



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES**

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## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES**

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Cumberland



[The committee met at 17:00.]

**Chair Steele:** — Okay, we will get under way, folks. Excuse me. I'll get the tasers out; you've got to get in control here. Okay, okay. Welcome, everyone. I'm Doug Steele. I'm the Chair for this evening. Chris Beaudry, Terri Bromm, Hon. Lori Carr. Don McBean's not here, so okay, we'll jump ahead. Erika Ritchie, and we have Nathaniel Teed, right? Nathaniel, is that how you pronounce it? Okay. You're subbing in for Jordan McPhail. Okay, sir.

Okay. Tonight the committee will be considering the estimates for the Public Service Commission. After a recess from 7 to 7:30, the officials from Crown Investments Corporation will join us for consideration of the estimates and supplementary estimates no. 2 for the Debt Redemption, Sinking Fund and Interest Payments.

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

**Subvote (PS01)**

**Chair Steele:** — We will begin the 2025-26 estimates for vote 33, Public Service Commission. Central management and services, subvote (PS01).

Minister Harrison is here with his officials. I will remind officials to identify themselves before they take part in the discussion. Hansard will operate and turn on the mikes for you. Minister, please give your opening remarks and introductions.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Sure. Well thanks very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks to members of the committee for being here this evening. It's appreciated. We look forward to a couple of hours of discussion, and I am pleased to be here to provide additional information on estimates for the Public Service Commission.

Before I start, I would like to take a minute to introduce my officials. So here with me today I have Greg Tuer, Chair of the Public Service Commission; Pat Bokitch, assistant Chair of the Public Service Commission; Claudia Burke, assistant Chair of the Public Service Commission; Jarret Boon, executive director, corporate services; and Joella Moore, executive director, human resources service centre. I'd like to thank these officials for being here today. Additionally I'll acknowledge the other commission officials that are standing by as needed to support with answering questions.

The Public Service Commission, we'll refer to today as the PSC, is a central agency for government. The PSC provides human resource services for executive government as well as some agencies, boards, and commissions. This is important work to recruit, retain, grow, and compensate Saskatchewan public servants.

The PSC has a strong focus on addressing employee recruitment and retention challenges faced by ministries. As you can appreciate, ensuring we have the right people in the right roles to deliver on the growth plan initiatives is a top priority. The PSC has a dedicated talent team to support ministries with their talent

attraction and recruitment needs. This includes well-thought-out hiring strategies for hard-to-recruit roles.

The Government of Saskatchewan currently has more than 11,000 employees to serve citizens across our province. As a central human resource agency for government, the PSC provides leadership, support, and policy direction to all ministries to enable a high-performing and innovative professional public service.

We have human resource business partner teams embedded within ministries to serve their human resource needs. These teams bring HR [human resources] expertise and perspective to specific ministry initiatives. This approach recognizes the unique business of each ministry and ensures their HR professionals are fully integrated into their business. Ultimately this positions them to provide strategic human resources advice.

The PSC's plan for 2025-26 is consistent with previous years. The five areas of strategic priority remain the same. They are effective leadership; high-performing organization; representative workforce; health, safety and wellness; and the PSC being engaged in high performing. These areas position the PSC to meet the strategic human resource priorities of government.

With a tight labour market, the work of the PSC is more critical than ever. PSC's plan is aligned with the growth plan to ensure government has the workforce needed to deliver on provincial priorities to meet the needs of citizens.

PSC provides this support to the Government of Saskatchewan through payroll and benefits administration; consulting support for labour relations, organizational development, employee recruitment and development, compensation and classification, and leading collective bargaining on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Our priority, effective leadership, is about ensuring the Government of Saskatchewan has the leadership required to deliver on our commitments. Effective leaders provide clear direction, inspire and engage employees to perform at their best, and achieve government goals safely and efficiently.

This involves recruitment of strong leaders and ensuring senior leaders are well supported and positioned to succeed. The PSC has well-established training and supports in place to build strong teams and leaders, such as the executive education program, middle manager excellence program, and leadership development programs.

Our second focus is creating a high-performing organization. High-performing organizations are built intentionally, not by chance. The PSC supports this by proactively recruiting for critical and hard-to-fill positions; implementing government's multi-year employee learning strategy; ensuring managers have the necessary resources, tools, and supports to be effective in their roles. Our goal is to have engaged, productive employees who feel valued and appreciated. This is measured every second year by the government-wide employee engagement and culture survey.

The third strategic goal is building a representative workplace. We recognize that this objective enhances our public service. It enables us to better understand and meet the needs of our citizens.

The fourth area of focus in our plan is health, safety, and wellness. Productive employees are healthy employees, both physically and mentally. We strive to provide a safe working environment where employees are supported to do their best work.

Our fifth area of focus is ensuring the PSC is engaged and high performing. We're focused on a one-team approach to client service, culture, and decision making. To be high performing, we are ensuring the PSC has the people and tools needed to complete our plan. This includes preparing for the implementation of a new government-wide solution for an integrated financial, human resource, and procurement system. The new system will be called government enterprise management, or GEM.

GEM will be a key tool to the PSC's continued success. The modernized system will adjust current business systems that are reaching end of life, are costly to maintain, and require significant manual effort and duplication of work. It will integrate the systems for HR functions like time card entry, payroll financials, updating employee information and benefits information, and applying for jobs with the Government of Saskatchewan. It's a big project that requires planning, preparation, and appropriate resources to be successful.

An important priority for the Public Service Commission this year will be readying the people and processes for GEM. The organization is taking lessons learned from similar projects to ensure success. This includes hiring temporary resources to support clients across government as they adjust through the implementation of the new system and accompanying process changes. This ensures ministries have the support they need for a smooth transition, allowing them to continue to focus on delivering programs and services to the people of Saskatchewan.

In the past year, PSC made significant progress on many of our planned initiatives. The Public Service Commission is committed to supporting the recruitment and retention of qualified and high-performing employees. Through ongoing recruitment strategies and initiatives such as talent pools, social media-based recruitment, and community partnerships, the Public Service Commission supported government ministries to recruit the talent that they need.

A big success in this area was the support the PSC provided to the creation and implementation of the Saskatchewan marshals service. The PSC offered key human resource support through organizational design, position classification, and recruitment efforts to get the service set up and established.

Another recruitment success story was a pilot project in partnership with the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. The pilot saw the PSC offer targeted staffing and recruitment support to the ministry. The PSC helped to build new talent pipelines and implement effective hiring programs in collaboration with CPPS [Corrections, Policing and Public Safety] management.

They've also been using social media and career fairs to connect

with potential talent and enhance the appeal of public service careers. This includes an enhanced focus on our online presence on LinkedIn to tap into diverse talent pools and highlight the rewarding career opportunities within the government. This platform allows us to showcase the benefits and impacts in public service roles to attract skilled professionals who are passionate about making a difference.

A competitive pay and benefits package aids in recruitment and retention for all areas of government. The summer saw the successful negotiation and implementation of collective bargaining agreements with the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union, SGEU; and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, CUPE Local 600. This included implementing a classification plan renewal for SGEU. I appreciate the commitment and co-operation of both the PSC employees and the unions in working at the bargaining table to reach a new collective agreement that is good for both public service employees and the people of Saskatchewan.

With an aging payroll system, much manual work was required to successfully implement the agreements. I'd like to acknowledge the work of PSC employees to make the necessary changes and salary updates. I know they're looking forward to implementing the modernized payroll system that will be able to process these kinds of updates more efficiently and effectively.

Through the Public Service Commission's recruitment and retention initiatives, our goal is to reflect the diversity of our province to provide a competitive advantage in attracting, engaging, and growing talent. We remain focused on increasing summer student employment opportunities to provide development opportunities that build the next generation of Saskatchewan's public service.

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to ensuring workplace health, safety, and wellness for all its employees. Ministries, management, supervisors, and employees are actively engaged in developing and implementing approaches to health, safety, and wellness through effective strategies, programming, and performance.

The PSC is responsible for the government-wide employee and family assistance program that provides counselling, resources, and 24-7 service availability. They secured continued EFAP [employee family assistance program] services with Kii Health following a comprehensive procurement selection process this year. This agreement includes added benefits like regular mental health learning sessions and other proactive well-being tools related to personal finances, relationships, and physical health.

New this year employees can access support from an Elder or Knowledge Keeper within their community in place of standard EFAP short-term goal-focused counselling. EFAP also provides support and resources for managers to help them create psychologically safe workplaces. The mental and physical health of employees continues to be a high priority for government.

The focus of the PSC for 2025-26 is to continue to progress on our plan. The budget will allow us to focus on our priorities, will set the organization up for the successful transition to the new integrated human resource system, GEM, and position the organization to effectively support their client ministries.

In order to achieve its goals, the Government of Saskatchewan needs the strategic advice, support, and guidance of the PSC. Their work is critical to ensure we have the right people with the right skills in the public service. The PSC's work helps ministries so they can deliver for the people of Saskatchewan. I'm proud of the PSC's accomplishments and confident in the work that's planned for the coming year.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And we look forward to responding to questions.

**Chair Steele:** — Before we move into questions, could we get you to remove the drink bottle and the can? Just little housekeeping things. And we have glasses here as well. There's water provided.

MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Teed, go ahead and go into questions now.

[17:15]

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. I just want to first by saying welcome to the officials to the legislature on this pretty beautiful afternoon in Regina. I was just out there and wish we could all be out there but . . .

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — I move that we move the meeting outside.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Outside on the lawn, absolutely. I would support that. Absolutely. Look forward to our discussion and, Minister, I want to thank you for your opening remarks. Just very informative to hear what the PSC is working on and goals and strategies. Preface, I'm new to the critic portfolio. My colleague predecessor Jennifer Bowes was our PSC critic prior to the election. And so excited to dive in.

I just want to start, I think, with asking some financial questions. I want to start by asking about the increases to the various line items. So firstly we're seeing a 22 per cent increase in the budget to the central management services. Not a lot of explanation in the business plan or the budget, so I was wondering if you can give me a little explanation of why we're seeing such a large increase to central services at this time.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — So what we'll maybe do is I'll provide a bit of a high-level response, then I'll ask Greg and the team here to provide some more detailed comments. Because you're quite right. And you rightfully point out, there is a significant increase in a number of line items in the PSC budget this year.

And I think you point to initially, rightfully, the central management and services subvote where there is an increase of 1.149 million, which is a 22 per cent increase. And that's largely due to a \$1.073 million increase in accommodations for the additional space required. And that is because we are bringing 20 new permanent and 62 term positions for the new GEM program. That really is the big part of it.

There is \$108,000 in that increase as well to salary for central management and services as a result of the collective bargaining agreement increases and the out-of-scope economic adjustments.

There is another position funded for a term project manager for the GEM implementation process. And there is a net decrease in that as well, and that's of \$180,000. And that was an internal rebasing to better align the budget with actual expenditures. But I will turn it to Greg, and maybe he can get more granular on some of those items.

**Greg Tuer:** — Thanks, Minister. Greg Tuer, Chair of the Public Service Commission. So you're right, there is a significant increase in our budget this year. And really there's three main drivers behind the increase you see in our budget. The minister referred to the first, and that's salary increases across the board. And those are due to negotiated changes to our collective bargaining agreements and then their application to out-of-scope staff as well. So over across the entire PSC, that's \$2.96 million are tied to that.

Minister also referred to resources required for EBMP [enterprise business modernization project] and GEM system implementation. And so there are 20 permanent FTEs [full-time equivalent] for GEM system sustainment and 62 temporary FTEs for the implementation of GEM system. So we have the workforce there to respond to inquiries and sort of, you know, people will be working through a new system and have lots of questions. Those temporary FTEs will be primarily at the HR service centre where we would expect the largest volume of work, and also this includes project managers as the minister said.

The other, the third piece, is just the movement of funds between subvotes. We've gone through a reorganization process in preparation for this, and so we've moved staff across divisions as we're kind of transitioning to a new future state that is aligned with requirements for the new system.

So specifically for central management and services, that subvote includes operating expenses for the Chair's office, our commissioners' honorariums and travel expenses, our communications branch, our financial and admin services branch, and then our portion of Minister's office expenses. You'll also see in this subvote where we have our funding for government's long-service recognition program, and that's for our 25- and 35-year employees. We have an event every year and employees can come and get recognized.

As well as accommodation services for the PSC. And so we are located in seven office locations in Regina — that's three leased buildings and four government-owned buildings — and one office in Saskatoon, which is a government-owned building. And so included in this subvote there's office rent, record storage, postal services, things like that. It also includes a portion of our information technology expenses. So that's where we're billed through SaskBuilds and Procurement; so things like desktops, laptop, all of our computer needs.

So yes, overall the central management services subvote increased by \$1.149 million, and that's due to, as the Minister said, an increase of \$1 million in accommodations. And that's directly linked to the additional staff that we'll see coming on for this year, the project manager resource to help us manage the implementation of the system as well as helping us provide response to any critical issues that may pop up. And then finally the increase in negotiated changes.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you so much for the detailed information there. I'm just reviewing here through my notes. I might come back to something. But I might move on and just we'll continue through these subvotes.

Another 44 per cent increase under the subvote called employee relations and strategic human resources. Again could I ask about those increases: why they're increasing so much and what's the money being used for?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — I'll maybe kind of provide a high-level response, and then Greg can provide a more granular response as well. But it's a very good question. And it's a very valid observation as well.

So there has been an increase on the employee relations and strategic human resource services subvote of just over \$4 million — \$4.014 million increase, which is a 44.5 per cent increase. And this really includes an increase of \$2.393 million in salary funding, and that aligns with the future-state structure of the PSC.

And Greg can speak a bit more to that, but that includes the collective bargaining agreement increase and the out-of-scope economic adjustments. It includes \$1.259 million for 15 new permanent positions in the talent branch. And really these positions are required to complete the new work that GEM requires, as well as the work that's being transferred from the ministries as a result of the new systems requirements. Also an increase of \$210,000 related to changes in the administration of the criminal record check program. And an increase of \$152,000 in operational funding that is a result of the internal rebasing based on the actual expenditure.

So Greg, over to you.

**Greg Tuer:** — So I won't restate the numbers. I think what I'll do is just . . . When we implement the new system in our talent branch, we'll be increasing the supports we provide to hiring managers in the staffing process. And so there are requirements in the system that people at PSC will need to input information, make sure information is flowing through the system, to make sure that we can onboard and get people set up in the organization.

Where you're seeing a decrease in some votes and an increase here really is primarily a number of staff in PSC moving to our talent branch in order to support that staffing function. So we have staff from our HR business partner teams who are moving. We have people from our HR service centre who are moving there. And all of that is really to support government's priority around making sure that we're able to hire people in order to deliver on our priorities.

The systems we have today, we have a distributed staffing model and each and every hiring manager has their own support person helping them to use our Taleo system. And so what we're doing when we go to the new system, we're consolidating all of that centrally, and then PSC will provide that support, as well as recruitment supports and advice to managers.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Are you seeing like a projection that there will be, I guess, efficiencies found with the transition to a new system, some of the changes that you're making, moving people,

providing supports? You know, it looks like we're seeing kind of a larger investment up front. Will those efficiencies equal, you know, savings down the road? I guess I don't know if that's the best way to say it. But could you comment maybe on some of the efficiencies you expect to see?

**Greg Tuer:** — Yeah, so I think you've kind of hit the nail on the head. Consolidating all of these resources in one place I really think provides us with the opportunity to see sort of efficiencies of scale. With a distributed model like we have today, we have, I don't know, approximately 3,000 hiring managers across government. And so the opportunity to find efficiencies, have better process, you know, be more efficient with it is more challenging.

We're moving to a consolidation. We'll have all of those resources in one branch, and you know, opportunity as we get to know the system. Because yeah, I think we'll see a bit of an uptick in terms of the effort required as we get to know the system, as our clients get to know the system. But absolutely the long-term thinking is over time we'll find better ways to be more efficient and frankly more effective.

And so those 15 resources that you see in our budget really is our estimation of the work that's currently distributed across the government. And so we've realigned that work. We've brought it centrally into our talent branch, thinking that, yeah, we can probably be a lot more efficient than the distributed 3,000 hiring managers.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Great. So what we likely will see is hiring managers moving from other ministries consolidating within the PSC as opposed to sitting in Health or sitting in Education, would you say? Is that fair to say?

**Greg Tuer:** — No. What will happen is — sorry, I probably wasn't clear — so we will have talent acquisition consultants that will work directly with managers who are out there running their programs. At the end of the day, the managers will still make the hiring decision, but they will have a human resource person right there with them and someone who has expertise in recruitment and be able to help them, you know, work through interview guides, through how we're going to assess people, what the best strategy is in order to find the people that we're looking for for a particular person. And of course we'll have those same people working with the system day in, day out, and that's where we expect to see efficiencies in the longer term.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — And when you said "consolidating," now would those be those 20 new positions in central management and services, or are we going to see kind of a consolidation of staff under these different lines?

**Greg Tuer:** — Those 15 employees will ultimately be in our talent branch, which is in the employee relations and strategic HR services. Where you're seeing money in central management and services is the accommodation piece. So the IT [information technology] supports, the space, the offices — all that sort of piece.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you so much. I'll move on to the increase in the human resources service centre. Again we're seeing an 85 per cent increase in the '25-26 budget. I'm looking



for that high-level and granular details on what this money is being used for.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Yeah, no, I appreciate the question and it's a good one as well. There is a significant increase in the HR service centre budget, \$9.175 million increase, which is 85.5 per cent, so very, very significant. And this includes a number of things which we'll get into, but I'll go through them.

Increase of \$699,000 in salary funding to align with the future-state structure of the PSC, and this includes the collective bargaining agreement increase and the out-of-scope economic adjustments which were the case in the other items as well.

Includes \$3.633 million in salary funding for the 61 term positions which we had earlier referenced, and 329,000 for the five permanent positions in the human resource service centre in order to implement and sustain the new enterprise management system; five permanent configuration analysts that are required to support the new human resource modules in the new system due to their size and complexity; and the 61 temporary resources which are required to ensure effective and timely payroll processing through the implementation period.

Also includes \$4.471 million for GEM system implementation, comprised of 2.6 million for PSC's contribution to the sustainment contract, 1.4 million for the licensing costs related to the HCM [human capital management] module, and \$150,000 for GEM training. Greg can maybe speak to some of the other details.

**Greg Tuer:** — Absolutely. So the human resource service centre in a typical year would be somewhere just over 100 FTEs, about 118. With the additional term resources we'll be up around 176 FTEs for the upcoming year.

[17:30]

And so the HR service centre subvote, that's the salaries and operating expenses for the HR service centre. And that's where we provide human resource administration, payroll, and benefit services to government employees and some external agencies.

They are also the people who maintain a number of our existing HR information systems, and so we have the associated costs with those. So that would be our current MIDAS [multi-informational database application system] HR payroll system, our benefits system, our learning system, PSC Client, that Taleo staffing recruitment system I referred to earlier, our Be At Work accommodations program, our classification application that we use internally, and our incident reporting and investigation safety tool.

So as you mentioned, the increase in funding is again just under 700,000 — 699,000. Includes those collective bargaining agreements, so that adjustment and the out-of-scope economic adjustments for the out-of-scope staff, as well as the money and funding for the 61 term positions. And those people will be brought in, just again, to make sure that we are ready for implementation sort of shortly in advance. And then we do expect to see a significant increase in calls from clients as they adjust to the new system.

They will get more information on their pay stubs than we ever have, and so we just expect a lot more calls. And we've been, through the project, talking to folks in other projects like AIMS [administrative information management system], and they've informed us that, you know, part of their initial implementation was, boy, we should resource up so we're prepared for that onslaught.

So we're going to be doing that. We have five permanent configuration analysts, and that's in addition to the folks that we have today that are supporting those other systems. And so, once the system is implemented, then we'll be responsible for the maintenance and ongoing upkeep for it. And also in addition to that, there's \$2.7 million for our contribution to the overall sustainment contract, \$1.4 million for licensing costs related to the HR module, \$290,000 just for additional IT costs, and \$150,000 earmarked for training.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you so much. What is the term for those 60 positions that will be brought in to help implement this process? Do you have a timeline? Or do you see when those folks will be . . .

**Greg Tuer:** — So that funding is for this fiscal year. Yeah, so again we expect in the longer term we will see efficiencies through the system. This is ramping up to prepare for turning on the system and that initial — I keep using the term onslaught but — increase in service requests from clients. And then we'll keep an eye on that and if we need more, then I guess we'll go back to the treasury board process.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Were there any lessons that we've learned from AIMS that might have, will continue to make this process a little smoother or make sure that we're not seeing cost overruns? Are you able to speak to those at all?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Yeah, you know, I appreciate the question. I think probably SaskBuilds would be better positioned to comment on that. I think Greg spoke well though to, I think, some best practices around being prepared for that increase in support requests that are going to be coming forward, and that really is reflected in the 61 positions which we had just been discussing. So we're going to make sure that we are, you know, as well positioned as we can be to respond to a lot of the requests that come forward through the process.

I think as MLAs we're familiar with a small part of it through the PSC Client process, but really across government there are a whole lot of applications. So you know, hopefully not too many requests coming from members in the Chamber. There may be. You never know. I know I've had to have help on occasion with a couple of elements.

So you know, increased functionality. We are expecting there are going to be additional requests. So that would be, I think, a best practice that really we've taken to heart, and that's why we've staffed up as far as the temporary resources.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you so much. Could you provide me with the term of the collective bargaining agreement that was signed with CUPE and SGEU?

**Pat Bokitch:** — Thank you for the question. I'm Pat Bokitch,

assistant Chair. The current collective bargaining agreement that was reached recently, negotiated and implemented, expires on September 30th, 2025, so coming up this fall. That was a three-year agreement going back to 2022.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — And have negotiations started to renew that collective agreement?

**Pat Bokitch:** — Thank you for your question. We're really in the preliminary stages, not yet actively bargaining, just strategizing our approach as the employer.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Certainly have some time then. Could you provide me with the percentage increases over the term of that three-year collective agreement?

**Pat Bokitch:** — Yeah, for sure. So the general wage increases for the most recent collective bargaining agreement were 3 per cent for 2022, 2 per cent for 2023, and 2 per cent for 2024. That included a wage increase and a small percentage applicable to pensions.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — And would it have been any different for out-of-scope employees?

**Pat Bokitch:** — The general wage increases were applied to out-of-scope employees in the same way.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you so much. I guess relating to . . . Thank you so much for breaking down all those various increases. I think we see very logical, you know, money needing to be applied to facilitate those collective agreements.

I guess perhaps maybe my question is . . . And maybe it is a comment on the timeliness of making these larger investments on switching our technology. You know, we see a lot of unprecedented events happening, money needed for health care, money needed for education, all those things. Could you maybe give us a little explanation as to why you felt like now was the time to make those investments in new technology?

**Greg Tuer:** — Thanks for the question. Can't speak to the investments in health care or education, but for the PSC our existing HR information system, MIDAS, was implemented almost 20 years ago. I would say that the challenge is to support it at this point. It's old technology. We've fallen behind with the times. I think we're seeing it show its wear and tear, so we really were at the point where it'd be costing us more just to try and maintain what we have than to invest in new technology at this point.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Yeah, I'd maybe offer just some high-level thoughts as well. I mean, you know, as Greg well points out, MIDAS has been the system we've had in place now for over 20 years. And I kind of relate back to . . . You know, my dad was — I think I've mentioned this before — my father was a senior public servant, and he's like, you're still using MIDAS? Because 20 years ago, even at that point, there was some challenges, I would say. Not being personally conversant with all of them, I know that there had been.

So you know, technology has moved along from where it had been, and really I think that this would be viewed . . . I think it

would be fair to say that we view this as an investment that will be, you know, showing returns across the entirety of the public service, as far as efficiency, as far as flexibility, as far as staffing requirements.

There is a very, very significant component of manual attention needed to a lot of the processes that exist right now. You know, IT systems are known to often be quite expensive as far as the front-end investment, but I think well implemented over time, you do end up seeing a return on that investment.

So I think, you know, we really look at it in that context of, we had a system that needed to be replaced, or a number of different systems that needed to be replaced, and by doing that — and doing that in a way that will reduce the need for a lot of the manual and detailed and other processes that we've used to kind of paper over some of the challenges that exist in the other IT systems — that at the end of the day we're going to realize more benefit from doing this than the cost.

**Greg Tuer:** — May I add one . . .

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Absolutely. Go ahead, Greg.

**Greg Tuer:** — I'm sorry. I missed a point there, I think. Also with the age of our system, there could come with that certain IT security concerns, and so it costs a lot to maintain. It's important that we make sure that the system is secure. And just with a system like ours of that vintage, it just comes with more challenges on that front. So we're moving to a modern, new system. It will be updated more regularly, and hopefully with that comes a higher degree of security for our information.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Really appreciate that. No, absolutely. All very important factors, efficiency and security. It might be a little granular, but would you have an answer to how many systems that GEM will be replacing? Is it quite large? Yeah.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I can . . . Kind of when you get into the really granular components of GEM, probably SaskBuilds. But what I can tell you, this is going to replace 60 systems across government, so it's a large number.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Well that's appreciated. I think we had kind of talked a little bit about 1.4 million for licensing costs. Do you have a figure for the ongoing operating costs that we'll be seeing once this is fully implemented?

**Pat Bokitch:** — Thank you for the question. We're not able to answer that. I think it's probably best positioned with SaskBuilds as the project lead.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Okay, thank you so much. I will make a note of that.

**Erika Ritchie:** — So will I.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — It's a good thing I've got my colleague, the critic for SaskBuilds, right here with us. I'm just going to take a peek at my questions here. We've been kind of talking perhaps maybe . . . What state of implementation are we at with GEM? And what do you see the timeline being for full actualization?

**Greg Tuer:** — So we're at the point right now, the project is doing what is called integrated testing cycle. So that's where they're testing across the HR system, the financial system, and the procurement system. And so the plan as it stands right now is the financial and procurement system components are targeted to launch in fall of 2025. And then human resource components will launch, you know, anywhere from four to six months after that. So we're continuing to test, make sure we've removed all of the bugs before we go live, again learning from where others have gone before us here.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — For sure. No, I certainly appreciate that, and I'm sure all the employees that we have in the Government of Saskatchewan appreciate that. I know we heard a lot of horror stories from the federal government level with Phoenix pay system, and we probably do not want to see that happen.

[17:45]

I'm just going to jump back to my question about operating costs. One question that we had was, why . . . Is SaskBuilds paying for the operating costs, the yearly operating costs, or why would that loop back to SaskBuilds?

**Greg Tuer:** — Maybe it would be best if I just clarify what is in our budget for the year ahead. I think, you know, in terms of operating cost, I think we'll expect the same and then, you know, adjustments for inflation as we go ahead.

So what we have in the PSC budget for this upcoming year is approximately \$4.5 million. So that's \$150,000 for Oracle University subscription. And so this is the training that our configuration analysts will require. So they will get that training directly from Oracle. \$1.4 million for software licensing, which might be the operating cost that you were speaking to, and that's so that all of Government of Saskatchewan can use the HR components of the system. \$2.7 million for the HR portion of the Deloitte sustainment contract, so that's the contract going forward. And then \$260,000 for ITD [information technology division] services through this, so that would be the SaskBuilds portion.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Sorry. Could you explain ITD services?

**Greg Tuer:** — I'm sorry. So SaskBuilds and Procurement, their division that's responsible for IT services to government is called information technology division, ITD. Sorry for the acronym.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — No, appreciate. I guess that probably kind of answers my question. So like which ministry in government was responsible for overseeing the implementation of GEM for PCS? And then will that ministry remain responsible for that IT system? Would that be fair to say that SaskBuilds . . .

**Greg Tuer:** — I would say PSC will be responsible for the HR component of it. ITO [information technology office] or ITD, which would be SaskBuilds and Procurement, kind of has the overall IT oversight for government. Finance will be responsible for the financial part of the system as well.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you so much. Do you happen to have a total capital cost of the GEM system for the government from when implementation started until now?

**Greg Tuer:** — That would be SaskBuilds.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Just a clarification. Great. I guess the question I would need there: are they booking the expense through SaskBuilds or through PSC?

**Greg Tuer:** — Right now while the project is in development, that's all through SaskBuilds. Once we move to implementation, then it will be distributed to the different partner ministries.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Okay. Could I just get a little clarification? GEM versus the EBMP's IT system, just for maybe those watching at home.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — That three people.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Three people and I'll add myself as well.

**Greg Tuer:** — Well I think we have 20 in the board room right now screaming the answer to me. But so EBMP is the project. And I'll talk really slowly because I'm trying to remember what the "P" is. Enterprise business . . .

**Pat Bokitch:** — Enterprise business management project. "P" for project.

**Greg Tuer:** — We'll say project. And so once we move to implementing the system, it will be called GEM. The project itself actually held a little contest with the staff who are currently developing the system to come up with the name of it going forward. And so GEM will be short for government enterprise management. And you know how we love our three-letter acronyms. So it will be GEM going forward.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — If it doesn't have an acronym, does it exist within a government? Or any kind of system? No, I really appreciate that help. And I know that I'm sure that I'll be conferring some of these questions where we can go to SaskBuilds to get better answers for.

What is the location of the data centre running the software for GEM?

**Greg Tuer:** — I'm sorry, you'll have to ask SaskBuilds on that. Yeah.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — I appreciate that. Thank you so much. I think then at this point I'm going to move on to some FTE questions. I'm just going to review here to see if there was any . . . I've been taking some frantic notes as we've been chatting and just going to see if there was anything else that jumped out at me. But I appreciate the clarification as to where SaskBuilds and PSC kind of engage on this.

What I'm going to do is I'll jump over to some FTE questions. I guess my first question is, what is the number of government FTEs that PCS is responsible as of April 1st, '25-26? And could you provide me a breakdown by ministry, agency, or commission?

**Greg Tuer:** — Sorry, we don't have the updated numbers for the end of this last fiscal year, start of this. We could provide you for the end of the '23-24 fiscal year.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — That would be fantastic.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Thanks. Greg and the officials can maybe speak to it in a bit more depth about the allocation within the PSC. But at the end of '23-24 there were 289 FTEs allocated to the Public Service Commission, which was a slight increase from the '22-23 year in which there were 283. So across government that year '23-24 there were 11,673 FTEs.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — And how would those break down in the PSC, like agency or commission?

**Greg Tuer:** — So again, so these would be to the end of the '23-24 fiscal year. We're at that unique period in time right now in early April where all of the year-end processing continues, so we don't actually have a finalized number for the ministries until May. What I can tell you is head count, which is not FTE, but sort of the number of individual employees in government at the end of December 2024 was 11,625. But I can go through those '23-24 numbers if you'd like.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — I'd appreciate that.

**Greg Tuer:** — So this is for executive government. This is the ministries that we provide service to.

So Advanced Education was 113 FTEs; Ministry of Agriculture, 332; Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, 2,777; Education, 269; Energy and Resources, 294; Environment, 358; Executive Council, 75; Finance, 352; Firearms Secretariat, 18; Government Relations, 164; Health, 381; Highways, 1,268.

Immigration and Career Training, 249; integrated justice services, 182; Justice and Attorney General, 958; Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, 160; Parks, Culture and Sport, 443; Public Service Commission, 289; SaskBuilds and Procurement, 991; Social Services, 1,879; and Trade and Export Development is 122. So that comes to 11,673.

I think just the additional clarification that I'll make is that's FTE utilization. So you might see in certain budget documents . . . I'll use PSC as an example. You know, we had 304 FTEs as our budget allocation, so our utilization last year, or I guess a year ago, would have been 289. So through turnover, vacancies, the time it takes to staff up a position, you know, we don't fully utilize that FTE, and so that's the sum of what those ministries have utilized in that year.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Yeah, and I might add to that as well. So you know, this is part of the increase that we're seeing in the Public Service Commission into this fiscal year though. So there were the 305 that were allocated FTEs, less as we kind of go through the year. And you know, there's some that are not filled for whatever reason over parts of that year, so you end up with the year-end basically reconciliation of the actual utilization of the FTEs allocated. So you end up with a bit of variance because of these different ways of calculating or talking about the FTE count.

There are additional FTEs allocated to the Public Service Commission this year, and that's precisely what you were rightfully asking about earlier with regard to staffing for primarily the GEM project. So the 61 part-timer or non-

permanent FTEs that are going to be allocated to PSC this year, and then the additional 20 on top of that. So there's an increase of 82 FTEs allocated in this budget year over last budget year.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Perfect. How many staff were terminated with cause by PSC and its organizations in '24-25 and therefore included in the administration costs of PSC budget forecast, which is part of the '25 estimates document?

[18:00]

**Greg Tuer:** — Just if I can clarify, you said terminations with cause?

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Yes.

**Greg Tuer:** — So this would be across all of the Government of Saskatchewan. Just to clarify, I think you used "within PSC," but so this is across PSC. And so our HR business partners and our employee and labour relations branch would support managers as they work through a termination process, as well as support from civil law in the Ministry of Justice. And so the numbers we have are just to December of '24-25. And so those, there were 10 terminations for cause across the Government of Saskatchewan.

And maybe just one more . . . maybe come back to my first point of clarification there. Those terminations would be done by the ministries, so that would be distributed across all of the Government of Saskatchewan.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Right. And so then therefore, like, the costs would also be distributed amongst all those . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay, sounds good. Do you have a figure on how many staff were terminated without cause by PSC or the ministries across the board?

**Greg Tuer:** — Okay, so for out-of-scope terminations without cause, that would include situations where there was a job abolishment, a dismissal, and/or a demotion. So from April 1st of 2024 to December 31st, 2024, there were 24 terminations without cause, yeah, across government.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Are you able to break down the job abolition, dismissal, or demotion numbers?

**Greg Tuer:** — No, sorry. We've just . . . The information we have here today just has all of the "without cause" lumped together.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Appreciate that. Again would those costs be shared across the ministries? Or is there a portion of your budget estimates that would cover for that?

**Greg Tuer:** — The cost for a settlement on a dismissal without cause would be borne by the ministry that made that determination. So again we would support those managers in doing the termination, but the decision to terminate would be at the ministry as well as the cost for whatever the agreement was at the end.

And those agreements or severance payments, they're guided by common-law principles and precedents and/or, you know, the appropriate Act if there's specific language of a specific Act.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — So going back to the “with cause” or “without cause,” we have 10 overall global. Do you have any numbers specifically for PSC?

**Greg Tuer:** — Well for PSC for terminations?

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Yeah. With and without cause. Yeah.

**Greg Tuer:** — So then the number for the Public Service Commission for terminations overall last year was three.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you so much. How many union staff were laid off under the provisions of the union agreements by PSC and organizations that it supported and therefore included in the PSC budget? And what was the total cost of those payments?

**Greg Tuer:** — Thanks for the question. We actually don’t have a number for that here. What I would say though, for in-scope employees who are laid off, they would have access to the bumping provisions in the collective agreement. And so there’s a number of options for an individual. They can choose to bump based on classification level; they can choose to bump based on location. So if you are an employee in a centre other than Regina or Saskatoon it might be more of a priority for you to stay close to where you are. And so there is an entire bumping process for those situations.

We’re not aware of any abolishments or layoffs, but that’s something that we can go back and check. The only number we have in front of us is the dismissals with cause.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — That’s very appreciated. Is it something that perhaps that you might be able to provide me?

**Greg Tuer:** — We can go back and see if we have a number.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — I guess I wondered, do you want to recess until the minister is back? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I don’t mind if you want to . . . [inaudible] . . . Or I can keep asking questions but I, if he wants . . . I’m good. I’m happy either way.

**Chair Steele:** — Do you feel confident that you can answer if we continue on?

**Greg Tuer:** — Yeah. No we’ll be . . . [inaudible].

**Chair Steele:** — Otherwise their time allotted won’t get filled, right.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Oh, totally not a worry.

**Chair Steele:** — You’re fine with that?

**A Member:** — Yes.

**Chair Steele:** — Okay.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — I guess maybe I’ll ask a few questions around . . . While we’re kind of talking about the union staff or, you know, layoffs or terminations, I wonder if you have any other, any use of private contractors within the PSC? Are you seeing any work that was formerly done internally that has been outsourced to private contractors in the last year? Anything being

considered for contracting out in the coming year?

**Greg Tuer:** — Thanks for the question. So again, off the top of our head, we’re not aware of any privatization. If an organization was to consider changing service provider like that, they would be required to work through the Public Service Commission. We would then have conversations with the SGEU. There’s provisions in our collective agreement that speak to that. And sorry, we’re not aware of any examples in the last year.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Appreciate that. As far as vendor-sponsored travel, we had discussed some of the use of the Oracle University training. Is there any vendor-sponsored travel as part of that? Have any of the ministry employees taken any trips paid by vendors outside the contractual agreement? Off-site training?

**Greg Tuer:** — Thanks for the question. No, we’re not aware of any vendor-sponsored travel occurring inside the Public Service Commission in the last year. The specific example you used of Oracle University, that will be completely virtual for our staff. So that will be done online from here.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you so much. Related to, or maybe just to continue with that, a little bit of questioning. Is there any money being spent on advertising by the ministry?

**Greg Tuer:** — Again thanks for the question. The Public Service Commission, the only advertising we would do would be posting job ads. We don’t have campaigns, billboards, things like that. We are a central agency back office. There’s not a lot to promote there.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — I appreciate that. Is there any cost related to the job postings with SaskJobs? Or whereabouts are you utilizing job postings?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I could maybe speak to the SaskJobs-specific question. I’ll maybe turn it to Greg and the team for where we post jobs additional to that. But SaskJobs is a program run through the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training. You know, not an insignificant amount of work has gone into keeping SaskJobs up to date.

And there had been a discussion a number of years ago where the Government of Canada basically wanted to take over the job posting process from provinces, many of which had SaskJobs-equivalent sort of job posting sites. In order to do that though, which the federal government had given a commitment to pay to do, but as probably not a surprise to most folks in the Chamber, it was overly complicated, highly bureaucratic, and very ineffective.

So we, on the basis of that, basically told the federal government, you know, thanks but no thanks; we’re going to regenerate the SaskJobs platform. Which we did, working directly with employers to really make it the central hub that it was and is and it continues to be.

They do a good job at ICT [Immigration and Career Training] of administering that system. But you know, we take advantage of that through job postings through the Public Service Commission along with a number of employers across the province as well.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Is there any cost associated with that?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — I don't believe that there is a cost associated with promoting jobs on SaskJobs for government, although Minister Reiter or our senior team at ICT could probably speak to that more eloquently.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Are you using any other platforms to post jobs?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — We are. And that's what I'll turn it to Greg to discuss.

**Greg Tuer:** — Yes. So I believe I heard the minister say, of course, we're using our own Government of Saskatchewan career centre. But in addition to that we utilize LinkedIn, so the recruitment website. And so we have what's deemed as three recruiter licences, six job slots, and access to what is described as a career life page. And so our contract for the next 13 months with LinkedIn comes to \$79,131.

[18:15]

And so what we receive for that again is . . . The recruiter licence really allows us to link our own HR information system to LinkedIn so we have a seamless posting. So if you or I went in to apply for a job, we could go in through LinkedIn. It goes directly to our career centre. And so someone doesn't have to see the ad in SpotOne and then search out the career centre, so a more efficient way. And hopefully that helps us be more effective.

Through that we can also send messages to anyone who has a profile on the platform, and so that is through their InMail system. And it also provides us with advanced search filters and the ability to save those searches. So if there was a unique occupation inside government and we were looking for a butterfly specialist for the Ministry of Agriculture, we could go through and do a really advanced search to see what that labour market looks like inside LinkedIn.

The Job Slots again. So that's sort of the ability to promote jobs, have that engagement with candidates, and also manage the applications through that. So an example would be Ministry of Finance has a financial analyst. There's a paid job ad on LinkedIn, and that's front and centre for individuals who match. It would be specific criteria that we've put in for whether it's a certain financial designation or something, you know, that's unique to that role. And then it's in our job posting. We're able to use the system to search out and find people who have that on their profile, and so that comes up in front of them. So it helps us push ads out to the people out there that we might want to recruit.

And then finally the Career, Life page provides candidates with the opportunity to see what it looks like to work for the Government of Saskatchewan. So from time to time when you're on LinkedIn you might see specific employees from the Government of Saskatchewan, where we've highlighted front-line employees, and they're able to say a little bit about what it is they do and what their experience is.

And we've really found that it's a really powerful tool. It increases awareness of what the jobs are across the Government of Saskatchewan. And we're seeing it driving interest to roles

where people might, oh, didn't know they had that work in government, or hadn't thought about the Government of Saskatchewan. And it puts a little bit more of a personal touch on it than kind of, you know, a standard corporate ad.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Is LinkedIn . . . Like do you use Indeed or any other platforms for job postings?

**Greg Tuer:** — I've been informed the short answer is no.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — No. Appreciate that. I guess I'll ask and then maybe jump a little bit here to cost-saving measures. And I wonder if you could describe any, you know, cost-saving measures that PSC is looking at.

I understand, you know, that we're making an investment. We're doing this for the future, for efficiencies. I'm wondering if there is anything in the plan though to make sure that, you know, we're saving money where we can — hiring freezes, vacancy management, out-of-province travel limitations, those things.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — I'll let the team maybe just speak to some of the details. But we went through a couple of the examples in the very early questions that the member put forward around decreases that really were rebasing elements of the individual subvotes, which really were around alignment with the actual expenditures that we historically had seen, right.

So that was the case in central management and services. That was the case in the budget on employee relations and strategic HR. Between those two it was, you know, 3 or \$400,000 in reductions there. So we're always looking to make sure that we're aligning expenditures, even budgeted expenditures, with actuals to make sure that we're being efficient. But I will turn it to the experts for perhaps more detail.

**Greg Tuer:** — Thanks for the question. I'll come at this from a few angles. Think we have one really strong example. A year ago now we went through a procurement process around our employee and family assistance program. So we had been working with one organization for a period of time.

That contract came up. And so through the procurement process we feel we were able to expand the services that were available. But so our previous provider, our annual cost per contract year was just shy of \$460,000 a year. The contract that we've been able to establish with our current provider, Kii Health, is in the neighbourhood of just over \$377,000 a year and a little bit of change.

So right there was some saving going through that procurement process. And that was a process that we engaged in with a number of the Crowns. All of our contracts came up at the same time. We went out to procurement together. Each of the organizations signed our own contract. There was a little bit of sort of the power of coming together and negotiating together to get that contract.

Other examples, the minister mentioned earlier that we are distributed across a number of locations in both Regina and one location in Saskatoon. And so part of our ongoing process is just to take a look at what our lease costs are in the buildings that we're in. Are there opportunities to get more efficient there? This

is not directly a cost that the PSC has saved, but what I would say is to the broader government organization. The Public Service Commission, we have two collective bargaining agreements that we negotiate on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan.

But in addition to those two agreements, we bargain on behalf of a number of other government-like organizations. So we bargain on behalf of the Sask Arts Board with the SGEU. We bargain on behalf of Sask Crop Insurance with SGEU. We bargain on behalf of Conexus Arts Centre with their two unions. We bargain on behalf of Legal Aid and we bargain on behalf of Water Security Agency. And so those would be examples of smaller organizations.

This is, you know, a very specific skill set to be able to bargain a collective agreement. We have a group of people who that's the technical skills that they bring to the table. So rather than broader government spending time, money, or having to contract that out, or us stealing from each other at those times, the PSC provides that service to those organizations.

In addition to those measures, PSC ourselves, we take a close look at every vacancy that comes up, make sure that the work that that vacancy does is aligned to our priorities, our clients' priorities. And at times we might sit on a vacancy for a period of time just to make sure that, you know, we're certain that that's the work we need to proceed with or perhaps move those resources inside PSC. And we talked a little bit about rebasing to make sure that we have resources in the areas where are our immediate priorities.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — No, thank you so much. I guess I'll quickly ask about, you know, the reduction in spending around the employee family health care plan. Are you seeing, you know, similar services and savings?

**Greg Tuer:** — You know, I think anecdotally we're getting more for less money in this. The minister mentioned I believe in his opening comments the current provider has been very open to input from us. So things like when we first contracted with the organization, one of the maybe gaps in service that was identified was the ability for Indigenous employees to access Elder services. That wasn't in our initial contract. We reached out to the organization, and they were quite open to expanding their service to provide that.

There is a very, very deep catalogue of services that are provided by these folks. So there are things like online therapist-assisted cognitive behavioural therapy, CBT; self-guided CBT, a number of free webinars there; as I mentioned, the Elder and Knowledge Keeper services; nurse care coordinator intake team.

So folks . . . I think another advantage we've had with this change again, having saved money as well, is one of the concerns we heard from employees who were accessing our previous provider was . . . So it's a short-term, goal-focused counselling program. It's not there for long-term treatment. But what people would find is, when they'd come to the end of their engagement with the counsellor, they weren't able to continue with that same counsellor. So you and I have met for three or four times. We've got a relationship. You understand what's going on for me. And then it was cut off.

Fortunately with the Kii Health, people are able to continue on with that same provider. There isn't the same requirement from the organization that there be a cut-off there.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Fantastic. No, I really appreciate that breakdown of the offering. And yeah, I feel like when you can go in and negotiate with a larger group, you're able to access those savings. So that's fantastic.

Do you survey for feedback on those health benefits? And would that be something that like you would do across a global ministry, or is it specific to PSC? Or how is information collected from provincial government employees around some of those services?

**Pat Bokitch:** — Thank you for the question. Feedback is really important to make sure that the benefits are hitting the mark. In terms of the employee and family assistance program and Kii Health, there is an ability to provide feedback on those services for individuals generally and also specific to their interaction for services.

We also work through our business partner teams that work closely with ministries to understand the feedback that they're hearing in those ways. We have a Safety Champion Council. They are a key input and conduit for information about product services that we provide in the health and safety front. And prior to procurement or renewing of any contracts, there is a feedback process undertaken to understand the value that's being provided and the perceived value of those contracts.

There's also, if it's necessary, an issue resolution process through our employee wellness and inclusion branch and Kii Health to understand the nature of the concern and resolve a solution going forward.

[18:30]

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Thank you so much. That's really appreciated. I'm going to jump into do you have any information on when the agreements for the SK Arts, Crop Insurance, Conexus, Legal Aid, Water Security, when those collective bargaining agreements expire?

**Pat Bokitch:** — Thank you for your question. The agreement between Sask Crop Insurance and SGEU expires September 30th, 2025. The agreement between the Sask Arts Board and SGEU expires September 30th, 2025 as well. The agreement with the Conexus Arts Centre and the IATSE [International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees] expires June 30th, 2024, and the second agreement there between Conexus Arts Centre and RWDSU [Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union] expires January 26th, 2024. The agreement between the Legal Aid Commission and CUPE expires September 30th, 2025. And the agreement between the Water Security Agency and Unifor Local 820 expires December 31st, 2026.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Have any negotiations begun for the Conexus IATSE or RWDSU employees?

**Pat Bokitch:** — Internal conversations and preparation, but bargaining has not commenced.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Have any meetings been booked for that?

**Pat Bokitch:** — No, there isn't bargaining booked for those.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Cost of living is a concern. Has the cost of living or wage increases been discussed at all for those bargaining? Is that a priority?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — All right. Maybe I'll have a couple of high-level comments, and then Greg can speak to some of the process elements. But really, I mean there's a public sector bargaining committee that, you know, gives high-level direction with regard to the bargaining process, really informed by the advice from the Public Service Commission and from a number of other partners that are directly engaged on a lot of these matters.

So you know, there are a whole number of different elements that go into that process, some of which are obviously confidential within government. But I would maybe ask Greg if he wants to speak to the process behind how some of this functions.

**Greg Tuer:** — Yeah, and so I think I'll kind of speak at a pretty high level right now. So I would say we're heading into a bargaining year this year. Our collective agreement that we have with the SGEU and the collective agreement that we have with CUPE will expire in the fall, September 30th. So from our end, our folks in our employee and labour relations branch will be working through, you know, getting some direction on what might be our priorities at the bargaining table.

I'll speak to the SGEU because I'm a little more familiar with them. They'll have a bargaining council meeting this spring — I think it's typically June — and they will collect ideas from their members about what they want to see.

Either one of the parties in that SGEU agreement can serve notice that we want to start bargaining in advance of the fall. So we're expecting, you know, typically we would receive that notice in the summer. Prior to September 30th we would start to get together with the SGEU, talk broadly about proposals, what kind of the rules of bargaining will be for us.

It isn't until we've worked through, I would say, more of the language-related proposals and we're getting down to the end of that process where we're getting close to an agreement, at that point, from our perspective, Public Service Commission, we would go to the cabinet committee on public sector bargaining and say, we're getting close. And we would seek to get mandate from government at that point.

So that cabinet committee provides oversight through the personnel policy secretariat in the Ministry of Finance to — I'm sorry, I don't have the briefing note in front of me — but I'll say approximately 30 different public sector collective bargaining agreements that are out there. And so we would go to cabinet committee, we would get provided with our mandate, and then we would go back to the table and negotiate the monetary pieces of the collective agreements there.

So we at this point are in very early days. More of the point where we're deciding, you know, what are the bargaining priorities, what are we looking for. The SGEU will be doing the same.

They'll be determining who their bargaining committee will be. We'll do the same likely this summer, and then we'll start to engage in meaningful bargaining.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — I really appreciate that breakdown. It gives a better understanding of how the process does work and the cabinet committee, for sure.

I guess I'm going to move over to some questions around . . . You had mentioned in your preamble the employees' survey. Just wondering if you can provide me a little bit more details around that, and if you might be able to provide me with a copy of that survey. When was the last survey done, I guess would be the first one.

**Greg Tuer:** — The last employee engagement and culture survey was done in the fall of 2023.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — And how frequent would you be performing those surveys? When were the last three or four, two or three surveys completed?

**Pat Bokitch:** — Yeah, I'll take that. Thank you for your question. Typically they occur on a two-year rotation. We did have a bit of change of process through the pandemic. So the previous engagement and culture surveys were conducted in 2021 and 2018, prior to the 2023 survey that Greg mentioned.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — And are you able to provide me with a copy of the fall '23 survey?

**Pat Bokitch:** — Yes.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Are you able to provide an overview of the demographics that were garnered through that survey?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — So that would be a part of the survey which we had committed to provide. We don't have that information right in front of us though.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Sounds good. I guess one of the last questions, well a couple . . . I'm just going to review here. I'm going to take a hot second and take a review. I guess when about should I expect that survey?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Yeah, well I think the short answer is it won't take us that long. But I can't say tomorrow or the next day. But we'll work through the process to get it to you, yeah.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Is there any high-level information that was garnered that is charting the course for the PSC over the next couple years? Is there anything that you can comment on that at this time?

**Greg Tuer:** — Sorry, can you repeat the question?

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Just wondering if you have any high-level commentary around the findings of those surveys. And how do those surveys go about charting the course for the next couple years? And I guess lastly, when would the next survey be? Would that be a two-year, '25-ish timeline?

**Greg Tuer:** — We do it every two years. The plan is to do



another round of surveys in this upcoming year. And so, yeah. I'll stop there.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Great. And then are there any high-level thoughts as to what was garnered from that survey? I guess specifically maybe I'm . . . And I know I could probably get the information when I have the survey, but looking at breakdowns of women employed, Indigenous folks, 2SLGBTQ [two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning], that data, and if there's anything that you can share with me tonight.

**Greg Tuer:** — I'm sorry. We don't have that level of detail here. What I do have, and maybe I will point to is — you talked about sort of high-level trends — something we have seen over the last three surveys, so that's 2018, 2021, and 2023, is a fairly significant increase in the survey response rate.

So in 2018, we had approximately 54 per cent of the employees in government respond to the survey. 2021, that was 63 per cent. And then most recently, in fall of 2023, that was at 70 per cent. So I mean, short of kind of providing that detail we don't have here, I think what we are seeing is employees are seeing it's a meaningful mechanism to tell us what the organization's doing well and maybe areas that they'd like to see improvement.

As well it's seeing that they're seeing actions being taken, where we've given you feedback. And that two-year cycle really has provided us with an opportunity. We do the survey. We're able to take a look at the information that's provided, plan for the actions we're going to take, and then go from there. So it's a good cadence for us in order to make sure that it's a meaningful tool.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — And I would maybe just add — Greg put it well though — I think when you see an increasing rate of engagement on a tool like this, I think it speaks well to the thought that there's value in participating in that process. And the fact that we're seeing increased levels of engagement with employees, I think, you know, really makes that point without us even having to make that point.

I think it shows that people do view there being value and that means that, because they're seeing there being value, it is an important tool that is used by managers within the public service. And you know, I can't speak to kind of all of the different mechanisms and ways that is the case, but I can tell you that it's taken very seriously. The responses that are received really provide a lot of insight and guidance for decisions that are taken within the public service going forward.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — You know, I really appreciate that. With that survey, is that specifically for PSC, or is that a global provincial-government-employee-type survey?

**Pat Bokitch:** — It's for all employees in all ministries.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — All employees. Like you mention, it is great to see that increase year over year of engagement.

[18:45]

And certainly I think people do see these as mechanisms of being able to communicate and to be able to have their voices heard.

I have a few more questions here. I think I'm going to jump back really quickly to a moment from your preamble, just to ask about if you could give me a little bit of high-level about the work that PSC did with the implementation of the marshals service. That stood out. And I know it has been moving forward quickly, quicker than in some early estimations. Do you have some insight into, what work did the PSC do to make this happen?

**Greg Tuer:** — Thanks for the question. Yeah, I mean I think the marshals is a really good example of the supports that PSC does provide to the overall organization.

So there would be a point in time where government announced that they were going to launch this program, service, and so then folks from our HR business partner team that's assigned to that ministry would start to work with their senior management. We would be providing, or we did provide support in terms of recruiting some of those very first employees that would be brought in to help design the organization. We have an organizational development branch who would also come in and provide support just on org design. So you know, what is the purpose of this organization? What are we trying to achieve? And then working through a process of identifying, okay, then what's that going to look like? And I think we would all kind of typically would think of an org chart.

And so all of this predates that. Having those discussions with the senior leaders around, you know, why are we here? What are we trying to accomplish? What sort of structures do we need to have in place in order to make this a success?

And then following through that, helping provide support in terms of recruitment. And then, you know, classification. So we've determined, these are the roles that we're going to need. Working with them around defining what each of the jobs might look like. Helping them write job descriptions. Classifying them in the Government of Saskatchewan's classification plans, which then sets the compensation for those positions. And then ultimately supporting those managers as they hire the folks, and then any of the related HR issues that might come up along the way.

Flowing right through to now the staff in our HR service centre are ensuring that the people who are there are getting paid, that they're getting access to their benefits. And then we just have an ongoing support to the program as it becomes like any other Government of Saskatchewan program.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Do you have any dollar figure for the budget estimates as to how much that process has cost? Is that a tough . . . maybe a bit.

**Greg Tuer:** — Yeah, we don't track our work in that manner. That's embedded in the work of what the HR business partner teams do. That's embedded in the work of organizational development. What I would say is that that work is ongoing every day in government. It's not always of course a new program, but it's supporting, you know, as there's a change in mandate, or the organization — you mentioned earlier — sees efficiencies. Well maybe, you know, what can we then assist you doing in making sure that you're best using the funds that you have as an organization? So we do not track it on that sort of a project basis.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Appreciate. I think with the last . . . I think I've got about 12 minutes left. I will move into some final hot-topic questions, and just very topical. I'm wondering if PSC foresees any effects of this tariff environment, of the kind of roller coaster environment that we're currently on. Does PSC have any contingencies, or have there been thoughts put forward as to how this might affect this ministry?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I appreciate the question, and I think I would agree with elements of the preamble about there being a very rapidly evolving situation. Yeah, we saw it even today. I mean, there was a significant change in direction announced by the US government with regard to tariffs levied on countries that, you know, were initially announced for tariffs. It's actually kind of an interesting rerun of what Canada and Mexico have gone through already, but you know, with the rest of the world kind of going through that same process now also.

The short answer is — and I've said this in the House before as well — you know, as we see impacts directly, we're going to respond to that. But if we are, you know, trying to respond to every single new pronouncement coming from President Trump and the White House, we'd be doing nothing but responding to new pronouncements coming from President Trump and the White House.

So you know, the example where we do have a tariff imposed on steel and aluminum across the country, but obviously a significant impact here in the city of Regina. Now I look forward to maybe talking about this a bit more in CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] estimates later tonight. But you know, we responded, right, I mean where there was a direct impact. We knew what the impact was going to be or potentially could be, based on something that was real, not something that was speculated on, and we moved to respond to that.

So you know, if we see direct impacts, if there are direct impacts, I think, yeah. Never can prejudice what's going to come out of the White House on any given day. But where we're at right now, you know, Canada has avoided what could have been the worst-case scenarios. I think that has largely receded. You know, always subject to change I guess, but largely receded.

We continue to have some challenges in that tariff environment. You know, steel and aluminum are two of them, but steel from Saskatchewan's perspective. You know, there's concern around the existing tariffs that have been in place, and they're not categorized as tariffs, but the countervail and the anti-dumping duties that have been imposed on our forestry sector by the Obama administration. So this has been going on for a decade now. Those have continued to be a significant challenge, and frankly I wish the Government of Canada had paid more heed to engaging with the USTR, the US [United States] Trade Representative's office in the last decade prior to this on forestry.

You know, we're going to have to be alive and constantly monitoring what's coming out of the administration, but you know, would there be any . . . to your specific question on any sort of operational accounts or anything of that nature, there are not at the Public Service Commission level.

But you know, I would say kind of at a more macro level, if we're

talking about government or you know, my area of responsibility on the Crown side of government, we're going to be very responsive and we're going to be very nimble. And I think we've shown that we can be very responsive and nimble to deal with real, real issues as they arise, as opposed to being deeply reactive based on different pronouncements.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Oh, I really appreciate that. I think I'll ask one more question, I think, and that's just around maybe the health of the pensions. Does PSC hold any investments to cover future pension payments, liabilities? And if so, how much?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — No. The short answer is Plannera does all of that work, so we really do not.

**Nathaniel Teed:** — Okay. Well we've got a few minutes left, but I am . . .

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well we can deem it to be 7 if you . . .

**Nathaniel Teed:** — You know what, if you're all right with that, Minister, then I am going to deem that we've hit the 7:00 because I've hit my questions for the night. I would just maybe say in closing, just thank you so much for this conversation this evening, thank you so much to the officials who came to speak about the work that you're doing.

One thing that I find in this role is . . . Certainly I've seen a couple different roles and so it's jumping into something new and always really interesting for me to learn more about what each one of these really important sections of our provincial government do.

And you know, as someone . . . look at the PSC and it's doing its very vital role in administering human resources in the province. So I just really appreciate this opportunity and just want to thank the minister, officials, and all the folks who make this happen this evening.

**Chair Steele:** — Okay, seeing that it's agreed upon, we're going to . . . Being we're going to adjourn the consideration of Public Service Commission estimates today, Minister, do you have any closing comments?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well very brief. Number one, thanks very much for the questions. We've been critic and minister roles on a number of different files. And I can tell you, I've always appreciated estimates because very good questions, you know, really seeking answers. And I appreciate that. And I appreciate the tone as well. So thank you for that.

Also thanks to Greg, and through Greg to our entire team here at the Public Service Commission who, you know, show their dedication every day. And I just want to say a genuine thank you to the entire team for the work that's being done. Kind of see the tip of the iceberg here on estimates, but there's a team that does a huge amount work. So I just want to say thank you to them, and thank you to the committee, Mr. Chair.

**Chair Steele:** — Thank you. Well the committee will now recess until 7:30.

[The committee recessed from 18:56 until 19:32.]

**Chair Steele:** — We'll now consider the 2025-26 estimates and the 2024-25 supplementary estimates no. 2 for vote 175, Debt Redemption; and the 2025-26 estimates for vote 176, Sinking Fund Payments — Government Share; vote 177, Interest on Gross Debt — Crown Enterprise Share.

**General Revenue Fund  
Debt Redemption, Sinking Fund and Interest Payments  
Votes 175, 176, 177**

**Chair Steele:** — We will begin with the vote on 175, Debt Redemption. Minister Harrison is here with officials from the Crown Investments Corporation. I remind the officials to identify yourselves before speaking and do not touch the microphones. And Hansard will operate the mikes to turn them on for you. Minister Harrison, will you please give us your opening comments and introduce your officials.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Sure. Well thanks very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks again to members of the committee for reconvening here this evening for the estimates on Crown Investments Corporation. I'll start, Mr. Chair, by introducing officials here from Crown Investments Corporation: Kent Campbell, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Crown Investments Corporation; Cindy Ogilvie, senior vice-president and CFO [chief financial officer] of CIC; Kyla Hillmer — back there — vice-president, Crown services at CIC; Tim Highmoor, vice-president, Crown planning and priorities; David Brock, vice-president, Crown energy security; and Brad Hunt, who's back there as well, controller of finance and administration.

And thank you, Mr. Chair. It is my pleasure to appear before the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to answer questions related to the budgetary aspects of the Crown Investments Corporation, and I'll use CIC for short. With me this evening is Mr. Kent Campbell, and I introduced the other leaders at CIC who will introduce themselves as well when they speak at the microphone the first time.

As our province navigates the uncertainty imposed on us by tariffs from the United States and China, CIC continues its strong leadership and support to Saskatchewan's commercial Crown corporations, so our Crown sector remains resilient and responsive and continues to contribute to the quality of life in a growing province, fuelling economic growth and delivering on the priorities of Saskatchewan people.

A key focus for our government is to deliver affordability to residents, businesses, and communities. Last year our province removed the carbon tax on home heating, saving families across Saskatchewan an average of \$400 on their SaskEnergy bills. This year and very recently, Saskatchewan took the lead again, becoming the first carbon tax-free province in Canada. As of April the 1st, 2025, the provincial government is pausing the industrial carbon tax under its output-based performance standards program.

As a result, SaskPower will stop charging the carbon tax on its customers, putting more money back in the pockets of Saskatchewan people and delivering further savings on SaskPower bills. This change is estimated to save the average

residential customer over \$100 per year, while farms can expect to save over \$300 per year.

The Crown sector continues to balance the growing demand for safe and reliable services with ongoing infrastructure requirements, all while maintaining rates that are among the most affordable in the country. Through finding efficiencies and diligently managing costs, Saskatchewan's total utility costs for 2024-25 are expected to be the second lowest in Canada, with auto insurance rates remaining among the lowest in the country.

Beyond their core business, Crowns are also exploring innovative programs to deliver affordability for the people that they serve. SaskPower's free energy assistance program provides a home walk-through, one-on-one energy coaching, and the installation of energy saving products. This program can save eligible income-qualified customers up to \$230 per year on their utility bills.

SaskPower also offers the northern First Nations home retrofit program to eligible customers who use electric heat as their primary heating source. After receiving no-cost home retrofits, these customers can save on average more than \$500 per year on their electricity bills. In addition, SaskTel participates in the federal connecting families initiative, which offers discounted internet services to low-income families and seniors.

These are but a few examples of the diligent work of our Crown sector employees to ensure Saskatchewan remains the most affordable place in Canada to live, work, raise a family, and start a business.

The Crown sector contributed \$845 million in dividends to the General Revenue Fund between 2019-2020 and 2023-24. The sector's financial returns support the government's continued delivery on priorities, including health care, education, safer communities, and affordability measures. Through prudent financial management, Saskatchewan's Crowns will continue to contribute to the province's fiscal balance and remain competitive.

The Crown sector is making a record level of investment and supporting the growth and prosperity of Saskatchewan with a forecast of \$2.4 billion in capital spending in 2024-25, and a projected total of \$13.3 billion over the next five years. Crown corporations are investing heavily to ensure safe, reliable, high-quality service delivery for the people of Saskatchewan.

Infrastructure renewal and new construction enhance safety and integrity of our Crown assets. Meanwhile these activities help to stimulate local economies with quality jobs and procurement opportunities, and support the delivery of high levels of services that our homes, businesses, and industries can count on.

I would like to highlight a few of the capital projects. SaskPower's 370-megawatt Great Plains power station near Moose Jaw is now online generating reliable baseload power. More than 300 Saskatchewan companies participated in its construction, resulting in over \$266 million contributed to local economies, of which nearly \$49 million was of Indigenous participation.

SaskPower's capital plan also includes \$710 million on

expansions to the Aspen power station and the Ermine and Yellowhead projects for increased new generation, \$311 million in growth projects to connect new customers to the grid, and \$67 million in various strategic initiatives such as smart meter deployment and the development of the Regina Operations and Maintenance Complex.

In addition, SaskPower completed the 20-megawatt Regina battery energy storage system in July of 2024. This investment is the first of its kind in the province, helping to balance load when demand spikes for short periods of time, delivering a more stable and reliable electricity supply.

The provincial government is committed to delivering enhanced connectivity across Saskatchewan to better serve rural communities and highway corridors. SaskTel has rapidly expanded its 5G network since 2021, completing upgrades on more than 660 cell sites in the province, including more than 380 that serve medium- to smaller-size communities, Indigenous communities, rural and resort areas, and highways.

SaskTel recognizes the importance of broadband as a critical component of modern society. The Crown corporation continues to expand their infiNet network to more communities through its multi-phased rural fibre initiative. As of January 2025, SaskTel has launched infiNet service in 29 rural communities, with additional locations to be fibre-ready in the remainder of 2024-25.

SaskEnergy successfully completed a few expansion projects in the past number of years. They delivered the \$40 million Moose Jaw supply gas project in 2022-23, to support anticipated regional growth, including natural gas service to the Great Plains power station. The Crown also completed the Regina west gas line project and natural gas transmission line expansion project in Melfort in 2024.

Looking forward, SaskEnergy are undertaking three additional major transmission system expansions in Regina and Saskatoon to reinforce the existing infrastructure, improve service reliability, and respond to anticipated load growth in the regions.

In 2023-24 SaskWater completed construction of the 65-kilometre Regina regional non-potable water supply, which will service the region from Belle Plaine to Regina. Cargill, that plans to commission their canola crush plant in 2026, will be the first customer receiving water from the system.

One of Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan's land-based operators, the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, or SIGA, is carrying out multi-million-dollar expansions of the Northern Lights Casino in Prince Albert and the Dakota Dunes Casino south of Saskatoon. These expansions will create about 100 full-time equivalent jobs and provide significant employment for trades and subtrades during the construction period. Through capital investments and construction activities, the Crown sector is directly supporting local job creation, stimulating regional economies, and delivering opportunities to Saskatchewan families and communities. The enhanced and renewed infrastructure enables safe, reliable, quality services across the province.

Capital investments require robust local supply chains. Our

Crown corporations continue to engage industry groups to improve the capacity and competitiveness of local businesses, and where possible, prioritize Saskatchewan and Canadian services and suppliers. In the first three quarters of 2024-25 the Crown sector awarded \$1.2 billion to Saskatchewan suppliers, including \$92 million to Indigenous suppliers, contributing to the province's overall financial growth and increasing Indigenous participation in the economy.

CIC has established a team of procurement leaders from the Crown sector, the Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement, and more recently, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, to collectively find ways and opportunities to strengthen the Saskatchewan supply chain. Now this work becomes even more critical than ever as the province and Canada face the developments that are occurring right now. While the Crowns have limited relationships with American suppliers, with about 3 per cent of procurement directly coming from the United States, the current supply chain is dependent on the US and could lead to indirect price increases for Saskatchewan.

The procurement collaboration team is working to reduce impacts by converting spending from out of province to in province wherever feasible and improve local supply chain capacity and attractiveness. Most recently, we saw SaskPower and SaskEnergy prioritizing local steel for their infrastructure projects, buying thousands of pounds of material and more than 100 kilometres of pipe from Evraz steel.

[19:45]

The Crowns are helping to keep over 400 hard-working Saskatchewan people on the job right here in Regina. Crown and public sector procurement efforts support local businesses and talent and help invest money back into Saskatchewan. Beyond their commercial mandate, Crown corporations are exploring how they can deliver additional value to the customers they serve and the communities they operate in.

SaskEnergy continues to help residential and commercial customers with energy efficiency rebates when they upgrade their natural gas equipment with high-efficiency models. These investments help SaskEnergy customers reduce natural gas usage, increase indoor comfort, and lower energy bills over the long term.

SaskPower's commercial energy optimization program provides free consulting services to businesses seeking energy efficiency savings. SaskPower is also investing in the future of Saskatchewan's workforce, partnering with the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre to offer high school students and adults online fourth and fifth-class power engineering courses.

As part of its commitment to accessibility, SaskTel began offering the RAZ mobility memory phone as part of its wireless device lineup in October of 2024. The device is designed with an easy-to-use menu and controls for those with memory loss, low vision, early dementia, Alzheimer's, or seniors who prefer a simple wireless experience.

In August 2024 SaskTel celebrated the grand opening of its new store in the city of Prince Albert. The new store concept, which will serve as a blueprint for all future store remodels, was

purposefully designed with enhanced interactive displays and accessibility features.

In the same month last year SaskTel also announced with the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency that Saskatchewan becomes the first province to transition all primary 911 communication centres to the next-generation 911 environment. As a result of this important work, the public will be able to share text messages, video, and photos through the 911 system.

To help reduce barriers to obtaining a Saskatchewan photo ID [identification] for individuals who are dealing with housing insecurity, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] is working with other government agencies and community partners on an alternative method of validating an individual's identity, and developing a guarantor form that would enable someone from partnering organizations to confirm an individual is a Saskatchewan resident. Unhoused individuals do not have an ID or a permanent address to meet the identity and residency requirements for a Saskatchewan photo ID card.

In 2025 15,000 new irrigation acres will be in service thanks to ongoing collaboration between SaskWater and the Water Security Agency. Finally, LGS, Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan, forecasts that in 2024-25 it will provide over \$45 million in commissions to nearly 570 video lottery terminal site contractors across the province. All these examples demonstrate the important role of our Crown corporations in enriching the quality of life for the people of Saskatchewan.

CIC and the Crown sectors support the government's growth plan through fiscally responsible commercial operations, reliable and affordable essential service delivery, and targeted public policy programming. The sector is also a main player in planning and ensuring our utilities' readiness to meet the energy needs of a growing Saskatchewan for many decades to come.

Affordable and reliable baseload power is the foundation of this growth. Saskatchewan is taking an all-of-the-above approach to power generation, examining the potential to extend coal-fired assets to help bridge the province's electricity system to a nuclear future.

SaskPower is investing in the future of nuclear energy in the province. Saskatchewan is working with GE Hitachi to explore the potential of deploying a BWRX reactor. In May 2024 SaskPower identified two sites near the city of Estevan to support final site selection for the first potential small modular reactor.

In September 2024 the Crown established SaskNuclear as its subsidiary to advance the province's SMR [small modular reactor] project through the regulatory and licensing processes. To support a new and robust nuclear industry in Saskatchewan, CIC is coordinating the development of a provincial nuclear supply chain and workforce, attracting investment in nuclear energy, and advocating provincial positions to the Government of Canada.

Additionally, CIC has invested in a two-year project with the Saskatchewan Industrial and Mining Suppliers Association, SIMSA and its partners to prepare local businesses to sell goods and services to the Canadian and global nuclear markets.

CIC is actively collaborating with Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions and industry partners to devise strategies to meet Saskatchewan's future nuclear workforce needs.

This important and complex work led by CIC and SaskPower builds on Saskatchewan's strengths in uranium mining and will create local jobs, boost local and regional supply chains, and increase economic development in the province. This supports Saskatchewan's future to nuclear power generation.

And with our keen focus on affordability and reliability, I have directed SaskPower to examine extending the life of existing coal-fired plants. Electricity generation is exclusively within our constitutional authority as a province, and it's imperative that we maintain a reliable and affordable power supply to support our needs and growth.

Managing increasing uncertainty in the world and complex issues facing the Crown sector and our province requires collaboration. It's vital that Crowns, ministries, and agencies work as one team leveraging each other's strengths and expertise to deliver on the province's priorities; standing up for Saskatchewan families, communities, businesses, and industries; and enabling our province to continue to grow and thrive.

The collaboration initiative, led by CIC, has now grown to include 36 Crowns, ministries, treasury board Crowns, and government agencies, leading and delivering initiatives through eight strategic teams. The collective set ambitious goals for 2024-25 to achieve \$50 million in cost savings and attract \$1 billion in new private sector investment. I'm pleased to report that as of Q3 — third quarter — of 2024-25 the collaboration initiative has forecasted \$50.3 million in cost savings and more than \$1.3 billion in new private sector investments to Saskatchewan, a tremendous success.

Finally I want to highlight our Crown corporations' social investments in communities, charitable organizations, and education and employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples. SaskPower, SaskTel, SGI, SaskEnergy, and CIC have provided \$2 million a year to support STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service] in Saskatchewan since 2012. To date, 30 million has been committed by the five Crowns, helping to ensure emergency trauma services are available throughout our province.

The Crown sector's two-year pilot program, Crown Career Pathways, is providing internship opportunities for Indigenous post-secondary graduates with Crown corporations. The program's goal is to retain these graduates in Saskatchewan, increasing Indigenous participation in the provincial economy and delivering a capable, up-and-coming workforce for the Crown, public, and private sectors.

CIC continues to invest in its Indigenous bursary program, providing more than \$2.2 million over the past five years to support Indigenous students' education goals and enable career opportunities by building a skilled and inclusive labour force. Both programs are in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action no. 92 which calls for promoting equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities for Indigenous peoples in the corporate sector.

In 2024 SaskTel announced a new recycling collaboration with

the Government of Saskatchewan in support of the Phones for a Fresh Start program with an initial donation of nearly 2,500 late-model government-owned devices. Since it launched in 2009, PFFS [Phones for a Fresh Start] has diverted more than 143,000 electronic devices from the landfill while helping survivors of domestic abuse, and youth transitioning out of the care of the Ministry of Social Services.

In partnership with Saskatchewan Polytechnic, SaskWater established two scholarships to be awarded to selected Saskatchewan high school graduates entering the water resources program at Sask Polytechnic beginning in '25-26. The scholarship is to increase lagging enrolment in the water resources program, a requirement for many front-line jobs at SaskWater.

SGI Canada announced a new \$2 million partnership with YWCA Regina, which helps fund operational and programming costs for the healing lodge at the new Centre for Women and Families that opened in Regina in November 2024.

Since 2019 SGI has facilitated about \$13.1 million for 870 community traffic safety projects through the Provincial Traffic Safety Fund, providing up to \$100,000 per location to municipalities and Indigenous land or territories through traffic safety grants, enabling communities to deliver traffic safety measures they may not have been able to otherwise afford. This program is funded through net revenue from photo speed-enforcement tickets, making communities safer for all Saskatchewan residents.

By quarter 3 in 2024-25, LGS has distributed \$5.1 million in charitable gaming grants to charitable and non-profit groups and organizations in nearly 350 communities across the province. By year-end, total charitable gaming grants are forecast to be \$7.1 million.

Saskatchewan's Crown corporations deliver more than essential services that our people rely on. They are a key contributor to our government's commitment to affordability, reliability, and energy security. The sector is an integral part supporting the high quality of life of more than 1.25 million people who now call Saskatchewan home.

Led by CIC, our Crown corporations are helping our thriving province to weather the current challenges while also laying the groundwork for a prosperous future. I thank CIC, its subsidiary Crowns, and the more than 11,000 dedicated Crown employees for their professional service, their insight and innovation, and their commitment to deliver excellence for the people of our province.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude and look forward to responding to questions.

**Chair Steele:** — Thank you, Minister, We'll go to MLA Ritchie.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, for those opening remarks. I was following along quite closely from last year and noted a few updates, a few things that were repeated or mentioned last year. I may come back to that later on just to get some updated numbers. But I think where I'd like to start is by thanking all the officials for being here this evening to support

the budgetary estimates for Crown Investment Corporation.

In reviewing the notes from last year, I notice that we did discuss, you know, some of the reasons for the significant drop in the consolidated net earnings in past years. I'm wondering if you could tell me what is CIC's forecasted consolidated earnings for '24 . . . or what they were for '24-25 and budgeted for '25-26, and included in that, a breakdown by the business enterprise.

**Kent Campbell:** — Kent Campbell, president and CEO, Crown Investments Corporation. So in terms of budget last year by Crown, LGS had a budgeted net income of 177 million. This year the budget is 201 million, and the third-quarter forecast for '24-25 is 204 million. Turning to SaskPower, the budget for '24-25 was 191.5 million. The budget for '25-26 is 126.3 million, and our Q3 forecast was 125.8 million.

[20:00]

Turning to SGI Canada, the budget for '24-25, last year, 127.4 million. The budget for '25-26 is 90 million. And then the Q3 forecast for '24-25, 79.2 million.

Turning to SaskTel, the budget for '24-25 was \$96 million in net income. The budget for '25-26 is 116.6 million. The forecast for Q3 was 90 million.

SaskEnergy, the budget for last year was 48.4. The budget for this year is 42.5. And the Q3 forecast is 60.4.

Turning to SaskWater, the budget for last year was 7.3 million. The budget for '25-26 is 6 million, and the Q3 forecast is 7.4.

Oh yes, maybe I'll just add the Auto Fund, which is of course not part of the consolidated Crown earnings but does affect summary financials. So in terms of the Auto Fund the budget last year was a negative \$207.3 million. The budget for '25-26 is a negative 230.8 million, and in the Q3 forecast was minus 106.3 million.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Thank you. What would be the total amounts then for that? Assuming we've got everything I think that are normally reported out, because you had SaskTel, SaskEnergy, SGI Canada, SaskWater, SOCO [Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation]. I see SOCO's maybe I guess wrapped up. And also CIC AMI [CIC Asset Management Inc.], and then the consolidation adjustments. Are you typically in that column?

**Kent Campbell:** — Yes, so for sure I can. In terms of the . . . we do divide these up in terms of government business entities which are your for-profits. And then if you look in the budget document, on page 25 there's a listing of the government business entities. Some of those are CIC; some are straight through the General Revenue Fund. But for ours, we divide into government business entities, and then CIC and its expenses and other adjustments are under government service organizations.

So I'll give you the total for both of those. When you total the total government business entity income numbers — and that would be the summary of the numbers that I'd just previously given you — the total for the '24-25 budget came in at 440.3 million. The '25-26 budget numbers, 351.8 million. And then the Q3 forecast was 460.5 million.

When you include the costs for CIC, CIC AMI, and then other internal adjustments or differences between Crowns' internal adjustments, you get what would be the government or the CIC consolidated numbers. And so the budget for the '24-25 CIC consolidated numbers was 456.9 million. The budget for '25-26 is 455.3 million. And then the Q3 forecast, 423.8.

And so what you see there is really a lot of continuity on CIC consolidated from year to year. So the budget-to-budget variance for CIC consolidated is a negative 1.6 million, and then the '25-26 budget-to-Q3 variance would be a positive 31.5 million.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay. So yeah, I'm not sure if we're speaking to the same numbers, because I did notice in the transcript from last year, it had been quoted at 663.6 as the budgeted number for '24-25. And you, I think, just quoted me 456. I'm not sure why I've got such a large discrepancy there.

**Kent Campbell:** — We'll just double-check on that.

Okay yeah, the difference there in the numbers that I gave you is the Auto Fund. So if you add the Auto Fund back in, that's how you get that extra.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay. Well yeah. You know, I was going to maybe even ask just a little bit more of an explanation on the Auto Fund, because that one you said was a negative amount. So can you explain to me why it reports as negative? Like what are the implications of that?

**Kent Campbell:** — In relation to the Auto Fund numbers, we had projected a loss last year in the neighbourhood of just over \$200 million. And so the Auto Fund is meant to, over time, be a break-even proposition. It's not a Crown corporation. There's no profits from the Auto Fund that go back into CIC. And so over time you will see it vary from profits to losses, but over time it is meant to break even.

And so last year we were projecting a loss. That ended up being a loss not as large as we were anticipating. And in part that is due to the fact that the markets were really more positive than anticipated.

So really, the big drivers of your Auto Fund balance are premiums, auto registrations that people pay in, and then that's offset by claims that people make when they have accidents. And so that is supplemented by investment returns.

And so what we saw last year was that really the markets had returned better than we were forecasting, and so what we thought was going to be a loss of more than 200 ended up being more like a negative 100.

This year we're thinking more similar to as we were projecting last year. So as an example, the SGI investments are projecting an overall portfolio return of about 3.9 per cent, and that involves a range of investments. Some of those are in equity markets. Some of it are in debt markets, property, treasuries.

And so that would be the overall, that's sort of the overall numbers that would get you to what we're projecting for this year and last year.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay. So originally last . . . For '24-25 you budgeted 207 million. The forecast brought it to 106. For next year, '25-26, you are budgeting a loss of 230.8 — just to make sure I'm following along.

Okay, so you're saying that it's again a more pessimistic number moving into this new year. And so what will be driving that pessimism? Or I don't mean to call it pessimism. I mean, I'm not trying to sort of mislead it. Just like, what's informing that budget estimate? It's a simple question.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Yes. Just I'll maybe speak to the Auto Fund specifically and, you know, Kent and other officials can maybe add a bit more around that. But I think it's important to remember as far as the nature of the Auto Fund — which is really the fund under which we pay for insured vehicles and loss and all the rest of it — the two elements of that are on the cost side, then also on the investment and return side.

You know, there's a lot of challenges in making these projections, I think, on both sides. You know, SGI are obviously not a line item, so they're not a part of the estimates process directly. But I think what SGI would say is that the cost per repair of vehicles have gotten significantly higher, significantly higher.

This has been a big part of the pressure that's been put onto the Auto Fund. So you know, I think a real world example for folks who are watching would very much understand is 20 years ago if you in your vehicle or there was a vehicle that backed into a pole, you know, it had a bumper that was damaged, you know, you'd replace the bumper and no problem.

The challenge now, just in that example, is that a bumper isn't just a bumper. A bumper has sensors that are embedded as a part of the bumper. The bumper would have, you know, in some case cameras that would be a part of that system as well. So it's not as simple as pounding out a dent, which likely would have been a solution in a lot of cases. So you're looking at very, very significant increases in the cost per repair. So that's one element of the pressure that's been put onto the Auto Fund.

Another element to that is the volatility that we've seen, you know, in equities, obviously. I mean, we've had that demonstrated in the last two days or last week in spades. I think the S & P [Standard & Poor's] was up 9 per cent today, and I think the Nasdaq was up about 13 per cent. You know, that follows on the heels of declines of equivalent proportions in the couple of days before that.

So you have incredible volatility in the equities market that drives, you know, part of the return or projected returns from the Auto Fund's investments. So it's a real challenge to project some of these things, and you know, it's been a challenge for SGI. But there are undeniably pressures that are on the Auto Fund. And you know, we want to be realistic about what we are projecting on these things, and probably leaning a little bit more towards the pessimistic side so that we are being realistic.

[20:15]

But that, you know, obviously informs how we plan at SGI and how the company is managed as well. So I'm not sure, maybe Kent can probably speak much more eloquently than I on some

of those things.

**Kent Campbell:** — No, absolutely right, Minister. And the cost of vehicles, it's been really quite extraordinary. You know, I've seen data that says sort of pre-COVID to post-COVID, the average cost of a Canadian vehicle went from \$40,000 to over 60, right. And so that's just during that sort of three-year time period. And the amount of electronics and microchips and computers in vehicles now, it's just expanding all the time, and that drives a lot of that cost as well. So maybe I'll leave it at that.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Yeah, so I mean definitely I think you've hit on a few things I was wondering about. Minister, you mentioned the volatility in the markets and how that impacts on the investments that SGI holds, and then of course the escalation in cost, both for new vehicles and repairs. Lots of supply chain pressures.

I guess I kind of have two follow-up questions to this before we move on. So kind of given the tariffs that are being proposed or enacted on the auto sector, what sort of impact will that have on these budgetary estimates? What sort of analysis is being undertaken to sort of, you know, model these fluctuations, and what have they shown you?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — So I'll maybe take a bit of an initial answer on this. You know, we had a bit of a discussion about this in the previous set of estimates, and there's been a bit of discussion in another forum in the House here about planning and about how the government has responded to, you know, really which is an almost hourly-changing situation coming from the President and from the White House.

What I've been very clear about is saying that on substantive and real measures that we will be nimble in responding. And you know, for an industry that actually has had tariffs imposed on it on the steel and aluminum front, we moved very quickly, very quickly through SaskEnergy and SaskPower to advance procurement of material that would be necessary over the long term, but that we advance that procurement very significantly and very quickly in order to respond to what was a real situation.

If we were creating new policy initiatives based on every musing coming out of the White House, I mean, we'd be doing nothing but responding to new musings coming out of the White House. Because literally it's changing every hour, and today was a pretty good example of that.

You know, as we see and as there are impacts, we're going to respond. But we don't know what those are. We don't know what those are. And as it relates to the Auto Fund, I mean, there are challenges which we had talked about, and a lot of that has to do with the increasing cost per repair per incident. So we're going to work through that. And you know, I have confidence in those who are managing our investment and on the Auto Fund as well, that we're doing the best that we possibly can do on that front with a great deal of volatility, and obviously managing risk in that as much as we can as well.

But we will respond as real, tangible measures move forward. But I would say as well though that, you know, in this rapidly changing environment, there were measures announced today that resulted in the market swing that we saw. You know, I think

by and large Canada has not been subject to anywhere near worst-case scenarios on any of these things.

And there are particular industries where there are challenges. Steel and aluminum is an obvious one, but there have been others. I mean the forestry sector has been subject to what amounts to tariffs, but you know, is a countervailing and anti-dumping duty combination for over a decade now that was imposed by the Obama administration. And this is a huge issue.

We have been encouraging our national government now. Tell you, from their very first International Trade minister, which was Chrystia Freeland, I have been encouraging every single minister to engage with the USTR to try and negotiate a way out of softwood lumber. And it's been, you know, really very frustrating that they had not engaged on this issue. And a variety of reasons I'd surmise about why, you know, negotiating on softwood lumber was not a priority for them. But they didn't. They didn't engage.

And we have this industry that's been, you know, significantly impacted, including individual companies. Like as an example here in Saskatchewan, NorSask Forest Products — I think the only 100 per cent owned, Indigenous-owned forestry company in the entire country — has 40-plus million dollars sitting in a trust account because they've been paying countervailing and anti-dumping duties that are entirely, entirely unfair, entirely contrived by the US softwood lumber coalition.

So you know, there are issues that exist now, but there are issues that had existed before as well, and we need to engage on all of these things equally. And I'm concerned that some of the existing trade challenges that exist, that had existed prior to this administration, are being now entirely forgotten. And forestry is a big one.

We have tariffs, the Chinese tariff circumstances by far the most significant and threatening issue that we're dealing with in this province right now. We've been engaging, you know, the highest level of the Canadian government, but we had said our number one priority for the new prime minister was to engage directly with China on canola tariffs. This potentially could cost our agricultural producers hundreds of millions if not more per year.

And again, what has been heard about this? Very little. And why is that? Well I think it's because it's our issue. So it's deeply frustrating that these issues are, you know, that are really impactful for rural Saskatchewan are somehow overlooked in this entire discussion. But you know, we're going to continue to engage on that. You know, you may hear some news about a conversation that might have happened today. We're going to continue to engage on those matters and put them top of the list because they're top of the list for us.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that overview. I may come back to this later because I was looking for a very specific answer on the Auto Fund and the estimates that had been put forward. But I'll leave that for now.

In a related vein, I want to ask about the impact that the forecasted consolidated net earnings for '25-26 will incur due to the loss of funding from the output-based performance standard related to the electricity funding pool. If you could provide a



precise number, that would be appreciated.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — I think I'll probably give a response on this, and you know, perhaps we may have some more conversation on it. I spoke to this last night in SaskPower estimates as well.

And there are a number of elements that go along with the federal carbon tax. And there are a number of timing issues that go along with elements of the federal carbon tax and how money collected under the federal carbon tax — whether it be in the context of the backstop and the Future Electricity Fund transfers that come from that — that were collected up to 2023, 2019 to 2023, right. And then the output-based system, which was the federal carbon tax that basically we had negotiated to keep in Saskatchewan through a program that we would administer, as opposed to the federal government taking money through the federal imposition of the backstop of the federal carbon tax, or the part 2 C-tax, how we would manage that through time.

So the OBPS [output-based performance standards] system has been in place for two fiscal years, I believe, last year and this year. We made no future provision for any of the output-based collections to be in existence past this fiscal year. We built that not into . . . And I said that with regard to power; that was not included as a part of any of the projections beyond this fiscal.

So we have the Future Electricity Fund component, of which I think there is about \$480 million that is outstanding or thereabouts which is federally directed. And I think we found out about the priorities that the federal government had allocated the FEF [Future Electricity Fund] funding to through a press release. I don't think they even gave us a heads-up. I know Minister Wilkinson didn't talk to me about it before it was announced anyway. Or if we found out, it would have been minutes before they issued the press release.

You know, that money is money that belongs to the Saskatchewan customers of SaskPower who have paid into this. So we expect, number one, that that money is returned to Saskatchewan; number two, that we have . . . Well I mean ideally this should be directed by the Government of Saskatchewan as to where these resources are allocated because they are from the customers of SaskPower. The federal government should have nothing to do with this.

And I was pretty clear in talking about some of these things yesterday, and I'll repeat them, is that the federal government have no jurisdictional authority over electricity transmission or generation — none, zero. You couldn't find a more clear provision of the Constitution than 92A(1)(c) that gives exclusive authority to provincial governments for electricity. So what they are doing is entirely unconstitutional, and that was why we talked about our non-adherence to the clean electricity regulations. And it's a part of the reason why the output-based system was ended.

You know, with regard to the funds from the output-based system, there were two components to that. Half went to the small modular reactor fund, which basically is held in a trust or bank account. It's not a trust, but it's a separate fund that we administer for future electricity investments, next-generation electricity investments for our power utility. And the other part was through what we refer to as the clean electricity transition

grant, so the CETG. And there's a timing issue on how some of these things are calculated as well. But we had allocated, I think, last year about \$170 million for the CETG. I think . . .

**A Member:** — It was 174.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — 174, okay. And it was, you know, slightly higher this year for the CETG portion of the OBPS. What I had said publicly, prior to estimates even — I think I said it a couple of weeks ago — whatever is not going to be allocated through CETG is not going to be spent. It's a very simple proposition.

[20:30]

And you know, there were stringent requirements around CETG about eligible expenditures, several of those things which . . . You know, what we don't take in, we will not spend. It's very simple.

And our priorities at SaskPower, you know, we're at a very interesting point right now, and we're making some very significant decisions that are going to have an incredible impact on what that future of generation of electricity in this province looks like, which has a massive impact on what capital expenditure plans are going to look like. And you know, one of the things I referenced in my opening remarks and I had the opportunity to talk about in estimates — after some time of trying to get there but talking about — was the future of coal in Saskatchewan.

So you know, we believe there is a future for coal here in this province. We've been working through very, very detailed analysis. And assessment of our assets that we have here in the province — which are in remarkably good condition, by the way — through both SaskPower and third-party assessments show these assets to be in remarkably good condition. Very much not just possible to life-extend, but in a relatively straightforward fashion being able to life-extend our coal-generating assets at a fraction of the capital cost of new-build gas and renewable.

So you know, as I said yesterday, we're not making any announcements. When we make the announcement, it'll be to employees; it will not be to a committee of the legislature. But you know, there are a number of factors that are going into that consideration. Costs are a part of it. Policy considerations are a big part of it as well, and power generation security, which I'm happy to go into detail about. I'm not going to right now, but all of these things have a very, very significant impact on capital expenditures.

So to the member's particular question with regard to OBPS and the components of OBPS and the FEF funding as well, you know, we expect the FEF funding to continue. The \$490 million that we are owed by the Government of Canada needs to be coming back to the province, needs to be coming back to the province.

And what we don't take in this year — because we have not budgeted for any additional OBPS payments to come in past this year — what does not come in this year, we will not spend. It's very straightforward.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay, so I'm looking at a table entitled,

“Electricity sector revenue and allocations for the year ended March 31st,” where it indicates that for the OBPS electricity sector in '24-25, it was budgeted 280.9. Then the forecast for the end of '24-25 fiscal year, 282.9. And then for '25-26, it is budgeted at 346.6. And I'm just trying to understand these numbers. So I notice that there's also the SMR investment fund, investment account that also has a contribution.

So would it be safe to say that, you know, if you strike that 346.6 from the output-based electricity sector as revenue, that that is what we will see, the effect on the consolidated net earnings?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — I understand what . . . The opposition are trying to score points here and they've tried to make this argument. This is not . . . What I have said repeatedly on the output-based performance standards program, and I will repeat again here tonight — you know, numerous times I've said this — what is not taken in by SaskPower . . . Because we're not collecting this. This is what you would pay on your SaskPower bill.

So everybody had a federal carbon tax line on their power bill, and you know, people want to look at what it is. You can see what it is. I mean, depending on your household or business use, we're talking about, you know, potentially hundreds of dollars a month that you were paying in federal carbon tax on your SaskPower bill.

So the way the federal government had set up their part 2, and this is the industrial carbon tax . . . So we had already taken it off the home heating side, which was your SaskEnergy bill. And the rest of the consumer carbon tax was removed about 10 days ago, on April the 1st, and that's why people are seeing a reduction at the price in gas at the pump right now, because that's been removed.

The other part of that tax, which is the part 2 carbon tax which applies to heavy emitters in Saskatchewan, about 80 per cent of that heavy emitters part of the . . . And this has been called the shadow or the hidden carbon tax. The Prime Minister calls it the shadow carbon tax for whatever reason. This is the industrial part of the carbon tax. Eighty per cent of that industrial carbon tax is charged to SaskPower.

So there's about 160 registered companies that are a part of that part 2 industrial carbon tax, which is what we removed. Eighty per cent of the dollars that are paid into that carbon tax were paid by SaskPower customers, which makes complete and utter . . . utterly no sense. Basically this is the federal government charging a tax on a public utility which is charged to individual ratepayers. For what reason? For what reason? To make them turn their heat down in December?

I mean it's outrageous. The policy rationale is outrageous. But this is something that is supported and has been strongly supported by the opposition in this province, by the federal government, and by the opposition party, the opposition New Democrats who are part of the federal governing coalition.

What we did, Mr. Chair, is we removed the output-based system from people's SaskPower bills. This is, at the end of the day, what consumers need to understand about the industrial carbon tax. Eighty per cent of the industrial carbon tax was SaskPower.

We took it off their bill, and the money that would have been taken in through that is not going to be spent. It is a very straight line, and I believe that those listening understand that as well.

The money that was taken in then had to be allocated to Liberal government priorities through the CETG. That was the deal. And what we're not taking in, we're not spending. That simple.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Well I'm just trying to get a straight answer to a very simple question. I don't think I need to have a big, long-winded explanation about everything that goes into it. I'm just really interested in the numbers. So I do see that it's also listed here that the — and you spoke to the number earlier — like there was 140 million budgeted in '24-25 for the clean electricity transition grant, and then for budget year '25-26 it's listed at 174.7.

So then I guess, is that the difference that we'll be seeing here in terms of now no longer will you see these payments going out? And then how will that reflect on the consolidated income?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I'll reiterate. What we are not taking in through taxing people on their SaskPower bill, we will not be spending. So the reason we eliminated the industrial carbon tax, 80 per cent of which is SaskPower, is because it makes no sense. It literally makes no sense.

The policy objective that the Liberals posited for having an industrial carbon tax in place was that it would change behaviour. That was the point of it. I mean it would be having a price signal, meaning you're paying more to heat your home, so therefore you will heat your home less. That's literally the . . . How silly is that? We're in Saskatchewan. It can be minus 40 in December, January, February.

Their idea was somehow we're going to send a price signal by making it more expensive to heat your house, so therefore you're going to turn the heat down. It was the height of lunacy to start with. So no, we're not going to be continuing with the OBPS. What we don't take in by people having that line item on their carbon tax, we're not spending.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay. Well I'm not sure I'm getting a very straight answer here. I am honestly looking to do my fiduciary duty here, to understand what the cost implications are to the estimates that we are here to discuss tonight, and how they're going to be impacted by changes, policy changes and decisions by your government, you know, within a week of tabling this budget and having it voted off on.

I'm going to move on to my next set of questions, and I'm hoping that, you know, we can just get some very direct, straight answers. I've got a lot of questions here I do want to get through in the remaining couple of hours that we have here this evening.

I do have one final question on this though, unfortunately. Would it be safe to say, based on . . . I mean you've presented this issue as one essentially of a flow-through, so no impact. It seemed to be what you're suggesting. So what, if any, effect will there be on the dividend that CIC provides to the General Revenue Fund from this policy change?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Yeah, the answer to that is very

simple in that this year we didn't take any dividends from SaskPower and we were not budgeting for any dividends from SaskPower next year either.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Thank you very much for that answer. I think this next question is more sort of confirmatory. I understand that there is a five-year agreement to pay \$2 million to STARS. The agreement ends in 2028, I believe. So is that the case for '25-26? \$2 million to STARS again?

**Kent Campbell:** — Yes, from the Crown sector, \$2 million this year which gets \$400,000 from five of the Crowns.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay, great. Thank you very much. CIC has in the past few years repaid equity advances to the Government of Saskatchewan. Will CIC or any of the Crowns be making equity repayments to the GRF [General Revenue Fund] in 2025-26?

**Kent Campbell:** — No.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay. And I think I know sort of the general basis to that response, you know, just kind of going through the annual report. But I guess, what would be the plan going forward in terms of repayment? Would those be contemplated at a future date or does it just continue to accrue?

[20:45]

**Kent Campbell:** — A couple things to point out. So in terms of dividend payments from the Crowns to CIC, we have a dividend policy where we first look at what the individual Crown's reinvestment needs are in terms of capital spend as an example. And so internal investment needs of the Crowns get determined first. Then we look at things like debt levels of the Crowns before we then determine what the capacity is to pay a dividend back to CIC.

And so you see over time that we adjust those based on those conditions. So for example, recently we've reduced the dividend target for SaskTel as an example, because we want them to be further investing in rural internet expansion.

In terms of equity repayments, those are not really budgeted for. Those are more related to one-time events like an asset sale, or perhaps there was some extraordinary earnings beyond what was budgeted. And those are the situations where you may encounter those. Otherwise we follow a dividend policy based on the principles that I outlined.

**Erika Ritchie:** — So what would be a recent example of that where an equity advance was made for unusual circumstances, and how much would that have been?

**Kent Campbell:** — Was your question around equity advances or equity repayments to the GRF?

**Erika Ritchie:** — Equity advances. If I understood you correctly, the advances would be going from the government to the Crown, correct?

**Kent Campbell:** — That's correct, yes. If we were to invest more money in a Crown, and then an equity repayment would be

when we take additional monies out of a Crown.

And so for example, on some recent equity repayments by Crowns, there was some in '21-22 where SaskPower and SaskEnergy sold some assets. So SaskEnergy sold a Kisbey gas processing plant in 2019. That gave them some extra earnings that were more one-time, so that came back. Similarly that year SaskTel had excess earnings of 25 million that were deemed to be more one-time, so that again was repaid.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Can you advise if Forkast Consulting and InterGroup consulting, both firms from Manitoba, are still under contract to do work for CIC in 2025-26?

**Kent Campbell:** — So the Saskatchewan rate review panel do choose their own consultants, and again that is to support their independence as a panel. We will pay — we at CIC, that is — pay the costs of the consultants that they choose. And so currently Forkast is on contract for the panel.

**Erika Ritchie:** — And can you tell me how much was paid out to Forkast Consulting in '24-25? And what is budgeted, if there's a budgeted amount, for current fiscal?

**Kent Campbell:** — Would it be possible to repeat the question?

**Erika Ritchie:** — Yes. Yes, I was asking how much was paid out to Forkast Consulting in the last fiscal year, '24-25, and what is budgeted for the current. And likewise for InterGroup.

**Kent Campbell:** — So for '24-25, Forkast municipal and regulatory consulting was paid \$41,754.56 for '24-25.

**Erika Ritchie:** — And then similar for InterGroup?

**Kent Campbell:** — There was nothing paid to InterGroup last year or this past fiscal year. We did not have anything that went forward to the panel last year. We budget every year for that purpose, but that funding was not utilized last year so we did not make any payments to InterGroup.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Oh, okay. So I guess what you're telling me is that, I mean, there is a budgeted amount and then just depending on the actual work during the year, you know, you'll experience a cost. So maybe the better question is, what was budgeted for consultants for the rate review panel in '24-25, and what is estimated for the current year?

**Kent Campbell:** — Okay. For the Saskatchewan rate review panel consulting costs, '24-25 we had budgeted 171,000. The number that we have budgeted for rate review panel consulting for '25-26 is 583,000.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Oh, okay. Well that's a fairly sizable difference. I presume there's some important work planned for the coming year. Maybe we could have a bit of an explanation of that work.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Sure. I'll maybe speak to that. I think that the officials have spoken to the budgeting elements to some of these things. I mean there's contingencies that we allocate. I think I know where the member is going, and I can tell her that there have been no decisions taken about applications to the rate

review panel.

**Erika Ritchie:** — So what explains the sizable increase in the budget estimate?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Probably ask officials. I was not . . .

**Kent Campbell:** — Yes. I would say that typically we would normally budget closer to a million dollars per year. And so the government was very clear last year that there would be nothing going to the rate review panel, so our budgeting this year was more similar to what we would normally budget for that amount.

[21:00]

**Erika Ritchie:** — And so what kind of work is contemplated that would cost in the neighbourhood of a half million dollars by the rate review panel?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Kent had spoken to kind of the average annual allocation. There are allocations made to be, my understanding . . . I mean I haven't been minister in this file for multiple years but my understanding is that there is generally an annual allocation that is, you know, significantly probably higher than the amount allocated this year. You know, if we don't spend it, we don't spend it. But that's the way it has worked.

**Kent Campbell:** — Yeah, maybe I'll just clarify that million-dollar figure I gave you as a more normal figure. That does include not just the consulting costs but the other . . . That's sort of the total budget for rate review panel activity, so things like retainers for the rate review panel folks, any expenses that might have, costs for public meetings. And we put that in as, you know, a regular part of our budget.

**Erika Ritchie:** — There must be a report where you've got those tables sort of itemizing the overall allocation to the rate review panel. Where would I find that?

**Kent Campbell:** — So that number would not be broken out as part of our operating budget in our annual report, but you would see payments to the consultants in the pay disclosure report under CIC that's issued each year.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Is there not a cut-off of \$50,000 on those payees? So if they come under that like, I guess, forecasted at \$41,000, it wouldn't show up there?

**Kent Campbell:** — That is correct. So only payments to individuals that would total \$50,000 or more show up in that report. Correct.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay. Thank you. How many FTEs has CIC budgeted for '25-26, and how many FTEs did CIC have on staff in '24-25?

**Kent Campbell:** — So staffing levels for CIC for '24-25, we had budgeted 68 total permanent staff. And for this year, '25-26, we have budgeted 69 permanent staff and three non-permanent term positions for a total of 72 employees.

And that's broken down as follows. In the president's office, which includes communications, our stakeholder relations, our

Indigenous relations function, we're projecting 12. For Crown sector priorities, which includes things like collaboration and our work around the collaboration committees, investment attraction, that's eight. Crown energy security, which includes our energy security group as well as our nuclear group, is 11. Finance and administration, we have 22 people. And then our Crown services division which provides HR, legal, and governance, both for the purposes of CIC but also the Crown sector, is 16 people. That will get you to a total of 69, and then I mentioned the three non-permanent term.

**Erika Ritchie:** — And what would those positions be?

**Kent Campbell:** — We have three non-permanent. We have one in our Indigenous relations group, we have one doing some work for us on records management in the president's office, and then we have one in human resources.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay, thank you for that response. What is the budgeted CIC salary expense for '25-26 and the forecast salary expense for CIC in '24-25?

**Kent Campbell:** — So salaries and benefits for CIC for the '24-25 budget was \$11,451,408; for the '25-26 budget, \$12,097,763. So that's an increase of just over 646,000 or an increase of 5.6 per cent.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Yeah, and I understand that, you know, CIC provides the guidance and direction for the other Crowns. And I think last year we kind of went over a little bit what some of those positions are undertaking. And I'm just trying to find my spot here.

So you talked about collaboration initiatives. And last year you mentioned savings of 53 million. And then I thought I heard you . . . and I don't know if it was a typo, because I thought I heard you say, this time around, 50.3 million. Anyway, so I'm just wondering, like what's the increment over . . . You know, what additional savings were there realized in the last fiscal year over what was reported in estimates last year?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Yeah, I'll maybe speak to that. I think we had talked a little bit about that in the introductory comments with regard to the savings through collaboration, and I think we're over \$50 million in savings in collaboration through three quarters. Is that about right?

You know, in addition to that there's investment attraction targets as well. And you know, in your preamble to the question . . . and I'll ask maybe Kent to speak to that specific. We'll find that information here in the immediate term here, but you know, really understanding the role that CIC plays and the collaboration initiatives we've undertaken at CIC and really kind of have expanded beyond just the Crown corporations, even including SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] and the procurement elements of that.

But I think it's important to understand, you know, really what the genesis of CIC was and where this came from. And it's really quite an interesting story, because, you know, this really came out of a number of state-owned enterprises, Crown corporations, which had developed here in this province going back to, you know, as early as 1910. I think SaskTel was brought together in

around that time period.

SaskPower, you know, in the late 1920s. 1929 I think is where we traced the history of SaskPower from. And then obviously a proliferation of Crown corporations in the period from 1944 to 1950, which included a number of things like brick factories and shoe factories and that sort of thing.

But you know, what was formed to manage and make sure government direction was carried out across that Crown sector was something called the government financial office. And what this was was the institution through which the government's Crown corporations would be managed, with accountability through a minister into cabinet. And that developed into the Crown Investments Corporation model as it evolved from the government financial office into the late '60s, early '70s.

And that model really was based on a vision of the GFO [government financial office] and then the CIC having a direct reporting relationship through Crown boards to CIC through, whether it was the secretary in the GFO and then to the president of CIC, the job that Kent fills so ably, and through that mechanism by having accountability both up towards cabinet but also back the other way to make sure that the companies were undertaking government direction and aligning their operations with government direction.

And you know, in a lot of cases, that was running these operations in a straightforward, businesslike fashion. But also it was about carrying out government policy direction. And you know, part of that government policy direction as it's evolved and as we've undertaken goes to this question of collaboration across Crowns. And whether that be standardization and procurement, whether that be other, you know, whether that be working together on investment attraction, this has really been a focus. And it will be a focus during the time I'm minister for sure.

I mean this is going to be a major focus in collaborating across Crowns, having the capacity at CIC to drive these agendas through, you know, whether it be collaboration cost savings, investment attraction, driving these policy priorities of government through CIC into the Crown corporations. So collaboration's a good example of it. And I'll maybe ask Kent to talk about some of the good work that's been going on there.

**Kent Campbell:** — Yeah, so for the collaboration initiative this year in particular we have eight strategic initiative teams. And we mentioned the goal, the target is \$50 million in cost savings each year and then \$1 billion in new private sector investment. So the numbers referenced earlier, we are currently forecasting \$50.3 million in savings as of Q3 for the previous fiscal year, ending '24-25, and then 1.33 billion in new private sector investment.

You had asked about some of the top cost savings areas that would contribute toward that. Maybe I'll just reference four. The first one was the establishment of a more centralized system for line location requests between the Crowns and other agencies at 17.9 million. There's a pole-sharing arrangement between SaskTel and SaskPower, where SaskTel is increasingly using SaskPower poles rather than burying lines.

We've expanded Crown collaboration. We now call it

collaboration because there's now 36 Crowns — administration, treasury board Crowns, government agencies — participating, including the health sector, which has been huge. And so there's one here from the health sector I would like to highlight, which is vinyl surgical gloves, where the Saskatchewan Health Authority, All Nations' Healing, and Athabasca Health joined 3sHealth [Health Shared Services Saskatchewan] in the procurement of vinyl surgical gloves as a joint purchase. And just by doing that alone, those agencies were able to save \$4.4 million. So they got the same products, but just by collaborating they were able to save the taxpayer \$4.4 million.

[21:15]

And then finally, one on joint infrastructure between SaskPower and SaskEnergy, reducing costs when installing services, of \$2.4 million.

And certainly one of the things that I've noted is, you know, you have these large government organizations and everybody means to work well together, but until you actually have a mechanism to sort of require reporting and encouraging that participation, you're not really optimizing it.

And I think one of the ones that has really been most prominent for me hasn't been on the cost-saving side but has really been on that investment attraction side, and in part, given my previous roles at TED [Trade and Export Development] and other economic agencies. It is a real advantage for Saskatchewan to have our Crowns coming together with our agencies like TED, like Energy and Resources, to attract investment. It just doesn't happen in other jurisdictions, and we hear that from investors.

It's a real advantage to be able to have one point of contact, which we coordinate through TED. And then Tim acts as the liaison with the CIC Crowns. We have a committee, and they're able to get really quick responses. One point of contact and it really makes the investors feel welcome. And it's unique. It shouldn't be. You'd think any smaller jurisdiction in particular should be able to do this, but it just doesn't happen.

And I know the minister has some experiences on that as well he might want to share.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I would. And you know, Kent put that very, very well. We have really viewed this as being an area of competitive advantage for our province as we go, you know, working with potential investors, as we talk about Saskatchewan around the world to both attract investment and to find new markets for our commodities around the world.

We have a genuinely unique advantage here in that anybody who is seeking to do business here and working with government in the province has one phone call to make, and we will coordinate across government to make sure that those potential investors or those who are seeking to buy our commodities are going to be able to do that and access the appropriate people.

This was really why Trade and Export Development was set up in the first place. And Kent was the very first deputy minister of Trade and Export Development as well. And we had set this organization up in 2017 and it was based on a lot of experience. I mean, you know, Kent's had the misfortune of working beside

me for a long time now. Nearly 20 years we've been working together and, you know, working in economic ministries through a great big chunk of that.

And I really identified some of the challenges early on and some of the structural challenges that existed for companies who were seeking to make investments and getting projects across the line. And that really culminated in the plan that the Premier put forward for the creation of the trade and export department ministry in his leadership campaign. That was where the plan that he put forward . . . That was the plan, and we executed on that shortly thereafter. We created the trade and export department ministry, and the vision was that this would be the one-stop shop for investment attraction.

We continued that. There continued to be some challenges though. Even though we were coordinating through a single point of contact, it was how do we get through these very, very, you know, complicated on occasion servicing issues, permitting issues, technical barriers? How do we actually cut through that? How do we work with the Crowns? How do we work with SaskPower? How do you get a power connection? How do you get a gas connection? All of these were real questions.

And you know, Kent has done a remarkable job as president of CIC, and Tim has done a remarkable job as vice-president and the point of contact between the Crown corporations, interfacing back with Trade and Export Development. It's resulted in literally billions of dollars of investment, where companies are making decisions on location that are . . . You know, it could be one or two points. I mean we're talking 1 or 2 per cent long term, you know, ROI [return on investment] numbers. What makes the difference and tips the balance in a lot of cases on these things is, you know, the single point of contact and your ability to actually get a project across the line in a defined period of time.

So you know, we worked really hard at that, and it has been done through hard work and collaboration across the Crown sector but also with executive government. And it is a unique model that exists in Canada.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Thank you for that response. I wonder if you could tell me what the budgeted CIC revenue and expense numbers are for '25-26 and the forecast revenue, expense numbers for CIC for 2024-25?

**Kent Campbell:** — For the '25-26 CIC budget, we are anticipating dividend revenue — that's revenue coming in from the Crowns; that's how we earn our money — at 276.22 million. Total operating expenses at CIC for '25-26 are estimated to be 21.065 million.

We then have three what we call public policy initiatives. One is our investment attraction infrastructure program, our Indigenous programming, and our funding for coal communities. Those total 9.629 million. So earnings from operations then — we take the dividend revenue minus those expenses I mentioned — would be 245.526 million. After finance income, finance expense, that comes to 246.556 million less capital expenditures. And then our payments to the GRF for '25-26, so our dividend payment to the GRF, that is estimated to be \$255 million for this year.

When you compare that to the '24-25 budget, we had anticipated

revenues of 227.739 million. The operating expenses were estimated to be 19.507 million. The public policy initiatives were 5.416 million. Your earnings from operation were estimated at 202.817 million. When you remove the finance income and finance expense, your net earnings were, at budget, were projected to be 203.886 million less capital expense. And then our payment to the GRF, \$210 million in dividends to the GRF.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay, thank you. So also known as CIC dividends? Would that be sort of the same thing, the payment to the GRF?

**Kent Campbell:** — Correct, yes.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Yes, okay. Just want to make sure I'm comparing the right numbers. It seems to be in range with going back to 2017-18, 2018-19. Thank you for those numbers. I'll get back to my list of questions. What would be the budget dividend by individual Crown corporation for '25-26?

**Kent Campbell:** — Okay, so the dividend revenue for CIC, another way to phrase that is the dividend that the Crowns pay to CIC. So projections for '25-26: SaskTel, 40.24 million; SaskEnergy, 14.875 million; SaskPower, zero dividend; Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan, 181.111 million — I'm rounding to the nearest 1,000 here — SaskWater, 3.004 million. SGI Canada would be 32 million. And then we're projecting dividends from our investment in ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], which is of course not a Crown, at just under \$5 million.

**Erika Ritchie:** — So Lotteries and Gaming, 181 million you said, right. So that seems to be a fairly significant increase over '23-24. Could you provide a little bit of an explanation, what's driving that?

**Kent Campbell:** — Yes, I can. So the difference there really was, that was not a full year of LGS operations. So I think that year there was only a three-quarter year worth of earnings.

**Erika Ritchie:** — And then I notice for SaskEnergy also, sizable increase if I'm not mistaken. You've got 114 you're forecasting — did I hear you correctly? — compared to more in the neighbourhood of 20 to 40 in past years.

**Kent Campbell:** — Sorry, no, the forecasted dividend for SaskEnergy is 14.875 million.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay yeah. I'm glad I asked.

**Kent Campbell:** — Just under 15 million, yes.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Yeah, that makes more sense. Okay. Great, thank you.

Okay, so yeah, you mentioned in that some earnings coming from the investment in ISC. ISC has been in the news this past week, as I'm sure you're aware. Could you tell me what the government's position is on the mini-tender that has come forward from Plantro to purchase 14.9 per cent interest in ISC?

**Kent Campbell:** — So ISC is a publicly traded company, and CIC is the largest single shareholder in that corporation. We

currently hold 29.3 per cent ownership interest. And certainly we are aware of the tender offer by Plantro as well as the response by the ISC board. And just very recently Plantro changed the terms of their offer. We are waiting to hear a response from the ISC board, but we do not have a position on that particular proposal.

[21:30]

**Erika Ritchie:** — Well I guess, yeah. I mean ISC was originally sold off, you know, it's gone sort of an initial IPO [initial public offering] about 10 years ago. And the government retained, you know, a third ownership thereabouts and has three board members on it.

But you know, I think there's been some speculation and concern over the implications of an outside firm acquiring that sort of a shareholder interest in ISC. And I'd like to hear from the minister on what he sees as the government's position on the implications if such a bid is successful, and what that will mean for the interests of the province.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I would say that Kent, I think, put it well. I mean the member is aware, I mean this is a publicly traded company. I'm not going to be making specific comments with regard to proposed transactions or potential or hypothetical offers or anything of this nature. I'm not going to be commenting on it. It's entirely inappropriate for me to do that.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Well you know, I think that there is some concern there. ISC did put out a statement as you mentioned. They characterized it as abusive and coercive. Those are some pretty strong words, certainly backed up by, I can only imagine, some valid concerns. And so you know, I think the concern from the people of the province would go to what this could mean for jobs, or you know, cost of services that are offered to customers here in the province when they have to get their land title searches and so forth done.

I wondered if you could perhaps comment on those concerns or implications.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Once again, like I'm not going to be commenting on any of the particulars. It's a publicly traded company. I'm not, as a minister, going to be commenting on that. What I can say: there's a long-term contract in place with ISC. There is a legislative provision on head office. Those are going to continue in place, but I am not going to comment on proposed market transactions.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Has the government made its appointments to the board for its three board members, and who would those be?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — So thanks. No, I just had to clarify the particular legal framework under which this happens and under which I can comment.

So there's an order in council that was passed, which I believe is posted publicly, that renominated the three existing board members who had been serving as government representatives quite recently, in the last couple of months. I think it's been public for some time now.

The actual formal appointment of the board happens at the annual general meeting of the company, which will be occurring in the next . . . Okay, it hasn't happened yet but the formal appointment will happen as a part of the AGM [annual general meeting], so I don't believe it's happened yet. But we have resubmitted our candidates who are those who already had been members of the board, and I think who we've been satisfied with their performance.

**Erika Ritchie:** — And who would those three individuals be?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Sorry?

**Erika Ritchie:** — Could we please have the names of those three board members?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Sure.

**Erika Ritchie:** — And then maybe also a bit of an explanation on how they were selected for appointment.

**Kent Campbell:** — So the three members are Joel Teal, who has been on the board since the IPO in July of 2013, and he is the Chair of the board currently. Doug Emsley, who is the Vice-Chair, also on the board since the IPO in July of 2013. And then the third is Amber Biemans. She was appointed to the board in 2022. Those are our three appointees.

**Erika Ritchie:** — So it's my understanding that no one entity can own more than 15 per cent of the shares in ISC. The offer, the tender that Plantro has put forward is looking to acquire just under that at 14.9, and there appears to be somewhat a possibility that that may lead to a slate of board members being put forward by Plantro to take a position on and through . . . gain control of ISC. And to what ends it's not clear.

But does it concern the minister that there would be this sort of initiative coming forward from somebody who has had a somewhat dubious past in terms of recent severances and letting go from the company that he was a key owner and executive on?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — You know, I've made the comment, which is as far as I can go with regard to, you know, a publicly traded company in which the government owns a position. I can't comment on these matters, and I'm not going to.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Is CIC budgeting to sell any of the ISC stocks that it owns in the current year?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — I'm not sure how many more times I can give the . . . I'm not able to comment on ISC as the minister. I can't comment. It's a publicly traded company. We have a material interest. I can't comment on it.

**Erika Ritchie:** — What is the projected financial return from CIC AMI in 2025-26, and could you list for me the assets still held by CIC AMI?

**Cindy Ogilvie:** — Cindy Ogilvie, senior vice-president and chief financial officer at CIC. So earlier tonight Kent had answered the question about all of the Crowns' earnings. In that listing he had provided, CIC AMI has projected earnings at 1.5 million for '25-26.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Yes. Thank you very much. I wondered though if you could provide a list of the assets still held by CIC AMI.

**Cindy Ogilvie:** — So CIC AMI is in wind-down, and the assets that are left are very minor and are all non-performing assets. So we have an investment in an entity called CanPro Ingredients, Performance Plants Inc., Muskowekwan Resources Ltd., Townsgate Properties, and Windermere.

**Erika Ritchie:** — I just guess I'd like to understand that a little bit better. You indicated that they're non-performing assets so how is it that there's been . . . What would be the history of it, how these assets would be part of the CIC's portfolio?

**Cindy Ogilvie:** — They would go back — some of them go back decades — to previous entities that would have existed over the years. Over the years these entities have been wound down, and many of the assets have been divested of. But there are some assets that are left that are non-performing, being that the entities aren't earning any earnings. Some of them are agricultural, ag-bio-type research companies that are getting dollars invested in them from other investees, not by CIC AMI, but we just continue to hold on to the shares because there's no market for them. We can't necessarily sell them. There's no value to them anymore.

**Erika Ritchie:** — So at some point then presumably they would be dissolved in that case? Or what would be . . . why would you continue to hold onto them?

**Cindy Ogilvie:** — The entities still exist. Yeah, I mean we could turn back the shares to the entity itself for no value, or we just continue to hang onto them and see what happens with the entities. If any of their research comes about, becomes revenue-earning in the future, then maybe there would be something there to recover.

**Erika Ritchie:** — I see. Okay. Okay, thank you. We talked earlier about the Auto Fund, and I've got a few questions related to that. What is the projected operating position of the Auto Fund before investment revenues in 2025-26? And what was it in '24-25?

**Kent Campbell:** — We don't have that breakdown.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Could it then be provided in follow-up to the committee hearing or meeting?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well what I would suggest, if the member wants to submit a written query on that, we would be happy to go through the process.

[21:45]

**Erika Ritchie:** — I'm here today asking the question. I don't quite see the purpose of submitting questions that will then get punted for six months or whatever the term. I would respectfully request that the minister's officials table for the committee's viewing the investment revenues for '25-26 and '24-25, respectfully, please.

Sorry, just to clarify. I know you had sort of a puzzled look on

your face there. I'll restate it. What is the projected operating position of the Auto Fund before investment revenues in '25-26 and '24-25? And I would ask for those to please be tabled at a later date to the committee.

Okay, I did notice the minister nodding to the Chair. I take that as acceptance of the request.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — What I would suggest, you know, the member has a number of options. We don't have the information here right now on any of that. I'm not sure if that's publicly available or not, but I'd encourage the member to avail herself of those opportunities.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Well that is precisely what I'm doing. I'm requesting that information in the here and the now, and respectfully requesting that it be submitted as requested at a later date. I don't understand the issue.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — We don't have it with us, Mr. Chair. We don't have it right now.

**Chair Steele:** — If the minister can't supply it right now, you're saying you can't supply it at a later date?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I'm not sure. I mean, yeah, I'm not making an undertaking that I can't commit to because I'm not sure. So we'll take a look and see what we can do.

**Chair Steele:** — Okay. We'll move on.

**Erika Ritchie:** — All right. So I know we canvassed earlier this evening the loss position or the negative position of the Auto Fund. I don't have the numbers right in front of me, but it would appear that the Auto Fund is operating outside its financial framework. I'd like to know what the province is intending to do to address this issue.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Thanks, Mr. Chair. I would reject the premise of the member's question. Where the Auto Fund was at as of March 31st of 2025 — so 10 days ago — was at a minimum capital test of 125 per cent, which is within the long-term target. So I don't accept the premise of the question.

The other thing I would add too with regard to the Auto Fund — and I talked about it a little bit earlier here this evening — given the uncertainty in the market we're seeing, yeah, literal fluctuations every day. We're not making long-term decisions with regard to either the Auto Fund or other budgetary measures based on day-to-day fluctuations in the market or oil price or any of these things. We're not going to do it, and I think frankly it's highly irresponsible to suggest that we do.

So the fact is that the MCT, minimum capital test threshold, we are within that parameter as of 10 days ago.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Does the minister have plans to increase automobile insurance rates in the current year?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — No decisions have been made with regard to any of those matters, and the fact is that on the Auto Fund we are within the long-term target for where that fund is at. You know, we're going to monitor where things go through the



course of an entire year, whether that be, you know, 6-, 9-, 12-months period, but we're not going to be making decisions based on daily or hourly fluctuations in the market.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Yeah, so of course no one would expect such a ridiculous reaction. But I am curious to know what the decision-making process and the factors that would come into consideration would be for such a determination.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I'll say it again. The Auto Fund is within the long-term target right now, and that's, you know, going to be continuously monitored, as it always is. You know, the Auto Fund had been significantly above the minimum capital test point, and that enabled us to do some . . . you know, issue rebates basically to customers of SGI through the Auto Fund. But I think the rate reserve is nearly 800 million. Is that about where we're at on . . . That's rate stabilization? Sorry, yeah, 720, we're at the RSR [rate stabilization reserve] right now.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Sorry, I didn't quite understand that number. The reserve? Is that what you called it? Yeah, and it's currently sitting at 800 million? Am I . . . I don't know.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — 720.

**Erika Ritchie:** — The reserve is sitting at 720 million. Okay, thank you very much. Can you provide me with information on the average per cent increase in the price of an SGI property policy in Saskatchewan in '24-25 and what it's projected to be in '25-26?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Yeah. Okay. So I mean this is a competitive market. SGI operates in a competitive market and are making pricing decisions based on the competitive market they're operating in. I'm not giving direction on any of those things.

Think about it this way. With SaskTel, you know, another government Crown agency, Crown corporation that operates in a highly competitive market who are, you know, constantly making adjustments to pricing, you'll hear on the radio or see billboards about new programs that are being rolled out. Government has no input into . . . I can tell you I have no input. The political level has no input into what those competitive decisions that these companies are making are.

So the answer on that particular question is, I don't really have an answer because that's up to SGI.

**Erika Ritchie:** — I don't quite understand that answer. I'm just confused by it because regardless of who makes the decision, it should be a number that you would have access to, would it not?

And then I guess, like I think don't insurance adjusters usually get quotes? I would think that if you worked in the industry you would have access to that kind of information.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I would say this. I mean SGI officials are not at estimates for a reason. I mean these are CIC estimates, not SGI estimates, and SGI don't have separate estimates.

And it would be . . . You know the question the member is asking

me, just for folks who are watching, I mean it's the equivalent of asking, well what are you going to do for cell phone plans next week? Well I'm not directly engaged in coming up with new pricing models for, you know, iPhone 16s that SaskTel is selling or how they're going to bundle that package with a rate plan.

And there's a reason for that. It's because we have experts working at SGI and SaskTel who are experts in this particular field who are making those commercial decisions, and that's as it should be.

**Kent Campbell:** — Maybe I could just add to that too. I think one of the differences is when it comes to SaskTel and SGI Canada in terms of property and casualty, the reason that's more delegated is it's a competitive market, as the minister mentioned. So when it comes to prop and casualty insurance, customers have a choice. They don't need to use SGI. They do for their basic auto insurance through the Auto Fund, and that's why that process goes through the rate review panel. But when it comes to your home insurance, you have choices in terms of who you buy your insurance from.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Can you provide me with the budgeted financial position for the SGI reinsurance program in 2025-26 and the forecast financial position for the SGI reinsurance program in '24-25?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — So I would kind of say this, and this was also pointed out last evening by the CEO of SaskTel in estimates. You know, for SGI and SaskTel, who operate in competitive environments, I mean a number of the questions that could be asked have implications, that we are not going to disclose competitive information that would put the companies at a disadvantage. We're just not going to do that.

[22:00]

So also kind of with regard to specific questions with regard to the business of SGI, I mean we don't have that with us. We're here as Crown Investments Corporation, not here as SGI. And to reiterate, there's a reason why SGI doesn't have separate estimates, which I won't get into, but there is a reason why SGI is not here for separate estimates. So asking for very specific information, some of which would be competitive information about the company, we're not in the position to provide and we won't provide.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Well I think that's unfortunate. You know, SGI is another Crown, and so there's an issue of transparency to the public in general, but then also my role in terms of ensuring accountability. And you know, those numbers are important for ensuring that. And I don't know if there is some way that they can be provided, maybe through written questions, or at least, you know, in a ballpark.

Because I think the concern is that with increasing claims and payments, ensuring that the fund is within that operating range that we were talking about before. Looking to see if it's on-trend to stay within a reasonable range or not is really what the questions are driving at. And without having the responses to what are, I think, very reasonable questions and ones in the public interest, it's difficult for us to make those determinations and do our job from this end.

But anyways, I did want to ask a specific question about the appeal advisor program, which operates within SGI. And what's forecasted for '24-25 and budgeted for '25-26?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I think, Mr. Chair, this would be, you know, an answer that probably would have been replicated in earlier responses with regard to SGI. We're here as Crown Investments Corporation, not as SGI. We don't have the information that is here with regard to highly specific questions about particular parts of SGI's business, so we can't respond to that.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Well then would it be possible for the minister and his officials to table the response to this question at a reasonable later date?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — I would give an answer similar to what I gave earlier. We don't have the information in front of us. I'm not going to provide an undertaking to give information that we are not sure where it is or who has it or if it exists in the context of the question being asked. And further to that, I am not going to commit to providing information that would be competitively challenging for the company to provide. And I don't know for sure whether it would be or not, but I'm not going to provide an undertaking that I know I can't deliver on.

**Chair Steele:** — Okay, hearing from the minister that he doesn't have the information or he's not going to, made the decision, can we move on with the questioning then? He's basically quoted that he's not going to respond.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Right. Sure. Well I believe that the minister is also the Minister Responsible for SGI, so could he not take that query back and pursue a response?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well I mean, this is what I had said earlier, Mr. Chair. I can't provide an undertaking that I have no certainty that I can deliver on, and I say that in a professional capacity as a lawyer. I'm not going to provide the undertaking. We will take a look and we will make efforts, but I can't provide an undertaking.

**Chair Steele:** — Okay, being that the minister said he would take a look and give it a . . . Is that satisfactory? Can we move forward with the questioning? Withdrawal on the one question?

**Erika Ritchie:** — Sure, yeah. If the minister is committing to taking a look and getting back to the committee, then I'm satisfied with that. And I'll look forward to a response being tabled to the committee.

**Chair Steele:** — Okay. Minister, you're good? We'll move forward.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — I just want to be very clear, Mr. Chair. I'm not committing to tabling a response because I'm not giving an undertaking to do it because I don't know that I can provide that undertaking.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Well I did have some other related questions. I'm a little bit confused about why questions on SGI are not germane to this conversation. It is true that there isn't a specific committee that . . . or committee time that's been allowed for

estimates on SGI, and I honestly don't know the reasons why that is. But you know, CIC as a holding company and SGI as one of those companies of which, it appears, that the Minister of CIC is also responsible for, it would be reasonable for me to be asking just a couple of questions on a couple of matters related to the budget estimates, specifically with respect to the appeal advisor program and the number of appeals that it receives in a year and the number that are discharged by that program in the year, you know, what the backlog is.

Certainly I've been hearing from constituents some concerns with the backlog on that program and the inability for timely resolutions of issues that have come forward. And I'm hoping maybe that the minister can either provide some details around that program, or if not tonight then commit to following up and bringing that information back to the committee.

**Chair Steele:** — I think what I'm hearing, the minister has offered to dig into the file, possibly come up with some, possibly answers. If you're not satisfied with that, I guess he's committed. Can we move on with the questions in committee tonight? Is that satisfactory to do that? He's going to attempt to.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Yes, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I just wanted to make sure that I sort of provided a little bit of context, you know, in terms of the question and the estimates for that ministry.

But it looks like we've got about another 20 minutes or so, and I did want to ask about the status of the SMR program that CIC is overseeing in conjunction with SaskPower. I did note, last year in estimates where there were a number of updates provided in terms of the nature of the work that historically has been happening.

And so really I'm just interested, in the interests of time this evening, in an update in terms of the work that happened in the last fiscal year and projections for the year that we're entering into.

I did note also in the record that there were some thoughts towards providing publicly available summaries of that work. I honestly apologize; I couldn't find it in the annual report, but I might have been looking in the wrong place though. If you want to direct me to where some of that information is provided, that would also be appreciated.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — All right. No, I appreciate the question. So I'm going to give a bit of an introduction, but then David Brock is going to, you know, provide probably a bit more granular detail on a lot of these matters.

But I would say this: the government's objective is to get to nuclear. And I've talked about that, I think, in the opening remarks. I talked about that in estimates yesterday, and I've talked about that publicly a great deal over the last number of months. Our objective is to get to nuclear.

And you know, there are significant questions about how and what that time frame is going to look like, not based on any lack of willingness on this side to get there, but on a lot of the development time frames for the particular SMR that David can speak to. But also, I mean, the reality with nuclear is that these

things often take longer than we hope and they often cost more than we hope.

We are still working very closely with OPG [Ontario Power Generation], who are the leads on the BWRX design. We're going to hopefully have class 3 engineering estimates from OPG in the relatively near future. We were hoping that we would have had them already, and we were hoping we would have had them for some time, but that has been delayed and pushed out. So you know, a lot of the challenges isn't because of SaskPower or CIC, it's that our partner on the project, which is OPG, is kind of . . . It's taken longer than they would have hoped as well.

So we don't have that pricing information. But from a policy direction and macro standpoint, the government wants to get to nuclear power development. We think it really fits within the overall policy direction that we want to take for power generation and distribution, transmission, meaning we are looking for as much energy and power production security as we can possibly generate here in Saskatchewan that we're not dependent on outside sources for.

You know, we have 25 per cent of the world's uranium that is here in this province right now. How do we get from just being the miner of that uranium to having the value, as much of the value-added that we can possibly generate to be here in the province? And a great deal of work has been done on this, and I give David a ton of credit because there has been a remarkable amount of work on planning future workforce needs, how then we work our way back from that in programming, educational design, working with our partners. And this is a huge undertaking because there are so many moving parts on all of this.

And you know, being able to plan in the long term and time out to make sure that we have the workforce and labour market capacity that we need in order to actually implement a lot of these things, in addition to working back through from power production to mining, what can we fill in the middle to have that value-added occur here?

So that is all part of that big picture that we're working through right now with the intention to getting to nuclear. How do we bridge there? I talked about that extensively yesterday with regard to SaskPower estimates. But specifically on nuclear, David, take it away.

**David Brock:** — Great. David Brock, vice-president, energy security. Through you, Mr. Chair, thank you to the member for the question.

I want to start by building on the minister's fundamental comment in his preface, and that is that so much of the work that we're doing on nuclear is core to the long-term provincial interests on energy security. And the minister's comments about bridging from our current diversity of supply to make sure that we're through to a secure energy future that also is powering the significant industrial interests in the province and are leading exports internationally, as well as obviously secure, reliable, and affordable power for our households and businesses that all of us rely on.

In terms specific to the work of the Crown Investments Corporation on nuclear, I'll cover off on five areas and I'll touch

on each of them briefly. Our responsibilities are for supply chain development, workforce development, investment attraction as it relates to nuclear, our relationship with the federal and provincial governments, as well as the overall oversight in governance, which is consistent with the long-standing mandate of the Crown Investments Corporation, as the minister illustrated in a previous response.

Overarching all that is to make sure that there is coordination across the provincial government on what we're doing in nuclear. And so primary to that I'd say is our ongoing relationship with SaskPower and with the pursuit of their grid scale, BWRX-300, invented by GE Hitachi, as well as the work by the Saskatchewan Research Council and the work they're doing on microreactors, specifically the Westinghouse eVinci, but other prospective microreactor technologies that are available to them globally.

[22:15]

That work is important, of course, because as Saskatchewan is seen as a so-called new nuclear jurisdiction, as the minister mentioned, we are by no means new to nuclear. And the work of companies such as Cameco and Orano, the research that has happened at our post-secondary institutions as well as a number of vendors in the supply chain that kind of operate below the radar but do very significant work and build on the province's expertise in welding, machining, manufacturing is a big part of that.

So maybe I can start there and talk about the work that we've done, particularly on supply chain investment. We've just completed a two-year investment in a Ready4SMR program led by the Saskatchewan Industrial and Mining Suppliers Association, SIMSA, with them having a national partner as well as a First Nations partner here in the province.

And that has enabled us to put on a number of events across the province over the past two years in places such as Regina, Saskatoon, Estevan, Moose Jaw, Whitecap First Nation to make sure that the potential supply chain in the province — not just for projects by SaskPower or by Saskatchewan Research Council but also nationally in Ontario, New Brunswick, or globally — Saskatchewan can be feeding that supply chain.

And I think a recent announcement by Westinghouse, and that they had signed MOUs [memorandum of understanding] with six specific businesses here in Saskatchewan to feed their supply chain — even though they're not currently planning on building one of their reactors in Saskatchewan — shows the significant advancements that we've made in the development of our supply chain.

We also have a nuclear supply chain working group that is a public-private collaboration, and again I think speaks to the considerable efforts that companies such as Graham Construction are starting to make towards becoming nuclear accredited so that they can participate and feed in the supply chain in Saskatchewan, as well, as I said, nationally and globally.

We have another 28 companies in the province that are Saskatchewan-based firms that have expressed interest and are working towards getting their nuclear accreditation. A number of these companies are well known to Saskatchewan residents. To

name just a few: Bird Construction, Flyer Electric, I mentioned Graham Construction already, JNE Welding, March Consulting, and Venables Machine Works.

So that's only half a dozen of the 28 or so that are currently working towards nuclear accreditation. This is not a minor undertaking. This is at least a 12- to 24-month endeavour that can cost up to an investment of anywhere from 500,000 to \$2 million. So credit to these companies that are actually starting to take the risk in getting the accreditation they need and start to model their business plans in order to participate in what is clearly a burgeoning industry, not just in this country but internationally as we've seen with now 34 countries pledging to triple nuclear power globally, and financial institutions such as Bank of America, Barclays, Morgan Stanley, Societe Generale, and others wanting to pledge their financial investments in the nuclear sector as well. So that's on supply chain development.

On workforce development, we've done specific work just for Saskatchewan and particularly had strong partnerships with our post-secondary institutions, our trades training institutes. Strong interest from labour, including IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers], our regional colleges, all of whom want to be in on training workers not only for this province but for developments that they're seeing potentially in Alberta, as well as obviously the ongoing work in Ontario and the long-standing nuclear developments in places like New Brunswick.

And now as they're seeing Canada investing in places like Poland, Romania, and our relationships with the United Kingdom and France, there's a real growing opportunity also for labour in this province to contribute not only to the growth here in Saskatchewan, this industry, but globally as well.

CIC is also contributing to a national workforce study where we've provided leadership. We're partnering with the province of New Brunswick, Ontario, Alberta, Natural Resources Canada, as well as the Canadian Nuclear Association to look at a national study, because the demands that we will need, particularly in trades training, are not just confined to Saskatchewan but certainly to the whole country.

That work came about as a direct result of leadership we've provided where I have served as Co-Chair of the national nuclear leadership table for two years with the deputy minister of Natural Resources Canada. And we've looked at very practical projects come out of that work and collaboration that we've had with other provinces and with interested parties from across the country. So a lot of significant work being done on supply chain and workforce development.

On investment attraction, we see a number of areas in the future where we think there are prospects in things like waste management from SMRs, build-out of transportation facilities. We already have some expertise in the province in those areas. Considerable potential, as I mentioned, in strengths we already have as a result of our mining and oil and gas industries and things like machining and manufacturing. A specific outgrowth of that has been the memorandum of understanding that was signed by a previous minister, Minister Duncan, and the current Minister of Affordability and Utilities in Alberta, Minister Neudorf. So Saskatchewan and Alberta are also working together.

We're helping Alberta think through if they're going to become a nuclear jurisdiction as well, what we've learned in Saskatchewan and how they can benefit from that, as well as the potential for things like industrial decarbonization or grid re-enhancement, which nuclear can certainly play a part in, particularly as we're thinking in the medium to long term, at least in terms of the power sector, so kind of out to the 2040s for the potential for things like large nuclear.

I'll close off on the last two areas then. In terms of federal-provincial relations, you'll appreciate that this is a particular area of ongoing work. The minister mentioned in response to an earlier question the Future Electricity Fund. And I do think it's important. CIC did negotiate the return of what was initially \$496 million back to the province, which is of our carbon tax money. That has now increased to 538 million that we've negotiated by moving money from another fund that was residual funds that we were able to move into that Future Electricity Fund, which will again go directly back into the electricity system in this province.

The reason why I make mention of that, Mr. Chair, is because of an announcement by the federal Minister of Natural Resources Canada on only March the 5th — so just six weeks or so ago — of \$80 million being invested into this province. I think it's important to distinguish that those are funds that are carbon tax dollars being returned to the province. That's not net new money that's coming into the province. There have been some areas through federal funding where we've certainly pursued to make sure that those dollars are coming into this province. But that's an example of reannouncements of carbon tax dollars that are coming back that is really just money that have been paid by the residents of Saskatchewan coming back to Saskatchewan.

I'll close on oversight and governance. I believe the minister made mention in his role last night as the Minister of SaskPower about the creation of SaskNuclear, a subsidiary that's certainly necessary to help move SaskPower through the regulatory process with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. But that's really a starting point for nuclear in the Crown sector.

So we're doing important work to understand in the medium and long term, thinking through, you know, a variety of conditions and variables: the number of SMRs, whether or not we're eventually bringing on large nuclear, the role of microreactors, what the financing arrangements may be like, what might be the options for the structuring of nuclear in the province.

So the subsidiary Crown nuclear most certainly makes sense for now and will for some time as SaskPower moves through the initial stages of licensing under the CNSC [Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission] as the proponent. But we want to start doing that thinking now to prepare for the medium and long term.

And the same goes for oversight. If Saskatchewan is going to be a nuclear energy power, then the long-standing role that CIC has played in oversight going back to 1978 is demonstrably different with nuclear because of the density of the energy, because of the regulatory environment not only nationally but internationally, because of the significant capital investments that are made, and because of the benefits that we see to the province.

So we're starting to think now about what the oversight role for

CIC — and through us the provincial government — will need to be as it relates to nuclear energy so that we're prepared to make sure that the Chair of the CIC board and the provincial government as a whole are asking the right questions and, most importantly, getting the right answers as we continue our oversight of the Crown sector and development of nuclear power specifically. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Maybe I'll just add . . . And David said it much, much better than I, and David's done a great job in leading our team in this space. You know, we are working right now. I mean this is not just some idea in the future. We're going through this right now.

And SaskNuclear was a part of that, going through the regulatory process. SRC [Saskatchewan Research Council] has a nuclear subsidiary as well that is concurrently going through the regulatory processes, which is why you had the subsidiary set up. And frankly it's why we have some amendments or some new statutory provisions in front of the House right now actually as well. Because we are, you know, concurrently with some of the actual technical work that's going on being led by OPG on the BWRX project, but we're concurrently going through the regulatory process with that as well which is, you know, to say that it's a challenge . . . It is a challenge and it's a lengthy process.

I would say that CNSC has made strides, and I think both SaskNuclear and SRC Nuclear would speak to some of the advances that CNSC have made through their regulatory process to do a number of these things at the same time rather than consecutively as far as that.

This has been a topic of discussion as well. It hasn't been a top-fold, front-page discussion in the national election campaign, but one of the commitments that was made by the Conservative Party was to truncate and shrink the regulatory process time for the deployment of whether it be small-scale SMR nuclear, micro nuclear, or large-scale nuclear.

And I really think that's going to be a vital conversation as we go forward, because I think you're going to see other jurisdictions within Canada, and you're seeing it around the world. I mean you really are. It's amazing the amount not just of interest but commitment from national governments and national utilities that are owned by governments to deploy this technology around the world which is going to create incredible opportunities here in Saskatchewan, which is why we are doing all of this work that we are on workforce and supply chain development. Because this is an amazing opportunity that we have here in Saskatchewan.

It was an opportunity frankly that probably existed at some level 30 years ago, and we didn't take advantage of it. In fact that opportunity was pushed outside of the province and now we're having to kind of get back to the point where we can have some of these chances again. But this is really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that we have in front of us to build out the labour market as far as the nuclear supply chain, but all of the elements that go along with that as well given our really almost unique position as a producer and miner of fuel.

So we're going to be working through all of this. We really are keeping an open mind about what that future would look like, and you know, we're going to be taking a hard look at all of these

options. SMR really are a very good one, so we're working through this very diligently, but we are keeping an open mind about what some of the other options might look like, including large-scale nuclear which could be a part of that mix as well.

Working closely with our partners, Alberta; David really at the national level leading on this space as well. But we're really excited about it. This is something that I think provides enormous opportunities for Saskatchewan.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Well it looks like I have time for one more question.

**Chair Steele:** — Yes, we can go to 10:32 because we started a little bit later.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Okay. So just looking for some clarification and maybe I'll first of all just say thank you to the officials for that overview as requested. Again just going back, I see that the Small Modular Reactor Investment Fund had budgeted an opening balance for '25-26 of 584.4, in-year contributions of 285.1, and closing balance of 869.5 for total asset of the investment fund of 869.5. So again given the changes to the output-based performance system, will there be an impact on that budget estimate?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Yeah I mean, the short answer is we're not going to be collecting carbon tax from people's SaskPower bill, so no, we're not going to be adding that carbon tax dollar to the small modular reactor fund. What I can say though is if we make the final determination to go in this direction, we're going to be, you know, obviously making these financial decisions not lightly. And they will likely not be made in the immediate future either.

[22:30]

And I would say as well, we need federal partnership in this space. We have asked the federal government to be a 75 per cent funding partner on SMRs. We're hopeful that that's going to go forward.

I've actually, frankly I've been pretty encouraged by the federal commitments in some of this space, and I'm hopeful that, you know, whoever is to form government after April 28th, that we're going to see a continued commitment from the national government. And not just a commitment as far as being, you know, verbally supportive. We need the federal government to be there very significantly with dollars.

And you know, we haven't had that concrete commitment that has been made, but we are going to continue to pursue that very assertively because that is a big part of what that nuclear future has to look like as well.

**Erika Ritchie:** — Just for clarity, so the in-year contribution that's listed at 285.1, where will that come from?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — I think we've talked about OBPS. I'm not going to add anything more. I think I've been pretty clear on all that, Mr. Chair.

**Erika Ritchie:** — It's a very basic question. I'm seeking clarity.

I don't know what makes up the in-year contribution amount that's listed in that budget line of 285.1.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Well you know, as far as funding a future nuclear reactor, whether it be an SMR or large-scale nuclear, we've been clear that we're going to have a provincial component of that funding. But we also expect the federal government to play a significant funding role in that up to . . . and we put the number of 75 per cent publicly out there. That's where we need the federal government to be as a funding partner in this, Mr. Chair, and I'm hopeful that they will be.

**Erika Ritchie:** — So are you suggesting that 75 per cent of that amount, 285.1 million, is coming from the federal . . . you're hoping it comes from the federal government?

**Chair Steele:** — Having reached our agreed-upon time for the consideration of business today, we'll adjourn considerations of these estimates. Any closing comments, Minister?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Very briefly. Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks to committee members; appreciate it. And really I just want to thank the team at CIC, through Kent to our entire team. We have a great team at Crown Investments Corporation that have dedicated and committed themselves to serving the people of this province, and I genuinely, sincerely appreciate working with them every day.

**Chair Steele:** — Thank you. Any comments from the opposition?

**Erika Ritchie:** — Yes, I want to thank the Chair for chairing the meeting this evening. I want to thank the minister and his officials for making themselves available for our questions here this evening. I want to thank Hansard and all of the audiovisual supports, Clerks' table as well for being here late again into another evening and another early morning tomorrow. Always appreciate your steadfast support for these committee proceedings. Thank you.

**Chair Steele:** — Being that we exceeded the allotted time of 10:30, it's my job as the Chair to adjourn the meeting for this evening. Thank you. This committee stands adjourned to the call of the Chair, I guess.

[The committee adjourned at 22:34.]