discussion to have with whoever your successors might be in subsequent years.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well and this is the point I wanted to make. So when I was outside talking to the Unifor folks I said, you're not on the list. SEIU-West [Service Employees International Union-West] is on the list. Different unions are on the list. Why isn't Unifor on that list, you know? Now of course they're engaged in an action. You are meeting and talking with them, or your representative. That's not lobbying. That's about something that is a specific case that has to be dealt with. So I think this is all very important that we take this as a serious thing and it's very, very, very key.

Now two things I want to ask is what about travel, and you had made the comment about travel and time adding up to that. Now is that in the Act or is that going to be in the regulations?

**Mr. McGovern:** — What the Act refers to in terms of the threshold — and it talks about it being prescribed and what it has been since 2014 in Saskatchewan in the regulations — it provides that when they talk about lobbying, it includes the following time directly related to and necessary for carrying out lobbying: preparation time, time spent communicating with public office-holders, and travel time. So in some provinces — and I can't rhyme it off my top of my head — prep time, travel time weren't included. In Saskatchewan the choice was made that all three of those are included, which obviously would aggregate the time to get your . . . It would get you to your threshold quicker if all those are included.

**Mr. Forbes:** — So those are existing regulations?

**Mr. McGovern:** — Those are existing and when we went from 100 to 30 we didn't change that, and have no intent to change.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Do you anticipate changing any of the regulations that may come up because of this passage of this bill?

**Mr. McGovern:** — I don't think so, unless we have to technically change a form to say 30 rather than 100.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Right.

**Mr. McGovern:** — But there's no policy intent that I can identify at this point.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Okay. Okay, fair enough. So I wanted to ask a little bit about the charitable non-profits. And you describe it as



a charitable non-profit with less than five employees who lobby for a total of less than 30 hours annually. Like I'm focusing on the word "employees." Five employees, is that correct?

**Mr. McGovern:** — Yes, in the bill.

**Mr. Forbes:** — In the bill.

**Mr. McGovern:** — Yes, the new, it talks about has both.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes.

**Mr. McGovern:** — So the distinction that's being made now . . . And this is an exception from the requirement. So what's new here is that non-profit organizations or associations, societies, will be covered, will be required to comply with the requirements in the Act unless they have both a charitable purpose and fewer than five employees.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Right.

**Mr. McGovern:** — And then the 30-hour threshold. So you need to have a charitable purpose rather than an alternative purpose, and you need to have fewer than five employees. So to use the minister's example previously, if you're in an organization that has no employees, you've formed a non-profit — grandmothers for X — you don't have employees, the view was that requiring that organization to spend the time to divert itself for compliance with the Act wasn't appropriate at this point. But it takes the big step of saying, non-profits are going to be covered; small non-profits with charitable purposes won't be.

**Mr. Forbes:** — So what the commissioner . . . Why I was focusing on the word "employee" — he uses the word but maybe this is a suggestion that he had heard — would be that only charitable non-profit associations with five or less lobbyists would be exempt from registering. So I kind of, you know . . . They're assuming and you assume everybody in the . . . If people have 20 employees, they have 20 lobbyists.

**Mr. McGovern:** — I don't think that's particularly . . . And of course we had shared the draft material with Mr. Barclay as we moved forward, and this wasn't a distinction that he made. Frankly, there's very few organizations that have five lobbyists that have a charitable purpose. And I'm not going to suggest that he misspoke but I think the intent was to say small organizations that don't have an employee structure is who we meant to exempt, not . . . We don't want to say, we've got 36 employees but only four of them are employed as lobbyists, therefore we don't have to comply. That's not our standard. Our standard is charitable purpose and under five employees.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Under five employees. Yes, I think it'll be . . .

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I think, you know, when you think about small groups like Child Find who comes here periodically, I think they would be right around that threshold of five. For us to say, oh well you are or you are not in because you're at that five level and you're not characterizing somebody as a lobbyist . . . I mean they're all looking for money from the government to do their programming, which is good programming, and we're trying to support them.

So for us to say, oh well I can only talk to so-and-so because they're not a lobbyist or I can do this . . . So I think the idea of saying it will cover all of your employees — we didn't get into the distinction of full- or part-time employees, but a lot of them do a lot of volunteers — but I think that captures the essence of what he was trying to achieve.

**Mr. Forbes:** — And I think that's fair and I think that's good because again, using some of the large corporations . . . [inaudible] . . . they've listed everybody and I think, you know, like maybe 20 or 30 of their top executives were all now lobbyists just in case they happen to come and meet, you know. And then it gets to be kind of a bit of an issue. And I'm not sure if it's actually Mr. Barclay's words. He had said that it's one suggestion would be, if I read that more accurately into that. So that could be the case.

But the other question about that though is that where you would have some small charitable organizations . . . And of course this is always the question about charitable, and I guess that's defined by the income tax people, but there's no dollar amount to what their annual budget is. So that, you know, you can have a small organization in Saskatchewan that maybe aren't . . . Now this might be the question I'm asking you. So if you have a branch here in Saskatchewan that has less than five employees but it actually has a pretty big bank account because of the fundraising that they do here for whatever reason — they may be part of a national system or whatever. So there's no correlation to how big their financial . . .

**Mr. McGovern:** — There is not. The distinction in the legislation that is now being made . . . Previously it was non-profits and those sorts of organizations with the overall intent having been where you have consultants who are in the business of lobbying or who are looking for financial gain, that was the target that was initially drawn. This is expanding that circle, if you will, to say we're going to pick up non-profits now, period. But if you have a charitable purpose and the five-employee distinction that we just made, then, you know, under the 30-hour threshold, you don't have to come forward. There isn't anything that says if you're small but this year doing well with your funding, that that would change that.

I think the way that that's addressed, and one of the really important pieces in this new bill that was suggested by the registrar, is to provide that lobbyists may not give gifts to public office-holders. So being a rich organization in that regard should have no bearing in terms of your lobbying effort because it's still a matter of the communication. You are prohibited by law now, and it is an offence under this legislation, to provide a gift in excess of \$200 outside of ordinary, you know, the rules in the members' conflict — the general rule of saying if it's a matter of protocol and you give someone a coffee mug, that's a different scenario.

But that's a new provision in this Act as well and I think that's a different way of skinning the same cat. By saying no, if you're a lobbyist who wants to give large items . . . I mean obviously any member has to list that under the members' conflict and, you know, there's a different way that the members are protected from that. But this hones in on the lobbyists themselves and says it is a breach of the law for you to purport to try and give a gift that would place a public office-holder in that position.

**Mr. Forbes:** — But they can still give gifts to a political party?

**Mr. McGovern:** — That has nothing to do with this legislation.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Donations to a political party are . . . Forms under *The Election Act* there, there's a disclosure. Anything over \$250 shows up. So if a lobbyist chooses to make a political donation, that's not a gift. That's a donation under that Act.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well I have strong feelings about that as well. So I feel those are my questions and I appreciate the answers. Thank you very much. And we're ready to go on that.

**The Chair:** — Excellent. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 9 inclusive agreed to.]

[19:30]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*.

I would now ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 195, *The Lobbyists Amendment Act* without amendment.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

### **Bill No. 196 — *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019***

#### **Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — We will now be considering Bill No. 196, *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019*. We will begin our consideration with clause 1, short title. Minister Morgan, please make your opening comments.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm once again joined by Darcy McGovern, Q.C. [Queen's Counsel], director at legal services.

I'm pleased to be able to offer opening remarks concerning Bill 196, *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019*. This bill will amend *The Members' Conflict of Interest Act* to address recommendations made by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner in his 2018 annual report.

This bill will require members to provide a description of assets of a private company in which a member or a member's family

has a controlling interest in all disclosure statements. This amendment will codify an existing process that the commissioner has used under the discretion provided in the Act.

This bill also addresses a potential disclosure gap for former members. The current Act places requirements on new and existing members to file disclosure statements, but there was previously no requirement on a former member. Former members will now be required to file a disclosure statement within 60 days of ceasing to be a member. This ensures that disclosure is provided for the entire time that a member was active. Former members will also be allowed to ask the commissioner for an opinion or recommendation regarding their obligations under the Act for one year after ceasing to be a member.

Finally this bill will add a definition of "gift or personal benefit" to clarify what falls under this category.

Mr. Chair, with those opening remarks I welcome your questions respecting Bill No. 196, *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019*.

**The Chair:** — Do we have some questions? Mr. Forbes, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much. And again I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this Bill 195. It's an important bill that we keep going back and taking a look at and seeing how can we improve it so that we can do our work as well as we can without any kind of shadow of other influence that is not good.

So I just have a question about the first, you know . . . So we've added a definition of "gift or personal benefit" and it seems to be a good one. And I'd be curious to hear you talk a little bit more about that, whether that, how common . . . Is that a common one that's used across Canada and how is that . . . I am interested because, you know, what are the regulations right now in terms of what gifts may be. Is this something that we're bringing out of regulations into the legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I'll let Mr. McGovern give you a bit on what takes place in other provinces. I think what the bill was trying to achieve was a threshold that was low enough and small enough that if you went and you got a mug for having passed out an award, it wasn't there.

So what was happening with people is they wanted to err on the side of caution. They wanted to have disclosure. So Cam Broten was door knocking and it was during the summer months and somebody gave Cam Broten a bundle of radishes which turned up on his disclosure statement. So a lot of people, myself included, thought if that was the threshold, we ought to be very cautious. So I was including pens and all kinds of things. And I think nobody is expecting that if you got a travel mug that you would disclose that.

But you know, other things. If you get a piece of artwork or something else, clearly there's an expectation — or somebody takes you to play golf — that it would be there. So I think it's a matter of what's a normal interaction and what is a gift that would be arguably made with the intent that it would somehow sway you or something like that.

So I'll let Mr. McGovern maybe make comments on what takes place in other jurisdictions.

**Mr. McGovern:** — Sure. And I think the quickest way of explaining, I think, this language is that this is in fact very close to the language that the commissioner had recommended in his annual report. And his comment was that, you know, “. . . to be consistent with other jurisdictions across Canada it would be prudent to include definitions of ‘gift’ and ‘personal benefit.’” And he lists it as:

an amount of money, if there is no obligation to repay it;

hospitality, entertainment, service, property, including the use of property, that is provided without charge or at less than its commercial value.

He also notes the need for the exception. Now there's an existing exception in 7-2 that the member will be aware of and that's the \$200 . . . you know, in the course of . . . And this is the you-get-a-mug-for-speaking example that the minister had given. But the wording itself is very much what the registrar recommended and what was chosen to include.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Right. It looks to me, if I've got this right, that the new part really is . . . Well actually it's an amount of money if there's no obligation to repay it. So if you're getting money and then a service, hospitality or property . . . So it expands what you have in the Act about gift or personal benefit, right?

**Mr. McGovern:** — It defines it. I would suggest it's simply a codification of what had been used. The words “gift or personal benefit” were previously used. This was what was being used by the commissioner. He's indicated in his annual report that it would be consistent to actually put this definition right in the Act rather than just proceed the way they've been proceeding. So I don't think there's anything new per se here other than the fact that's actually written down.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Right, that's good. Thank you. Now the other question I have is, section 11 has been amended. And this is something that I just may not know but it's . . . On one hand it's pretty straightforward. You know, when you have 4(a), it says the statement of assets, liabilities. So you have a statement of the assets, if I'm reading that right. But now what you're talking about is adding another line, a description of the assets. So you're moving from . . . Well you have to have the list. But then you have to describe that list. And so I guess what I'm asking: is there a legal definition of what a description is?

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I'm guessing that the commissioner will make a determination as to what or how that is. I think what he's trying to avoid, or at least the discussions I had with him were, if somebody put in there a numbered company and it just said holding company. You had no idea whether it was a company that had an insurance policy from a deceased shareholder or whether it was a car dealership or had a controlling interest in something else. So when the members were meeting with the commissioner, they asked . . . they were asked those type of questions, provided an answer. He made notes on it, but didn't disclose it to the public. So I think the purpose of this is that he'll be able to say, okay, this a holding company with apartment blocks, or this is a holding company that has a farming operation.

And it won't necessarily disclose the dollar value but would disclose the particulars of it.

I think, you know, there was some social media about we'll be able to find out what so-and-so has and mister so-and-so has. And I don't think there was ever any intention that that should be hidden. Nobody ever asked but it wasn't part of the process. And I think in the interest of fairness and transparency, those things are reasonable questions for the public to know about their MLAs. We don't have the same privacy that regular citizens have. And that was the recommendation from him, and I think as he applies it, he'll make a determination of what kind of detail should go with it.

**Mr. Forbes:** — He will be the one who, after the interviews when he makes the description . . .

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — . . . prepares the report that's made public.

**Mr. Forbes:** — . . . in the report. So for example, when somebody lists a company that they have shares in but you give the name of the company, people can find out what that, you know . . . If they say where and that company's okay, it's easy to find out what they do. So okay, fair enough. I guess that gives a lot of leeway to the commissioner though in terms of hopefully he will be within the bounds of reasonableness and not, you know, I mean like . . . I guess this is what the process is and we've been through it. We get to see it before it gets released, so if we have any questions we can ask at that point.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I think we go through the process where he gives us the draft which we review to see whether there's any patent errors, or something you want to raise with him on it, that oh, well this looks incomplete or whatever. And you and I have both gone through it when Gerry Gerrand was doing it and now. So we've gone through it since the process started. And it's actually . . . and now it'll be Maurice Herauf who I think will have the same kind of approach, that he'll want to have the transparency for the public, but will want to work through something that's reasonable.

My guess is that sooner or later they'll become either a regulation, or some kind of better particulars that are there, and that will likely be left to the next commissioner to try and determine what that is. But at this point in time, this is the recommendation that was made by Commissioner Barclay so I think we're . . .

**Mr. Forbes:** — Speaking of regulations, just getting back . . . I just see from my notes here that I did have one other question about the gift. So section 7, the last line of section 7, the new part 3, “any other gift or personal benefit prescribed in the regulations.” Now I guess I have a couple of questions about that in terms of if there is . . . And we've had situations where there's been issues of disagreements about gifts and interpretation of gifts and stuff like that. So when you put it into regulations, can regulations be predated or postdated that give definitions that might be more favourable? Can you go back in time?

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I think what you're asking is whether we can make a change retroactively to find out something that wasn't supposed to be there. I think the general rule is retroactive legislation is something that is often frowned upon by the courts.

Difficult to do, not impossible. I would think a regulation change probably would never be done retroactively although I suppose it could. But a piece of legislation could, with a debate in the House, be done on a retroactive basis.

But I think the members and the commissioner would act in good faith on their filings. They have so far. And if it appears that there's something that's not being addressed as thoroughly as it should or in as much detail as it should or has got unnecessary detail, I think the commissioner would likely say to that member this is too much or this is not enough, and would try and make appropriate determinations and would come back to the legislature — they're an independent officer — and make the recommendation that this is a change that's there.

As you're aware, this was, you know, I think virtually everything that the commissioner had recommended on this one. You know, on the previous bill we had a difference of opinion that you and I had, but on this one I think this one is . . . I'm not aware of anything that was not included.

**Mr. Forbes:** — And we'll talk about it. But I'm . . . Unless you want to . . . We could . . . But anyways I'll save that till . . .

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Yes, anyway. Carry on.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Now when especially in legislation that is an awful lot . . . And we have a former Speaker in the committee tonight. And, you know, when you talk about conflict of commissioner and their role and far less. I mean the government is the government but you don't want to be setting up so that there's obvious conflict because we all have to live through these things. So do you try to minimize the use of regulations? The opposition doesn't get a real input into regulations usually.

[19:45]

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — There's a variety of reasons why some . . . [inaudible] . . . but legislation is something that you try and make an overall statement for as to a purpose, and a regulation may well be something that might change periodically, you know, an income threshold or something. For example, you know, income tax changes, whatever, are usually done by way of regulation.

The things that are in the two Acts that we've talked about tonight are things the public has got, I think, a strong interest in and these things are largely done in legislation, but the forms would be done in regulations. So there's, you know, a variety of reasons why you might do it differently and, you know, it would be a much longer discussion than what we have.

**Mr. Forbes:** — I think with these two pieces it's good to minimize that. This is the one that, well — and I appreciate that you've done an awful lot of good work here and things that I think adds to the input that needs to be done — but this is one that I actually had forgotten about until I was reviewing this today. And it's on page 29 of his report, of the 2018-19 report: changing the title of the Act and commissioner.

And he comes up with the idea, the thought that we should change the name of the Act and the commissioner to be updated to reflect the focus on ethics and integrity generally. And one

solution would be to rename the Act the members' ethics and conflict of interest Act and designate the commissioner as the ethics and conflict of interest commissioner.

Now I'm not proposing an amendment tonight, but I do think that it's kind of a good thought that he's leaving with as we leave, that we have a positive frame here. We often think of negative frames. You can't do that. You can't be in conflict of interest. Why can't we have a positive frame and say listen, we act in an ethical way. We have integrity. These are the foundations of how we do this. And I think that would be something to consider.

So I guess my question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: are you considering this legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Not at this point in time. I think it was a well-intentioned idea and I think I agree with you that it adds a positive tone on it. The changes that are made in the Act are of a relatively minor nature. They change, you know, some definitions and sort of, you know, extending the period of time for access to the commissioner.

You would be more likely to do a name change where you do a major makeover of the Act and perhaps change some of the purposes of the Act where you do it, because right now somebody that was familiar with the Act two or three years ago, oh, well that Act doesn't exist even. Was it repealed? Oh, well no, now there's a new Act that, you know . . . So usually if you were going to do a new Act, it would be a totally new Act. It would have some other things in it.

But it's something to, I think, to keep in mind at some point down the future if there is a reason to make it over, amalgamate it into something else, or do something new and different. So the point you make is valid but it adds a level of confusion that . . . So anyway it was not considered at this point.

**Mr. McGovern:** — And I think, you know, in addition wet blankets within the Ministry of Justice like our friend Ian Brown would say, who's the chief legislative drafter, would say that, you know, our practice in Saskatchewan quite rightly is not to name an Act something . . . a term that doesn't appear in the Act itself as a substantive element. So you know, from that point it's a bit of a non-starter unless there was a more substantive change that was pursued.

**Mr. Forbes:** — And I was thinking about that myself in terms of I don't think the word "ethics" appears in the Act. And so you'd have to have some sort of reference point to hang that on, and so it might be something for the fellow from Kindersley to champion, because I know that a few of us won't be here in the near future. So we'll leave that to him to work on.

But with that I do think, though, it's a good idea and it's one that it's an aspirational goal that we work towards. And I think that would add to a better goal because people just right away shy away from the word "conflict," where they don't want to be in conflict. They want to be in the ethics camp.

So with that, Mr. Chair, I want to thank the minister and the official tonight and appreciate the opportunity to answer these questions. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — Excellent. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019*.

I would ask a member to move the that we report Bill No. 196, *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019* without amendment. Mr. Francis. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. We will now need to take a short recess to change the ministry and officials and . . . Mr. Minister, would you like some closing remarks?

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Yes, thank you very much. I want to take this opportunity to thank a few people. We had the Chief Coroner with us, who was somebody that we stole from the city of Saskatoon as a police chief who has been outstanding to work with, and I was glad that he was able to be here. As well as I mentioned earlier, outgoing commissioner Barclay who has served us well for two terms and has given incredibly valuable assistance to all the members on both sides of the House. So I certainly want to, for the purpose of the record, thank both of those individuals.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank you, as well as the members on both sides of the House for your attendance tonight and your hard work, as well as the staff from Hansard, building staff, broadcast services, the Legislative Assembly staff, as well as the staff that are here from the ministry and from the offices within the building. These people work tirelessly all year round especially through some challenging times given the pandemic that we're facing right now.

So I want to thank all of the people in our offices and the people that are here in the building tonight for the work they do year round, but especially for having been here tonight and doing everything. So to them, I hope that they're able to get some summer fairly soon and enjoy a normal summer.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Forbes, any . . .

**Mr. Forbes:** — I'm looking forward to . . . well thanking the staff for sure, but I do look forward to further committee meetings in the next couple of weeks and will be thanking more people at that time.

**The Chair:** — I'd like to thank the minister and the officials in the committee, and we will take about a 20-minute recess to clean.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**Bill No. 194 — *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019***

**Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — Welcome back. We now have Minister Carr and her officials with us. We will be considering Bill No. 194, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019*. We will begin our consideration with clause 1, short title. Minister Carr, if you would please introduce your officials and make your opening comments.

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Thank you. I'm going to have my officials introduce themselves as they speak to the bill, so I'm just going to start off with my introductory comments to the bill. So this bill amends the three Acts that govern municipalities in Saskatchewan: *The Cities Act; The Municipalities Act; The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010*.

The amendments proposed generally fall into four main categories. The first, protection from reprisal for municipal employees who report wrongdoing is added. Second, there are administrative efficiencies for municipalities, such as electronic means of communication. The third area is to strengthen and improve governance and accountability, such as making qualified administration and public account requirements consistent for all types and sizes of municipalities. And finally several amendments for stakeholder requests, such as enabling green energy programs and improving the property assessment appeal process.

This bill continues our practice of regularly reviewing and amending municipal legislation to ensure it continues to meet the needs of municipalities, the public, and the province. Over the last year, municipal sector associations have had the chance to suggest and review amendment proposals and generally support the changes in the bill.

A few changes are being introduced as House amendments. The first change is one recommended by the Ministry of Justice in response to anticipated federal legislation on firearm regulations. As a province, we are not interested in municipalities creating a patchwork of firearm regulations. It is completely impractical to have different bans of firearms in place from municipality to municipality. Therefore municipalities will not have the authority to pass firearm bans.

The second House amendment will remove the proposed changes regarding the public notice requirements for newspaper advertising. The Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association has strongly voiced its opposition, and many members of the public have written letters to support that view. So we have decided to remain with the status quo. In many areas of the province there is no local newspaper, and municipalities must advertise in the closest available newspaper, which may have limited distribution. However councils may continue to advertise public notice through additional means, such as on their websites or through social media.

The last change is concerning the fiscal year of the Northern Municipal Trust Account. The original bill proposed to change the fiscal year of the account to align with government's fiscal year. However in further discussions, it was decided that the

fiscal year should remain the same for now, to assist with meeting annual reporting requirements.

Thank you, and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have on the bill.

**The Chair:** — Are there any questions? Mr. Wotherspoon.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thanks so much, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Minister, and to your officials that are here this evening. Just looking, I guess, for a bit more of an update as it relates to the consultation that you and your officials engaged in with respect to the legislative changes here today.

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Sure. I'd be happy to update you on that. So with the internal consultation, it included the advisory services and municipal relations; community planning branch; and Saskatchewan Municipal Board; the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety; and the Ministry of Justice, legislative drafting and Crown counsel.

As far as external consultations go, consultations with stakeholder associations and other external-to-government stakeholders began mid-2018 and continued through June 2019. The following stakeholder associations participated in the consultation process, as well as individual cities that engaged directly with the ministry: the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities; the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association; New North; Urban Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan; Rural Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan; Provincial Association of Resort Communities of Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan Association of City Clerks; the City Mayors' Caucus; the Northern Municipal Trust Account board; city managers of all 16 cities, except Lloydminster which is governed by *The Lloydminster Charter*; Saskatchewan Asset Management Agency; Saskatchewan Municipal Board; and Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. And of course we have the date of all of the consultations that took place individually, but those were the groups that were consulted on these.

[20:15]

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thanks so much. Certainly engaging all the external stakeholders that're, you know, critical when you're looking at making changes like this.

With respect to where individual stakeholders entered in, I think your comment at the front end was that they were generally supportive of the changes that are being brought here today, or that are represented in this legislation. Could you identify the concerns that external stakeholders have identified with you or your officials?

**Mr. Nasewich:** — Rod Nasewich, director of legislation and regulations for Government Relations. In terms of the three major groups, as the minister said, they're all generally supportive of the amendments. In terms of SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], SARM is very supportive of the changes around municipal districts. They did have some concerns about allowing at-large elections, which we added as an alternative to them doing reviews of their divisions, which is a new requirement that we put into these amendments which we

worked out with SARM.

And that amendment requires each RM [rural municipality] to have a policy to review their divisions with respect to population, number of voters. And then it's up to council to decide whether they want to rebalance those divisions and change those boundaries. But as an alternative, if an RM didn't want to review their divisions, we provided for them to have at-large elections, like other municipalities do, so they could vote for all councillors at large. SARM was not supportive of that even though it is optional and discretionary. We still think it's a good alternative to keep in the Act for those RMs that might want to hold at-large elections.

In terms of SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], again generally supportive of the amendments. Their areas of concern are related to . . . initially they were related to ministerial authority, which we then softened to tie to official examination and make it clear about the minister's authority to issue directives. Another area was the conflict of interest changes where we are amending that definition to align better with the common law. SUMA expressed some concerns about it being too broad, but we think we have some regulations that will address their concerns there.

Also the two cities are a little concerned about the ability to remove a council member who is disqualified and does not resign. It was a request of both SUMA and SARM, but the cities of Regina and Saskatoon were not in favour of those amendments.

In terms of the north, New North and the Northern Municipal Trust Account board, with the exception of requiring more time to move their fiscal year, they are generally supportive and no major concerns with any of the proposals that remain in the bill.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thanks. Could you expand just a little bit about, I guess, the context or the nature of the concerns around the minister's authority that you described with some of the . . . or that have been identified with some of the urban municipalities, I believe you've stated?

**Mr. Nasewich:** — Initially we had allowed a broader ministerial authority to issue directives to municipalities that may be withholding approvals. They may have a bylaw that is not quite compliant or aligned with the legislation. There was concern that it was a little too broad, and as a result we revised the wording to tie it to the existing provisions in the Acts about the authority for the minister to issue a directive based on an official examination, and those are defined to be a report of the Ombudsman, an audit, also an investigation ordered by the minister.

So we expanded the minister's authority to cover the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and investigations under *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. And the sector was satisfied with that softening of the minister's authority to issue directives to order something that was withheld to be granted, like a licence or an approval or a permit.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — I see. Thanks for that information. Just on the point around Saskatoon and Regina and the concerns you've stated they've registered with respect to some of the measures around the, I guess, authority or abilities to remove, I think, a

council member, or abilities to act on that front. Could you describe the changes that are being brought and what the concern is that Saskatoon and Regina, you know, have identified?

**Mr. Nasewich:** — Sure. The amendments . . . Currently there's no ability for the council to remove a member who becomes disqualified or is disqualified but does not resign. The Acts place the onus on a member of council to resign immediately, and then the provisions provide for a voter or the council to apply to a court to have the individual removed. In the northern Act however, since that Act was developed in 2010, there's always been a provision for the council to remove a member who's disqualified and refuses to resign, and then the onus is on the member to apply to the court to make a determination of whether he or she is actually disqualified and whether he or she should remain on council.

So when we amended the Acts way back in 2015 regarding conflict of interest, we had initially proposed to make those provisions consistent among the three Acts. There wasn't consensus among SUMA or SARM regarding amending *The Municipalities Act* or *The Cities Act*. Since that time, both those associations supported having those provisions put into the Act to provide council that ability and passed resolutions to that effect. So we followed the direction of their resolutions. We put those provisions in and made them consistent among the three Acts.

And again, the onus is on the council member to actually resign. But if they don't, then the council may declare the seat vacant and proceed. And there have been a few situations where that has come up.

Regina and Saskatoon were never really in favour of those provisions, thinking it might cause council dysfunction. Again they're optional. A council does not have to use them. They can develop policies around the circumstances in which they would. But we still followed the direction of the two associations and made those provisions consistent.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thanks for the thorough responses capturing, you know, sort of the context of what's being changed and where concerns, you know, have been identified as well.

With respect to the measures, I guess one of the main thrusts of this bill is to protect employees against reprisal, protecting municipal employees who report wrongdoing. Can you speak specifically to . . . I guess one question would be, I want to hear a little bit about making sure that, you know, the measures that are brought forward are going to be as effective as they can be on this front. But specifically can you speak to the kinds of actual incidents that you're aware of as minister without . . . I mean, obviously you've got obligations to confidentiality as well, but what sort of circumstances, what sort of incidents, you know, are you protecting people from?

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — So I guess I would just start on that one. And so with these proposed amendments, it would add explicit protection of reprisal for municipal employees who report wrongdoing to a person or authority that has the power to investigate the wrongdoing, and include any internal reporting disclosure and investigation process a municipality may establish. So if you're reporting directly to someone and you're

complaining about that person, then it could be pretty hard. A specific example? I don't have one for you, but those are the types of things that we're trying to prevent by this amendment. And I'm just going to let Rod expand on that.

**Mr. Nasewich:** — Sure. Again back in 2015, when the conflict of interest amendments were significantly strengthened, and the mandate of the Provincial Ombudsman was expanded to deal with municipal matters and municipal conflict of interest matters, after those amendments were in place we had heard concerns from the sector, from administrators in particular, that they didn't think there was enough protection in *The Ombudsman Act* to allow them to report a wrongdoing. Certainly they could try to report it confidentially, but there was nothing regarding protection from reprisal.

The ministry did a lot of work over the next couple of years, particularly to look at the Sask employment Act which does cover municipalities as employers, and so it covers employees as well. Again we didn't have specific circumstances or situations, but we were made aware from the administrator associations in particular that they still had concerns that they weren't sufficiently protected. And there was anecdotal information of harassment or reduced hours, those kinds of things. And the concern with the Sask employment Act was that it covered the municipality as the employer; it may not cover an individual councillor.

So basically, as the minister mentioned, that's what these amendments do is make it clear that a member of council may not reprise against an employee for reporting a wrongdoing using the existing avenues that are out there for reporting wrongdoing, including the Criminal Code, *The Ombudsman Act*, and the employment Act.

So it doesn't duplicate those avenues. It just ties them together and makes it an offence against the municipal Acts for a member of council to reprise. And it defines clearly what reprisal means and what a wrongdoing is, and makes those offences subject to disqualification if a member is found guilty of doing that. They were totally supported by the association, worked out in detail with them in the years between 2015 and 2018 to make sure we had covered all of the concerns that were out there about the gaps in the existing employment legislation.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Well I think it's an important body of work and I hope that the measures that have been brought about . . . It seems that it's been developed in a real thorough way, and with the sector and with the administrators as well and with the associations. So I wish everyone well on this front, because there is a lot of anecdotal concerns that sort of get shared, and I appreciate all those that were part of sort of raising their hand to say that this needed to be improved in Saskatchewan to ensure protections for workers in this situation.

As it relates to the changes around conflict of interest, am I correct that the terms or sort of the treatment around conflict of interest is rather similar to sort of our terms as members of the legislature? Or how do they differ? And what were some of the concerns around conflict of interest changes that were brought?

**Mr. Nasewich:** — They are similar. But the amendments clarify what is defined as a conflict of interest under the Act. In terms of

. . . The current wording references improperly furthering the private interest of the closely connected person, and that's defined as an immediate family member or business associate. And what the amendments do is change that wording to improperly furthering the interest of any private interest. And the private interest is defined as well under the Act.

Again, what we found from 2015 in actual court cases and reports of the Ombudsman was that the municipal Acts were out of alignment with the common law expectation of what constitutes a conflict of interest, which is really improperly furthering any private interest and not acting in the interests of the municipality as a whole.

And so those reports indicated that the Acts may be actually leading to some confusion where a council member may think it's okay to further the interests of a brother or a cousin because that's not defined as a closely connected person, or a friend or a neighbour even. So the intent of these amendments was to remove that sort of discrepancy or that misalignment between what the common law expects of public officials and what the legislation reads, supported by the Ombudsman in their latest report as maybe helping to alleviate some of the confusion that's among council members.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thanks for that. With respect to the changes to ensure there's consistency around firearms treatment within the province, not a patchwork across the province, I guess I'm just looking to the consultation that occurred on that front and if any concerns with the changes that are being brought today, if there were any concerns noted to the minister or officials.

[20:30]

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Okay, so I'll just take that one to start with. And I guess that was one of the amendments that came up after we did our broad consultation that I had spoke to you about. So when we looked at . . . When we left committee and we went and did our work as to what that would look like moving forward, we went to municipal websites to see exactly what kind of bylaws and rules were out there regarding firearms and how they were using that. And we saw that they were using it for public ceremonies and funerals and if they were opening up a gun range, then they would do noise bylaws and all of that kind of stuff.

So we just took the information that we found from all of the different municipal bylaws that were already out there and saw what they already had and decided that by doing this through regulations, that it would be easiest for the municipalities if they needed to change anything moving forward, and it would happen in a timely fashion. They could come to us and request that change and we could do it at that point in time.

And of course if it's with regards to banning guns and that sort of thing, then it's something that we wouldn't be amenable to; we would probably say no. But if they wanted to open up a gun range and put the bylaws in place and put the noise laws in place, absolutely then that's something that could happen in a timely fashion. So that's how we got to that.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — And as far as the consultation with the municipal associations on this front with the sector, are there any

concerns that have been identified through your consultations by external stakeholders?

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — No. As I mentioned this, we actually took care of this as we were doing the amendments after the fact. So by doing it through regulations, now what will happen is it will come into place and then we will talk to those associations. And through the regulations, if there are any strong concerns, we'll deal with it at that point in time.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — So you haven't consulted municipalities?

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Not specifically on this amendment because it was so late in the game. And by putting it in regulation instead of the legislation, then that allows for us to have those conversations and do any amendments if necessary.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Okay. Not ideal to not have the stakeholders.

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Absolutely.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — I can't speak for them. I suspect there's a sense that having a patchwork of bylaws across, you know, the province on some of these fronts probably isn't desired. I hear a statement that there's some flexibility that can be built in for municipalities. But yes, I guess, it's just not ideal. I guess, when was this initiated? I was hopeful that at least there had been engagement with the stakeholders for a bill that's before us at this stage of the committee.

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Yes, I mean I guess the one thing that I would note is the existing bylaws that are placed are actually grandfathered. It's not like we're going to go back and change anything that people are already doing. But I'll maybe let Rod address. I don't recall when we took this to committee the first time but you probably do.

**Mr. Nasewich:** — It was in the spring. The word on the potential federal legislation came in the spring, so it was after the bill had been introduced. So there was really no opportunity to consult. And Justice was waiting for the specific wording of the federal amendment, which still we're not sure about. So that's why the general wording is provided through the amendment and making sure that it applies only to new bylaws going forward, and limiting that authority, and then also adding, as the minister mentioned, regulation-making authority to deal with any clarification or issues that we may need to once the federal wording becomes clear.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Yes. No, I mean a lot of it at first blush, you know, a quick presentation certainly seems reasonable in how folks are approaching this. But again it's sure, you know, it's ideal and kind of the way it should be, that before we're before a table like this that we're able to bring forward the perspectives of the sector partners. But I guess we'll all be engaged moving forward on this front.

With respect to some of the changes around the, I guess just like the reporting, or for municipalities, or workload changes as a result of the new legislative changes, have you heard how prepared municipalities are to . . . I know they've gone to a lot of work to sort of prepare for these changes. What's the state of play



on that front around workload and preparedness for municipalities with respect to the changes around how they operate and how they keep records and how they manage their business?

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Okay, so that's a pretty broad question, and I guess we could go anywhere with that. But I think generally the changes that are taking place, whether they're administratively or whatever the case might be, is all to ensure that reporting is done in a timely fashion and is the most accurate as possible.

And I think municipalities share in that with us. They want to see the same thing right across the province. And any time that any changes are made, if they are cumbersome for a municipality, through our advisory services we have a lot of great staff that take the time to deal with each of those communities on a one-on-one basis, walk them through what the changes are. And if they need additional assistance they will help them with that kind of stuff.

So our intention isn't to make this cumbersome for them by any stretch of the imagination. It's just, you know, making for a little bit more accountability and a little bit more transparency right across the whole piece. And that's what we found through our consultations was what everybody's goal was.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — No, I appreciate that. I know municipalities out there, you know, want to, you know . . . They're proud to be good, strong stewards of their communities and their resources. They're often short on resources and sometimes, you know, I think, have a lot of pressure too, you know, with the demands that they face within their workload. And I know I've heard from municipalities across the province at some of these stakeholder meetings just that it takes a lot of work to change practice. But the goals and the aims that are put forward here are important.

Can you just expand a little bit on one of the points that's, I guess, a change here? And that's that it extends the period of suspension from council for 3 to 12 years for a member held financially liable for an unauthorized transaction.

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Sure. I'm probably going to turn this over to Rod for some more explanation on the history behind it. But you know, when you're voted in as a member of city council or a member of the Legislative Assembly, you're held to a higher threshold. And when you do things that lose the trust of the voters that have voted you in, I think accordingly so, you should be punished. But I will turn that over to Rod for some real background. That's my opinion.

**Mr. Nasewich:** — There's been long-standing provisions in the Act that make it an offence for a council to knowingly vote for an unauthorized expenditure or unbudgeted expenditure unless it's an emergency, and there's wording around that. So we're not changing the intent or the policy around those provisions.

The punishment was disqualification and the period was three years which used to be, a long time ago now, used to be the term of office for municipal councillors. So it's a stand-alone provision that had sort of been forgotten about really when we changed the disqualification period to be 12 years back in 2015 and make that consistent among the three Acts.

At one time the three Acts had all different periods of disqualification for various things, and we consolidated all those provisions in one set back in 2015 and made the period consistent at 12 years. But we forgot about that one. And our advisory services made us aware of that and so we altered it this time to make it clear that it should be consistent. If it's a disqualification matter, then the period should be the same.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Yes, makes sense. With respect to the changes around the rules for assessment, what's going on there?

**Mr. Nasewich:** — No real changes to the rules other than regarding resource production equipment. And it's just clarifying the definition of what is and isn't considered resource production equipment. And this follows a court case in the fall, which actually came after the bill had been prepared.

So what we're doing is making sure that we have regulation-making authority again to further clarify what is and isn't included in resource production equipment in that definition for assessment purposes, as based our consultations with SAMA [Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency].

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you very much. And the property tax appeal process, how is it being changed by the Act before us?

**Mr. Nasewich:** — There's a few things we're doing here. I'll cover some of the . . . they're not quite housekeeping but some of the smaller items that we're changing there. We're clarifying that a board of revision should be appointed when the assessment role is prepared, just so that there's no delay there.

The timeline for appeal decisions for all municipalities is set at 180 days. Currently that's in *The Cities Act* but not in the other two, so we're making that consistent.

We're doing some things from the appellant's point of view to make sure that the notices that are prescribed in regs — but they're required under the Acts — have the contact information both for the municipality and the board of revision, as well as information on the fees. So making that clear.

Also when a person files their notice, they're given some time to perfect it if it's deficient. We're making sure they are told what is deficient about the notice. Legislation was silent on that so there have been instances where they were just turned back to say it was deficient, and it was left to the appellants. We're making sure that the secretary of the board of revision makes that clear.

We're also clarifying some wording regarding transcripts and recording of hearings to make sure that that's written, and so we're adding that word in there.

Also there are situations where a property owner may not be a party to an assessment agreement or an appeal. It might be a tenant that does the appeal. So we're making sure that a property owner is notified of those situations. Again, just closing that loop that the Act was silent on it.

In terms of tax payments, no major changes. But we're just clarifying where there are situations of partial tax payments and the apportionment of tax payments so that they go to all the taxing partners, for example, the municipality as well as the

library if they're on the tax roll of the province through education property tax. Just making sure that wording is clear about when someone pays a partial amount how that's apportioned.

And probably the major thing is allowing for some regulation-making authority again around some of the definitions and some of the qualifications for board of revision members, and then providing for provincially established boards of revision, which Elissa can speak on in more detail.

**Ms. Aitken:** — Thank you. Elissa Aitken, executive director of policy and program services. So starting last summer we started engaging stakeholders in a pretty intensive consultation process around the first level of appeals for property tax. We had heard that that first level of appeal . . . So there's a number of levels of appeal in Saskatchewan. The first level is with the municipalities, and then SMB [Saskatchewan Municipal Board], and then through the courts. That first level of appeal wasn't working as well as we wanted it to, just in the sense of getting through those appeals in a timely way for taxpayers.

So we engaged in a consultation process last summer, as I said, and really brought a number of people together and got a consultant to work through the challenges that people were seeing with that first level. Praxis did that report for us. It's on our website and it certainly came to a great degree of consensus among stakeholders about what some of the challenges were. And so it gave us a really good path forward in terms of improving that system.

So since that time we've been working on a number of new pillars to that first level of appeals. So maintaining standards, just making sure that those first level of appeal, those board members, understand the expectations of them, that they have the training needed to hear appeals in a timely way to render good, solid decisions. Mandatory training, so making sure that again that they have access to that training so that they can really have those qualifications needed for this important job. Municipal autonomy of course was a principle that came through the consultations really clearly. Some municipalities do want to maintain their own boards of revision and it's very important to them that they maintain that. City of Regina is a great example of a board that's doing a great job and certainly they're interested in maintaining that, and so having a choice around that.

But then also in the smaller areas where . . . There's large portions of the province where they don't see many appeals and so it's challenging to bring together people who have enough experience to hear those appeals. If you hear one appeal every four years, it's pretty challenging to maintain current in that. So the idea of having a provincial board of revision came through that where . . . Could there be a default board at the provincial level where municipalities who don't want to maintain their own board would have somewhere to go?

And then the final pillar is the provincial registrar. And so streamlining the process by having a single intake for appeals, and then that single intake could funnel those appeals to the appropriate board, whether that's a municipal one or a provincial one.

So right now we're working with stakeholders. We have a steering committee formed and are working through those

changes. Our intention is to have this process up and running by 2023, which will be midway through that assessment cycle so hopefully the slowest time in terms of the appeals for the system. The legislation enables the system through regulations but certainly we don't have all the details worked out. We continue to work through that with stakeholders.

[20:45]

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thanks so much. I guess maybe touching on some of the changes around energy efficiency and renewable power and some of the changes that I believe could aid some improvements on this front and some greater control by municipalities. Could you speak to what's being brought on that front and who is involved in that body of work?

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Sure. So the intent with this is . . . This was a request that came forward by the municipalities to try and get some more . . . Work being done within their municipalities, people that wanted to change lines from their house to the water main or whatever the case may be but they couldn't afford to do it in one tranche. So this is just allowing municipalities the opportunity to be able to put that on the tax roll and spread that out over time. I guess technically they're loaning the money to the ratepayer until they can afford to pay that off, but it goes on their tax bill. So it's another way to help encourage green energy projects that are happening. So you know, if they did want to do that solar project but couldn't afford the entire thing right away, then they could put that on their tax roll and have the opportunity to pay it over time also. And if Rod wants to expand on that, but I think that's the intent of it.

**Mr. Nasewich:** — Sure. Just to expand a little bit on it. It ensures that it's done by agreement with the property owner, so a case-by-case or a program-based decision. It's entirely optional. And the legislation amendments were needed to ensure that programs of this nature — whether it's environmental improvements or custom work that's done by the municipality on behalf of the owner — if they did do a program like this, it wouldn't be counted against their debt or their debt limit because it is being repaid. So the legislation needed to be amended for that. And any time you want to put something on a person's property taxes, you need to do it by legislation.

And those amendments were brought forward by the city of Regina and city of Saskatoon, Regina's for custom work and Saskatoon for the environmental improvements. But we decided they were pretty good provisions to put in the other two Acts. Again entirely optional for municipalities to choose to use.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — So you used the example of . . . Like it might be a service line. Like a waterline might be an example of a project like that. Is that correct?

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — That's correct.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — And then you used the example of a solar project. Could you expand a little bit about, you know, what that would look like? Are we talking about, like an individual homeowner, like a rooftop solar-type array?

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Well it would be something that would be an agreement between the homeowner and the municipality. So if a

homeowner did decide to do that description that you just gave on their rooftop, then absolutely that would be something that would fall under these parameters.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — You know, it sounds like it offers good flexibility. It also sounds a little bit similar to some of the push that we've been making, just a bit around being able to enable some of those energy efficiency retrofits and solar arrays as well provincially. And there's a pretty great relationship that exists with our Crown corporation, SaskPower, on that front that really could allow, you know, folks to take on some projects and then have that amortized, of course, and paid back through a period of time.

I'll leave that — it's not our time with the Minister of SaskPower here tonight — because the one thing for municipalities is they're still rather limited when it comes to debt. You know, they've got a lot of demands when it comes to the operations and a lot of capital demands as well and they can't run a deficit of course. So to further enable some of what we're talking about here, it might be interesting to expand that conversation with the Minister of SaskPower.

I don't know that I have much . . . It's been a long day, hasn't it, for everybody. I don't think I have any other questions here tonight. I may have questions moving forward on some of these fronts, but thank you very much for your time. And to your officials, thank you very much.

And to all the sector partners across the province, all the municipalities across Saskatchewan that are impacted by this work, many of whom will have been directly involved in the creation of this work, just thank you to them for the good work that they do. And you know, with COVID-19 these really are extraordinary times and there's a lot of pressure that municipalities are facing that are different than what they've, you know, faced in the past, so just sending care to everybody.

**The Chair:** — Are there any more questions or comments from any committee members? Seeing none, clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clause 2-1 agreed to.]

### Clause 2-2

**The Chair:** — Clause 2-2. I recognize Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I would like to propose an amendment:

Amend Clause 2-2 of the printed Bill:

- (a) by renumbering subsection (1) as section 2-2; and
- (b) by striking out subsection (2).

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Do the committee members agree with the amendment as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Is clause 2-2 as amended, agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 2-2 as amended agreed to.]

### Clause 2-3

**The Chair:** — Clause 2-3. I recognize Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. I move an amendment that clause 2-3 of the printed bill:

- (a) by renumbering subsection (1) as subsection (2);
- (b) by renumbering subsection (2) as subsection (3); and
- (c) by adding the following subsection before subsection (2):

**(1) The following subsection is added after subsection 8(1):**

“(1.1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act or any other Act or law, a city has no power to pass any new bylaws respecting firearms, unless otherwise provided for by regulation”.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont has moved an amendment to clause 2-3. Do committee members agree with the amendment as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Is clause 2-3 agreed as amended?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 2-3 as amended agreed to.]

[Clauses 2-4 to 3-1 inclusive agreed to.]

### Clause 3-2

**The Chair:** — Clause 3-2. I recognize Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I would like to move an amendment.

Amend Clause 3-2 of the printed Bill:

- (a) by striking out clause (e);

- (b) by re-lettering clause (f) as clause (e);
- (c) by re-lettering clause (g) as clause (f);
- (d) by re-lettering clause (h) as clause (g); and
- (e) by re-lettering clause (i) as clause (h).

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Do the committee members agree with the amendment as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Is clause 3-2 as amended agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 3-2 as amended agreed to.]

### Clause 3-3

**The Chair:** — Clause 3-3. I recognize Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I have an amendment for this also.

Amend Clause 3-3 of the printed Bill:

- (a) by renumbering subsection (1) as subsection (2);
- (b) by renumbering subsection (2) as subsection (3); and
- (c) by adding the following subsection before subsection (2):

**(1) The following subsection is added after subsection 8(1):**

“(1.1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act or any other Act or law, a municipality has no power to pass any new bylaws respecting firearms, unless otherwise provided for by regulation”.

I so move.

[21:00]

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont has moved an amendment to clause 3-3. Do committee members agree with the amendment as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Is clause 3-3 as amended agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 3-3 as amended agreed to.]

[Clauses 3-4 to 4-1 inclusive agreed to.]

### Clause 4-2

**The Chair:** — Clause 4-2. I recognize Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. I'd like to move an amendment to clause 4-2 of the printed Bill:

- (a) by striking out clause (e);
- (b) by re-lettering clause (f) as clause (e);
- (c) by re-lettering clause (g) as clause (f);
- (d) by re-lettering clause (h) as clause (g); and
- (e) by re-lettering clause (i) as clause (h).

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont has moved an amendment to clause 4-2. Do committee members agree with the amendment as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Is clause 4-2 as amended, agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 4-2 as amended agreed to.]

### Clause 4-3

**The Chair:** — Clause 4-3. I recognize Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I move an amendment to clause 4-3 of the printed bill:

- (a) by renumbering subsection (1) as subsection (2);
- (b) by renumbering subsection (2) as subsection (3); and
- (c) by adding the following subsection before subsection (2):

**(1) The following subsection is added after subsection 8(1):**

“(1.1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act or any other Act or law, a municipality has no power to pass any new bylaws respecting firearms, unless otherwise provided for by regulation”.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont has moved an amendment to clause 4-3. Do committee members agree with the amendment as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Is clause 4-3 as amended, agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 4-3 as amended agreed to.]

[Clauses 4-4 to 5-2 inclusive agreed to.]

### Clause 5-3

**The Chair:** — Clause 5-3. I recognize Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I would move an amendment to clause 5-3 of the printed bill:

Amend clause 5-3 as a printed Bill in subsection (2) by striking out “4-42 and 4-44” and substituting “4-42, 4-44 and 4-81”.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont has moved an amendment to clause 5-3. Do committee members agree with the amendment as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Is clause 5-3 amended as agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 5-3 as amended agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — I recognize Mr. D'Autremont.

[21:15]

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I have one further amendment to propose by moving an amendment to the long title of the printed bill:

Strike out the long title of the printed Bill and substitute the following:

An Act to amend *The Cities Act*, *The Municipalities Act* and *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010* and to make consequential amendments to other Acts

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont has moved an amendment to the long title. Do committee members agree with the amendment as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Is the amendment to the long title agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019*. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 194, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019* with amendment.

**Mr. Francis:** — I move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Francis moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. This concludes our business for this evening. Minister, do you have any closing comments?

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Well just briefly since that was a little drawn out there, I know. We only open up the Act every 10 years so it was essential.

I just want to thank my officials for coming out tonight. I truly appreciate the time that they spend on the work that is done, and the help that they're always giving me. And thank you to the members of the committee for being here tonight. I appreciated that. And of course all of the support staff that make these evenings happen, so thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Wotherspoon, do you have any closing comments?

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Just about an hour of remarks I'd like to add.

**The Chair:** — Oh okay. Sure.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — No, thank you so very much, Chair, and Minister, and officials as I think I've identified already, or thanked you already. Thank you for the work and all those municipal partners. No great thanks to the member for Cannington for extending the meeting duly here this evening on this long day. But jokes aside, thanks to everyone for the work.

**The Chair:** — I also want to extend my thanks to the minister and the members being here tonight and all the support staff. It's been a day.

Seeing that we have no further business this evening, I will ask a member to move a motion of adjournment.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont has moved a motion to adjourn. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. The committee stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 17th at 3:30 p.m.

[The committee adjourned at 21:18.]