STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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[The committee met at 15:59.]

Chair B. McLeod: — Welcome to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. My name is Blaine McLeod, and I will be the Chair for today's meeting. And with us today we have MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Hilbert, MLA Laliberte . . . Is that the correct pronunciation?

[16:00]

Leroy Laliberte: — Laliberte. Laliberte gets used, so I . . . [inaudible].

Chair B. McLeod: — Laliberte. Excellent. I like to get it right. We have MLA Martens; and chitting in today we have MLA McPhail; MLA Patterson; and chitting in today is MLA McBean. And I got that one right. Thank you. Those are the substitutions, MLA McPhail and MLA McBean today.

So we're going to speak regarding the committal of supplementary estimates. And I'd like to inform the committee that pursuant to rule 148(1), the following 2025-26 supplementary estimates no. 1 were committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice on November 27th, 2025, not many days ago: vote 73, Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, and then vote 30, Government Relations.

General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — No. 1
Corrections, Policing and Public Safety
Vote 73

Subvote (CP01)

Chair B. McLeod: — So today for Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, we'll be considering the 2025-26 supplementary estimates no. 1 for Government Relations and Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. And we'll begin with vote 73, Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, central management and services, subvote (CP01).

Now Minister McLeod is here with his officials, and I'll just briefly remind everyone to identify themselves before they speak and to not touch the microphones. The Hansard operator will look after that for you. Minister McLeod, with that, please make your opening comments and introduce your officials, please.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the committee. I'll begin by introducing my team of officials that are joining me at the table. To my right we have Denise Macza, deputy minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. And to my left is Marlo Pritchard, president of the SPSA [Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency] and Fire Commissioner for Saskatchewan.

Also joining us in the room I have my chief of staff, Max Waldman. We have Scott Harron, assistant deputy minister of custody division for CPPS [Corrections, Policing and Public Safety]; Josh Freistadt, assistant deputy minister, supervision and rehabilitation services; Wanda Lamberti, assistant deputy minister, corporate services; Jill Rowden, executive director, central services; Ryan Clark, director of infrastructure and finance; Nathanial Day, executive advisor to the deputy minister.

Officials from the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, we have Steve Roberts, vice-president of operations; Devon Exner, assistant deputy minister, recovery task team; David Cundall, executive director, corporate planning and acting vice-president of corporate services; Noel McAvena, executive director, finance and corporate services; and Michelle Broda, executive director, finance and corporate services.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased to attend to committee today to provide information on the additional funding required for the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety for the 2025-26 fiscal year. In total an additional $335.8 million is necessary to cover costs associated with responding to wildfires and to address utilization pressures in the provincial custody facilities this year. The majority of this amount, being $295.3 million, is in support of evacuation and wildfire response activities, including $80 million that was provided during the first quarter.

The mission of the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency is to protect our people, property, and resources. It prioritizes the protection of human life first and foremost. It then protects communities and major infrastructure. This year Saskatchewan faced one of the most challenging wildfire seasons in our history. By season's end, our province recorded over 500 wildfires and nearly 3 million hectares had burned.

Fifty-five communities were impacted either due to evacuations or from direct impact of the fires. The agency's emergency community support team provided approximately 11,500 evacuees with direct or financial support. Saskatchewan lost thousands of assets this summer, including homes in Denare Beach as well as numerous cabins, vehicles, and other assets across northern Saskatchewan.

However we did not lose any lives as a direct result of the fires. Due to the heroic contributions of personnel, pilots, fire departments, contractors, and community leaders we were able to save numerous communities such as Beauval, La Ronge, Pelican Narrows, and the list goes on and on, Mr. Chair.

The wildfire season started during a period of high daytime and nighttime temperatures, very high winds, and very low humidity with very little precipitation. In these conditions small fires grew quickly and demonstrated extreme fire behaviour. Many of the fires grew to a rank 6, meaning that it was unsafe for our air tankers and water bombers to fly over them. If they did, water would simply evaporate before it reached the flames. It was also not safe to put ground crews in the path of these fires due to the extreme fire behaviour.

Since some aircraft were undergoing repairs or undergoing federally regulated inspections, the agency brought in aircraft from other provinces. Assistance was requested and received 35 times from other provinces and other agencies within North America, Mexico, and Australia. When it was appropriate and safe to do so, resources were brought in from the Canadian Armed Forces to assist.

In response to the evacuations, our government dedicated

$15 million to the Canadian Red Cross for support to evacuees. We provided direct financial support for those over the age of 18 who evacuated, and to the heads of household to assist with groceries and support if they were not staying in a hotel.

A cross-government recovery task team was also utilized to support communities affected by the 2025 wildfires. The recovery task team brings together experts from the SPSA and key provincial ministries, agencies, and Crowns to deliver critical support, including debris management, housing solutions, and mental health resources. By working directly with community leaders, we ensure the hardest-hit areas get the assistance they need to recover and to thrive. $29.9 million was committed to support communities and individuals affected by these devastating wildfires to assist local recovery efforts through site cleanup, debris removal, temporary housing, and project management supports.

Recovery efforts are well under way in many of the communities that were affected by the wildfires. Significant progress has been made to expedite the recovery of the most heavily impacted communities. Impacted residents have been connected to social supports through Saskatchewan Health Authority, mental health, and the Canadian Red Cross. The recovery task team also supported the community of Denare Beach to provide temporary housing as the community rebuilds. Those families and individuals have already moved into units within the community of Creighton and Denare Beach. I commend and thank all those who responded to the worst wildfire season in Saskatchewan's history.

Beyond wildfire response, additional funding of approximately $40 million is required to address utilization-driven pressures in the operation of provincial correctional facilities. These pressures relate to staffing needs and operational costs for food and offender provisions. The overexpenditure is attributed to an increasing inmate population and complex inmate health care needs within our correctional facilities.

With that, I would now be pleased to answer any questions of the committee that they may have on the additional funding requirements for the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair B. McLeod: — Thank you, Minister McLeod. I will now open the floor to questions. I will recognize MLA McPhail.

Jordan McPhail: — Thanks to the Chair. And thanks, Minister, for your opening comments. And I just wanted to, if given the opportunity, I just want to say a thank you to the officials that are here today. I know that this was an unprecedented year in trying to respond to an extremely challenging time in northern Saskatchewan, and I thank you for the stressful situations that you would have been in throughout that.

Going into questions, I'll just start off. How much was spent this year on the hiring and training of type 1 firefighters?

Steve Roberts: — Good afternoon. Steve Roberts, vice-president of operations for the Public Safety Agency. The total training budget for our type 1 staff — which includes both our firefighters front line but also our incident management team staff and our regular staff that are involved in fire suppression directly — combined is $2.334 million for this fiscal year.

Jordan McPhail: — So just for a quick clarification on that, that's for all type 1, 2, and 3?

Steve Roberts: — No, that's only for type 1 and permanent staff that are in the incident management role. Does not include type 2 and does not include type 3.

Jordan McPhail: — Then I would have a very similar question for the type 2 and type 3 firefighters. How much was spent this year on the hiring and training of type 2 and type 3 firefighters respectively?

[16:15]

Steve Roberts: — Okay, for type 2 firefighter services for 2025, we're looking at total investment, which includes wages, of 50.826 million. So when we bring on type 2 crews, their first two weeks training is done while they're working for us. So it's not a separate investment, separate from their hire. So they come on in their first two weeks of hire where they're getting paid their salary. Training is done internal through us or through their type 2 provider who provides us and bills us for that service. So there is no incremental cost other than the type 2 program. And the type 3 program for the same training, $4.8 million.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you. So for the three numbers that were just provided — the $2.334 million and the 50.826 for type 2 and the 4.8 million for type 3 — how much of each one of those respectively is an outside contract, so not direct employees of the SPSA?

Steve Roberts: — So our type 3 contracts are primarily done throughout . . . but we do have a percentage of those done by third party. And specifically the third party has been providing our type 3 training has been the Prince Albert Grand Council has been doing that.

We will do in-service staff. And then the type 2 contractor training go to the tribal councils that are employing the type 2. So that would be the Meadow Lake Tribal Council or to the Prince Albert Grand Council. And if it's a community crew, it would be in partnership with the Public Safety Agency for that training.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you. I do recall, you know, when I was up in La Ronge seeing some — I want to say maybe, given your responses — maybe some type 1 firefighters from the United States or other jurisdictions. So out of the 2.334 million, I'm guessing based on your previous answers, that's where the outside initial attack crews have been deployed to, which is the type 1 firefighting activity?

Steve Roberts: — Actually no, the number I gave you is just for Public Safety Agency staff. When we bring in crews from outside of the province or other jurisdictions they come fully trained, and it's part of their daily rate to provide us trained, certified firefighters upon request by mutual aid. So we don't actually train firefighters from outside the province.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you. Can the ministry provide a formal breakdown of how many full-time wildfire firefighters it

has? How many it has in reserve for emergencies? And can the minister comment on whether he thinks the number of firefighters is adequate?

Marlo Pritchard: — Marlo Pritchard, president of the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency. Thanks for the question.

To start off, SPSA has 456 full-time positions. We have 220 type 1s. We partnered with our communities that Steve talked about earlier. We have 410 type 2s. This past year we brought in 915 type 3s. Some of those were hired again for a total of 1,131, but 915 individuals. We had mutual aid of 1,200 trained firefighters.

And I'll just quickly go over the list so that you understand the complexities of this. In regards to that team that you would've seen up in La Ronge, that was an incident management team. But we had British Columbia that provided nine individuals for incident management between June 1st and June 15th. We had the USA [United States of America] provide nine incident management-trained individuals from June 12th to June 29th.

Quebec provided 11 individuals for an incident management team between June 30th and July 14th. Ontario provided 13 for an incident management team between July 18th and August 3rd. Ontario provided 18 for an incident management team between August 1st to August 16th. National parks provided 17 between August 10th and August 22, and that was around the Waskesiu fire in that area. Ontario provided 21 between August 14th and August 29th. Colorado provided 14, again for an incident management team, June 14th to June 29th. Arizona provided type 1 incident command and an overhead from June 4th to June 19th. And Arizona provided an overhead from June 17th to July 3rd.

In regards to resources, exactly what you're talking about, Nova Scotia provided 20 sustained action and one AREP [agency representative] from May 31st to June 14th. Northwest Territories provided 20 type 1s and one AREP from May 31st to June 14th. Oregon provided two div reps from June 1st to June 17th. Prince Edward Island provided 10 type 1s and one AREP from June 2nd to June 16th. Washington provided 50 type 1s from June 9th to June 26th. New Brunswick, two div supervisors from June 2nd to June 16th.

British Columbia provided 19 type 1 crews from May 31st to June 16th. Yukon provided one division supervisor from June 2nd to June 17th. British Columbia provided three crews and two overhead from June 6th to June 16th. USA provided 100 type 1 hotshots from June 16th to July 2nd. Quebec provided 100 type 1 and two AREPs from July 8th to July 24. Australia provided 40 type 1s and one AREP July 14th to August 20th. Mexico, 40 type 1s and an AREP from July 18th to August 20th.

Nova Scotia provided 20 type 1s and an AREP from July 19th and August 4th. New Brunswick provided 21 type 1s and an AREP from July 23rd to August 4th. Quebec provided 40 type 1s and two AREPs from July 24th to August 9th. Prince Edward Island provided one five-person crew from July 29th to August 12th. Prince Edward Island: one task force leader from July 20th to August 12th. British Columbia: five type 1s from July 29th to August 10th. Mexico: 100 type 1s and three AREPs from August 10th to September 11th. Quebec: 40 type 1s and two AREPs, August 10th to August 27th.

Yukon provided 20 type 1s and two AREPs, August 9th to August 25th. Quebec provided two radio operators. British Columbia provided 40 type 1s and two AREPs, July 25th to August 9th. South Dakota provided 40 type 1 hotshots, June 12th to June 29th. Colorado provided 10 type 1 hotshots, June 10th to June 29th. Minnesota provided a div supervisor, July 2nd to July 16th. Arizona provided two division supervisors, June 26th to July 12th. North Dakota provided a task force lead, August 10th to August 26th, for approximately 1,200 individually trained firefighters.

And to your follow-up question, if we had needed more, we have a number of compacts that we are part of. And through CIFFC [Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre] and agreements through those compacts, we could have asked for or could ask for more if the situation dictated it. So you know, the requests can continually be made through those compacts to get more individuals.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you. Going on to the prevention side here, it's my understanding that in previous fire responses, namely in 2015 — I was one of the folks on the ground in 2015 — they had systems that were set up in and around residential areas; ladders, sprinkler systems set up on the backs of, you know, residential houses; fences, cutlines put in.

So a question that I'd have, how much was spent this year on water pumps and sprinkler systems in the wildfire preparation response?

Steve Roberts: — So we actually do not break that out as a specific function. It's part of the response in different locations, typically done by our type 1, type 2 staff and potentially augmented by contractors. So it is actually in the variable cost number which is what's under discussion today, is the increase in the variable cost of fires this year.

Jordan McPhail: — So I guess the follow-up I'd have is, there is no specific number that you have at all for how many pumps were purchased by the SPSA this year to provide water to residential areas and sprinkler systems.

Steve Roberts: — So we are currently doing an assessment of, again, losses from this year. But we start the year with our full complement of pumps for the year in all of the bases and all of the areas. So we're stocked up in advance. We don't buy pumps as we need it. At the end of the year if we've had losses or damage to pumps or equipment we will start the replacement process to be ready for the next fiscal.

Jordan McPhail: — Okay. I guess that is slightly concerning as we've, you know, canvassed multiple times that this was an unprecedented fire season. So I figured that, you know, the pumps and whatnot might have been purchased to provide additional resources to cabin owners or smaller communities throughout.

So I guess one of the questions that I'd have is how much was spent on contracts to private contractors to be able to provide some level of cutline or wildfire management, you know, wet lines, suppression lines along the backsides of residential communities. You know, I'm thinking of places like Denare Beach, East Trout Lake, or even in La Ronge, where that wet line

could have provided a bit of a water break from the fire entering into the community.

So how much was spent on local contractors to provide some level of fire suppression, wet line systems in those residential areas?

[16:30]

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thanks for the question. I think there may be some misunderstanding in what Mr. Roberts was indicating was what the SPSA has for equipment for the pumps and the sprinklers.

But certainly through all of the contracts and the resources that Marlo had listed off, many of those resources provide additional pumps and additional sprinklers and the additional equipment. So we did not rely exclusively on the SPSA inventory for this fire season. That's part of the contracts. Part of the agreements is that we bring in not only personnel but additional equipment through all of these other agreements. And Marlo can maybe touch on some of those additional resources.

Marlo Pritchard: — Thank you, Minister. Thanks for the question. Just to clarify, you know, part of CIFFC agreements is not only resources, but equipment. Quebec brought in 3,000 one-and-a-half-inch hose; and Montana provided 50 Mark-3 pumps and pump kits, 75 sprinklers. Again Montana provided another 50 pumps later in the year and also included 300 sprinkler adapters. Quebec provided repair to 150 Mark-3 pumps as well, so to keep our inventory active.

In addition we also contract a number of, I would say, irrigation companies with high-volume sprinklers — and I don't have a dollar value; I'll have to bring that forward — but you know, individual contractors that used heavy-volume sprinklers to protect communities. And we brought in a number of those contractors.

In addition we asked for help in regards from volunteer fire departments to help, you know, support or protect communities, to your point. There was approximately 60 to 65 fire departments depending on the time of year or the time of season, which also brought a number of I guess defensive firefighting tactics to those communities and assisted. And we moved them from community to community based on priorities.

So it's not just pumps. It was literally a layered defence is what we ended up doing.

Jordan McPhail: — Understood. Thanks. In speaking with some of the folks that were the very boots on the ground in Denare Beach up and to the point of June the 2nd, there were reports brought to us that the sprinklers that were set up within the community were sourced solely by the volunteer fire department. And in many cases the irrigation systems they were retrofitting like residential lawn sprinklers to be able to provide some level of sprinkler systems up to and including June the 2nd.

And so if these folks that you've mentioned before that come in to provide that support to community, I guess my question is, for the protection of Denare Beach — specifically on water pumps, sprinkler systems, and basically being ready for the fire to enter the community — how much was spent up to and including June the 2nd in the community of Denare Beach for those preventative measures?

Marlo Pritchard: — Thank you for the question. There is no breakdown in regards to how much we spent in regards to sprinklers that would be complete variable in regards to Denare Beach. But like other communities we have a volunteer . . . For other communities, they have volunteer fire departments that would be the first line of defence. In this case with Denare Beach, we also dispatched a number of other volunteer fire departments as well as our emergency response teams that rolled in and worked on the spot fires and did the best they could on June 2nd. But we don't have an exact cost in regards to the sprinklers or sprinkler systems.

The FireSmart program does advocate for individual homeowners or communities to build resilience into their communities by potentially putting sprinklers up or even just taking some precautionary activities such as cleaning yards, keeping flammables away from houses. So that is also an option and something that we are considering and continuing to work with communities. We've done that over a number of years. But it was FireSmarting activities. But the actual expenses toward sprinklers into Denare Beach, I do not have and we don't break that out.

Jordan McPhail: — Thanks. On the procurement of services to bring in cutlines into communities to create a firebreak in and around communities, can you provide any level of a breakdown as to what was spent to create fireguards around communities in northern Saskatchewan this year?

Marlo Pritchard: — Again, thank you for the question. I'll start with the heavy equipment, in regards to cutlines and wet lines. And they are, as I'm sure you're aware, two different techniques that are used.

I do want to clarify that with this unprecedented season that we saw fire behaviour that is not typical. And we had embers literally travelling 4 and 5 kilometres that were starting spot fires which, from individuals that were speaking to me, would almost immediately go to rank 3 and run with the wind. So as you can understand, there was often those fire lines, and those firebreaks would be breached because the embers were going 3 or 4 kilometres. In fact, we had some evenings, nights where, you know, typically fires would lay down, would run 22, 27 kilometres overnight.

So I mean, we saw fire behaviour just because it was environmentally so dry, such high winds that did not abate at night, it just continued to blow. So those fire lines and that — although we attempted a lot — didn't always work because of the fire behaviour and the ember storms that were, you know, literally jumping lakes, let alone firebreaks.

To give you an idea, we hired 604 different pieces of heavy equipment; vast majority would have been, you know, dozers and that. They put in 130,953 hours of work putting in breaks. We spent 39.8 million doing cutlines, and to your earlier question, we were just able to pull it together. In regards to sprinklers, heavy contractors and sprinklers, we spent approximately $22 million for the heavy sprinkler contractors that would come

in and use high-volume sprinklers. I think I answered your question.

Jordan McPhail: — Yeah, appreciate that. There was an article that had come out during the wildfire season from CKOM saying that Saskatchewan had contracted private wildland firefighters to fight fires in the North. And specifically in the article, it says that they were dispatched to Candle Lake. Is that reflected in this budget?

[16:45]

Steve Roberts: — So that wasn't the case. There was a private company that came. They're actually funded by insurance companies. So they responded to Candle Lake and did FireSmarting exercise on all homes that were within their insured group members. So they were not brought on by us, and they did not directly engage in wildfire suppression. They went to the community and did cleanup around each of those facilities due to some premiums that existed in their insurance policies.

Jordan McPhail: — And so I guess a question from that is, if that was a value added to the community of Candle Lake, is there a reason why those same activities . . . Or is it within the supplementary estimates here that those same activities were being done in other communities? East Trout Lake, Denare Beach, La Ronge, Wadin Bay, Napatak, Nemeiben — any of those areas in northern Saskatchewan receive that same sort of proactive and FireSmarting techniques in the community?

Steve Roberts: — So I can't say where they had been, but the company is triggered as soon as there is a wildfire within so far of insurable property. The insurance companies do that. They are based out of Edmonton. They're common in Alberta and BC [British Columbia] for the last number of years. So potentially it could be anywhere in the province if your wildfire insurance covers a premium for protection from these individuals during an event.

As far as hiring individuals, we do not hire individual companies for that activity. We hire individual companies, some of them private contractors, who are trained in suppression, and we will work them alongside our suppression crews. So there were a number of private companies that had trained wildfire firefighting techniques, equipment that were brought in to work beside us, but they were a private contractor.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you. I guess on the front of just, you know, wildfire insurances being able to bring in additional resources as part of their premiums, it would be my expectation that as long as someone has paid provincial taxes in some way, shape, or form, would receive very similar in their community. But I digress. I'll move on.

How much was spent on training, recruitment, and tooling of new aircraft maintenance engineers? And how is this compared to previous years' funding levels?

Marlo Pritchard: — Thank you for the question. I'll start with the salaries for our air maintenance engineers. The salaries this year were 3.2 million, and that included overtime. And I do really want to give a shout-out to the women and men that literally worked 24-7 during the peak of the season, long hours to keep those planes and our air assets in the air.

We also spent 5.7 million in contracts and parts in maintenance, so approximately $8.9 million in salaries and parts and contracted services. That is part of our base budget, not part of the supplementary or variable asks, as what we're here for.

Jordan McPhail: — Thanks. As there were grounded aircraft reported this year . . .

Chair B. McLeod: — Just to interrupt just for a moment.

Jordan McPhail: — Sure.

Chair B. McLeod: — And I want to thank you thus far for the information that's being asked and provided. I just want to reiterate the fact that we are here for the supplemental part of it. So let's make sure that we continue to work towards questions that reflect the supplemental basis of what we're working on here. Thank you.

Jordan McPhail: — Understood. As there were grounded aircraft reported this year and as you've admitted to, was there any additional dollars in the supplementary estimates that would be reflective in hiring, training, or tooling to address any of the aircraft that were grounded this year?

Steve Roberts: — Thank you for the question. The cost for maintaining the fleet of aircraft that the Public Safety Agency has is a fixed budgetary infrastructure cost. In this case it didn't get done, not because of a cost issue, but because of a parts delivery issue on those specialty aircraft resulting in them being grounded for the early part of the season and us having to, you know, wait until the parts arrived before crews could service those aircraft and put them back in.

Jordan McPhail: — I'm moving on to the recovery task team. It was mentioned in the minister's opening comments there was $20 million earmarked for that, for those efforts. I want to know how much of that 20 million has been spent to date, where it's been spent. And if there are any remaining funds as of the advertised closure of the fund application — which I'm under the understanding of December 25th — what will happen to the remainder of those funds?

[17:00]

Noel McAvena: — It's Noel McAvena, executive director for the provincial disaster assistance program. I just want to speak first about the deadline that you referred to. I believe that's actually referencing the PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] deadline for private applications and not specific to the $20 million of the recovery task team, which Devon will speak to a little bit later here.

But basically how the PDAP program works is, from the end date of the disaster which will be slightly different for each community, applicants have six months to submit their application. So those deadlines will fall somewhere in December. And again, that's for private claimants. They can receive those applications from their local authority. A lot of them will fall under the northern Sask admin district, who's published the application on their website.

Devon Exner: — Devon Exner, assistant deputy minister with the recovery task team. Your question was around how much of the $20 million has been committed. So just a reminder for the committee, so we actually committed $29.93 million, which 20 million was dedicated to cleanup, debris management, landfill expansion, and maintenance, and then another roughly $9.93 million towards temporary housing.

So out of the 29.93 million, about $18 million has been committed. We do anticipate that we will be supporting these communities not just in this fiscal year, but carrying forward into additional fiscal years as well. When we think about folks accessing the temporary housing, they will need housing for more than just a six-month period.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you. You can correct me if I'm wrong on this, but I believe the provincial disaster assistance program is a federal assistance program that the provincial government administers a majority of those funds. So out of the $29.93 million that were committed to the recovery task team, how much of that will be covered by the federal government?

Noel McAvena: — Noel McAvena again. I appreciate your question. So I do want to talk a little bit about how the PDAP program and the funding mechanism through the federal government works. They're actually in fact two different programs.

The PDAP program is entirely a provincial program, so we'll fund it through supplementary funding exercises such as this and deliver the assistance directly to the residents and communities of Saskatchewan.

After we have delivered that aid, we then get to make application to the federal government under the disaster financial assistance arrangements, which is the federal counterpart that we use to recover funding from the federal government on things like this disaster.

And so the exact funding that we receive is dependent on a number of factors. First there is a provincial deductible which is based on the per capita population of Saskatchewan. And that deductible is indexed to inflation each year. Currently the per capita amount is $3.84. That is the provincial responsibility before any federal government assistance will kick in.

After that point, it depends on exactly what the activity is, what our recovery percentage is. And so federal recovery is divided right now into five different funding streams, the first one being response costs which would be things like we've been talking about a little bit earlier here. Those are 80 per cent covered after the federal deductibles and any excluded items. For example, full-time provincial staff are not an eligible expense because provinces are expected to have those on staff.

The second funding stream speaks to aid given to homes and small businesses, and that will depend. It will vary 70 to 80 per cent depending on the specific activity that's involved in that recovery.

The third funding stream in terms of restoring infrastructure, so this would be your typical roads, bridges, water systems that a municipality might claim through the PDAP program, we typically . . . We can receive federal reimbursement up to 70 per cent of those costs through stream three in the federal funding program.

For relief and recovery supports — so things like aid given to evacuees, temporary accommodations, that sort of thing — we can receive up to 90 per cent federal reimbursement, again subject to the cost-sharing elements and specific exclusions through the federal terms and conditions.

And so all combined, historically we've typically seen about 70 per cent recovery on the large portion of costs that we submitted. There are restrictions when we do our application to the federal government around the nature of the event. And so this year we are making submissions based on the wildfire events, but not all wildfires that we combatted are going to be in an urban interface setting, which is one of the requirements for federal cost recovery.

So while we'll receive — we estimate, based on historical trends — about 70 per cent on a large majority of the cost incurred by the province, not every cost will be eligible for a cost sharing through the federal program. Although we do pay them through the PDAP program regardless of the size of the event and regardless of where they occur.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you. Specifically on the temporary housing units that were mentioned in the . . . And sorry, I forgot your name. I didn't write that down. But I appreciate your response to it.

In the temporary housing units that were brought in, to my understanding, into the town of Creighton for many of the people that were displaced due to the wildfire, can you let me know what was spent on bringing in that temporary housing, and who those contracts are with?

Devon Exner: — Thank you for the question. So Devon Exner, assistant deputy minister with the recovery task team. We contracted with two providers, one being Black Diamond and the other one with Williams Scotsman, or WillScot. The total value of those contracts is $11.5 million over the course of three years.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you. In the event of time here, I will pass the opportunity here to my colleague from Athabasca here to ask a few questions as well.

Leroy Laliberte: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to Minister McLeod and to all for being here. I have enough questions here to last a couple of days. I know we don't have that kind of time. But you know, and I totally agree with what was said here by the MLA from Cumberland, that this was a crazy wildfire season and we all know that.

I want to say thank you to both Marlo and Steve for your service this summer. I know it must have been difficult for everybody. I know in my area and representing Athabasca, it's such a huge area to cover for both of us in the North, and we've seen first-hand all of the scrambling around that was done during this time. It was definitely, I know, busy for everybody.

I have a few questions, and one of them . . . The first question that I have here is, you know, knowing that we were in a drought

and going into the wildfire season in 2025, what type of money and supports were in place in case that we were going to have either evacuations due to these fires? And I just want to know the dollar mark, if there was something, if there was money that was put aside in plan of this wildfire season.

[17:15]

Marlo Pritchard: — Thank you for the question. In regards to evacuations we have a budget of about $14.05 million that would support response and evacuations. In the past five years, a typical year — which was not this last year — we are under $1 million a year in regards to just evacuations. Like in '21-22, '22-23, '23-24, and '24-25 we were under a million dollars. In fact the high was '23-24. We were at $890,000 in evacuation support. Typically, unlike this year, we see an average of three communities, between three and eight communities that would be impacted that would require evacuation, and this year it was 55.

Leroy Laliberte: — Thank you. So of the 15 million dispersed to the Red Cross, how will your ministry be able to audit or track the spending of the 15 million that you had committed to?

Noel McAvena: — Yeah, so as far as the contract that we have with the Red Cross, it does include provisions for reporting requirements. And so we receive quarterly reporting from the Red Cross on what they've expended in accordance with the contract. And we do have the ability to query the Red Cross if there's reason to question anything within that reporting further.

Leroy Laliberte: — Okay, thank you. Were there resources provided to Beauval? Can you tell me a list of the resources that were provided to the community of Beauval and communities surrounding that community from the time the fire began?

Marlo Pritchard: — Thank you for the question. I'll start with the fire in the Beauval area which is the Muskeg fire. It was reported on June 28th. It started approximately 10 kilometres from La Plonge. We had early suppression of aircraft, air assets, and water tankers and ground crews on it. The efforts at that time as you're quite aware was hampered by 45-kilometre-an-hour winds and quickly spread.

The assets, as you said, we had a number of assets throughout the period of the fire which, as I said, was reported on June 28th and was listed as contained on September 15th. We had individuals from Mexico, hundreds of firefighters from Mexico, Australia. We had type 1s, type 3s. We also had the Canadian Armed Forces, approximately 100 that were deployed into that area.

We utilized heavy equipment, helicopters, air tankers. We had value protection units. We also had contracted specialists. There was, you know, 11 volunteer fire departments that rolled in and rolled out and supporting Beauval and supporting the community and the community assets.

We also had a number of heavy equipment in regards to dozers to work with the cutlines and a number of contracts with those.

[17:30]

At the peak, the peak deployment was 248 personnel, 147 value protection units, 1,910 hoses, 72 pumps, 21 dozers, heavy equipment. We had over 80 personnel at different times that were from Ontario, Quebec, Mexico, South Dakota, and Australia, and we contracted a number of contractors both from Saskatchewan and across Canada to work in that complex fire situation.

Leroy Laliberte: — Thank you for that. One thing that I know for sure is that our northern people know how to fight these fires. So one of my last questions — it's not my last question; I got one more after this — is that how much was spent to bring in the local northern businesses to assist with the fighting of those fires? Was there any money spent going to local suppression or local businesses to help fighting these fires throughout the summer? Was there any money allocated to help community members?

Steve Roberts: — Thanks. Steve Roberts, vice-president of operations. So in answer of your question, our whole process when we fight fires in the North, northern Saskatchewan, is our first resources are local resources. So our local type 2 crews, our local heavy equipment operators are first on the scene — closest resources first. That includes local groceries, local fuel, local hotels to support them wherever that's possible.

If in the event we do maximize that opportunity, then we will go to provincial Saskatchewan resources. We'll start moving crews from Cumberland over, or up from North Battleford or wherever they may be. If we run short, that's when we start looking at our interprovincial partners and maybe our international partners. So all of our fires are accessed by local crews, local individuals first, before we even look at, you know, contractors from Alberta or those other resources.

So lots of opportunity that we pre-canvass in the spring. We set out requests for interest from local vendors for anything from catering to hotels to heavy equipment so that we have them preregistered, so that we can call upon them at a moment's notice if we have to.

Leroy Laliberte: — Thanks for that, Steve. The only reason why I was asking is that there were numerous people that contacted my office sitting on some water trucks and stuff that could have been utilized out in the communities and they weren't contracted. So that was partially why I was asking the question.

My next question is my last question. Does any of the 335 million of the supplementary estimates go towards helping people rebuild their homes and their communities?

Devon Exner: — Thank you for the question. The 29.93 million as part of the recovery task team is committed to helping communities rebuild, so as we talked about earlier, the cleanup, the debris management, ensuring that we're handling that safely, doing environmental testing. Getting the lots back into the hands of the owners to start rebuilding is absolutely critical.

As mentioned, in Denare Beach there are a number of properties already that are starting to rebuild, which we are very excited about. The recovery aspects around community cleanup moved extremely fast compared to many other jurisdictions. In less than four months, basically all 250 properties are now being turned back over to the residents to start the rebuild. There are 14 foundations that are in the works this fall, which is fantastic, with two new RTMs [ready to move] that have already been moved

in. So we will continue to work with the community as we head into spring to continue with that rebuild.

I think the other thing, very important thing to note is we are also there supporting their social wellness and resilience. So working with the families, with the children to ensure that they have the supports throughout the winter months to not lose that sense of community and be part of community and focus on their mental health and the supports that are needed to ensure that they're in a great place moving forward.

It does take a fair bit of time to move through the recovery process, and we are there each and every week working with them to make sure that they are successful in their recovery plan.

Leroy Laliberte: — Thank you. I'll pass things over to Jordan.

Chair B. McLeod: — Additional questions?

Jordan McPhail: — Yeah. I do have a few additional questions if my colleague here has wrapped up for now for his constituents on the Athabasca side.

Going back quickly into the temporary housing units here, it's my understanding that the folks that are in these temporary housing units are still paying rents. I'm wondering if those rents are being paid back into the ministry as a cost recovery, or is that part of a different supplementary estimate? And if it is part of the CPPS vote 73 here, how was that rent determined for the individuals that are renting those units?

Devon Exner: — Thank you for the question. As far as setting the rental rates for the temporary housing units, we looked at a number of factors as we were doing that. Obviously there is not a lot of rental vacancies in and around the Denare Beach, Creighton, Flin Flon area, so as we were doing that we wanted to ensure that we were not disrupting the rental market. So we looked at the average market rents that were available in those communities. We also looked at our social housing rents offered through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, and that's really what we utilized to set the rents.

As part of that we also looked at the cost of utilities. We knew that these interim housing or temporary housing units would be running primarily off of propane, which can be extremely expensive, so we did advance and we are offering propane costs at a subsidized cost. So basically we're charging $110 for a single individual per month, 130 for a couple, and $150 for a family unit. So that's about half the cost of what the actual propane usage is expected to be.

We are also flat rating the garbage collection and looking at the power rates as well to ensure that we are supporting people as they're receiving their displacement insurance funds either through PDAP or through their insurance provider, so that they are able to stay there as long as they need as they kind of work through the recovery period. We wanted to ensure that people were supported throughout the winter, absolutely, and then help them to move forward on their recovery plan next year.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you for that. Can the minister speak to what resources are devoted to early assessment and the modelling of the fire activity? The reason I ask this is that the folks that reached out to our office from East Trout Lake said that they were told that the fire would never actually reach their community. And further to that, I know my colleague here from Athabasca, and the community of Beauval, the day that they were evacuated, was told it would be four days before the fire would reach the community. And it was at the ranch, I believe, within four hours.

And so obviously there's some concerns on how the province spends their money or allocates resources to the early assessment and the modelling of the fire activity in Saskatchewan.

Chair B. McLeod: — I'm just going to intervene here and ask if the question can be asked in relation to the supplementary estimates, the appropriation of additional funds. I fail to see the connection. Maybe you can phrase it another way, but I do not see that connection at this point.

Jordan McPhail: — All right. In the event . . . or this year, as there was unprecedented fire activity in northern Saskatchewan, was there additional dollars being put into assessing and modelling the fires throughout northern Saskatchewan to ensure that, as accurate as possible, we were assessing and modelling the fires to ensure that we were ready in every single community that the fires threatened?

Chair B. McLeod: — I'll allow that question to move forward.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — If I could, just for clarification, are you asking if we prepared for each community that experienced a fire, as though we knew which community the fires were going to appear in? I just want a clarification on the question.

[17:45]

Jordan McPhail: — What I'm saying quite clearly in the question is that the way that the fires are detected, assessed, and modelled in our SPSA and how we respond to those fires and where we deploy resources obviously would be highly dependent on how they're assessed and how they're modelled. And so I'm wondering how much is spent in that process of making sure that communities have the preventative measures that they need. And I want to know how much is being spent to assess them and to model them and to know where they're going to hit in that community.

Steve Roberts: — Thanks for the question. Wildfire modelling and forecasting is done by staff, specialized staff within the Public Safety Agency. We have a fully staffed meteorological department with a meteorologist and two forecasters who specialize in wildfire weather forecasting. That includes using all of the weather stations that the agency has put up, which far exceed the number that the federal government has to report weather.

So they use all the current weather stations, current weather data. And they actually make forecasts on specific fires, will map the fire for 18 straight hours, talk about the heat, the temperature, the wind speed, so that we can use those in growth projection models, the same ones used across Canada in other jurisdictions, to predict where that fire will be based on fuel types and the weather over that 18-hour period. That's what makes the forecast of what we believe the fire growth will be and where we need to

take indirect and direct action on those fires.

Jordan McPhail: — Thanks. In the additional funding is there anything there that would, you know, recognize some of maybe the challenges that the ministry would have in that assessment, the modelling on the fire activity? Is any of the supplementary estimates to make sure that we're, you know, better prepared next year for that assessment, the modelling of the fire activity?

Steve Roberts: — Okay. Thanks for the question. In the supplemental estimates, many of the incident management teams we brought in, brought in fire behaviour specialists as part of the core team. They do modelling. So it brings extra capacity when we have lots of fires and we bring these command teams in. So part of the costs of bringing these command teams in from other jurisdictions included additional analysis capacity for these large fires.

In the future as planned is we do have that core capacity. In any event that we need more, we will bring it in to supplement our core individuals.

Jordan McPhail: — Thanks. In the early days of the wildfires . . . Sorry. Moving on to some evacuation supports. In the early days of the wildfire, evacuees and many people had complained of a lack of services being provided, confusion between the SPSA and Red Cross. And in some cases we saw the quick response of community to open doors short notice.

We had PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council] in the Prince Albert area who provided meals, evacuee supports. The city of Prince Albert also mobilized quickly to make the Exhibition Centre open for PBCN [Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation] members that were evacuated. Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation, they established their self-named camp of the RezCross, where they also provided meals and evacuee supports.

Batoche grounds, the MNS [Métis Nation of Saskatchewan] also provided evacuation supports, and in Montreal Lake there were also evacuee supports being given to provide the help that people were not receiving elsewhere.

How much of the funds spent in all of these above scenarios that I've listed were covered by the SPSA or will be covered by the SPSA through these supplementary estimates?

Marlo Pritchard: — Thank you for the question. First of all, the first I guess line of defence in an evacuation is the community. Communities can contract third-party providers to support any evacuation support, SPSA being only one of them. Red Cross and MLTC [Meadow Lake Tribal Council] also have supported communities in the North, as you're quite aware.

The individuals that you spoke of, the communities that you spoke of would potentially be able to access some of the expenses around PDAP, depending if it was on-reserve or off-reserve, depending on what the circumstances were.

I can say that from an SPSA's perspective, we spent $13 million in hotel supports for community evacuations. We spent another $3.2 million to support 3,054 households in regards to food support. Those are those self-evacuated into communities and friends. The government also again pledged 15 million through the Red Cross to support those that were impacted. We also spent $9,800,500 and those are for the individuals that were over 18 years of age. And we supported 18,324 individuals across northern Saskatchewan in regards to that.

Again going back to your question around third-party providers, all the communities have a choice, and they make the decision whether they're going to evacuate or not and who they are going to come to, whether it's SPSA, Red Cross, MLTC, or other third-party providers.

Jordan McPhail: — Thanks. I think that the third-party provider was only there because they weren't receiving the supports necessary through other means. But I will move on to another question here.

Chair B. McLeod: — Being mindful of the time allotted for the supplementary estimates brought before us today, I'm going to proceed to vote on the supplementary estimates no. 1 for Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. So before we begin the voting process, do you have any closing comments, Minister McLeod?

Hon. Tim McLeod: — I'll just take this opportunity to thank all of the officials who were here supporting the effort today. Thanks to yourself, Mr. Chair, and the committee. And thanks to Hansard for their patience as we work through the committee meeting.

Chair B. McLeod: — Thank you. Appreciate that. Any closing comments from the members? Member.

Leroy Laliberte: — First of all, again I just want to say thank you to Minister McLeod and your ministry and Steve and Marlo for being here. And thank you, Mr. Chair. I know that there are a few more questions, or a lot more questions that we had had, seeing that again this was a very, very bad wildfire season.

[18:00]

And I'm just in hopes that, you know, we start prepping now and work to having a plan in place for the season coming up, because we're definitely going to be approaching the season and it will come fast. And I know that, you know, we need to have a plan in place to ensure that the communities are supported; they have the resources that they need.

And that's all I wanted to say about that. It's important for us to make sure that all are taken care of coming into this new season. So with that, I just want to say thank you.

Jordan McPhail: — Can I make a couple comments as well?

Chair B. McLeod: — Very brief. I'll allow it.

Jordan McPhail: — No, I just wanted to thank the ministry staff for being here today and then the committee members and Hansard and production team for all the work here tonight and just say that, you know, it's unfortunate we only had a couple hours here to be able to ask some questions on behalf of the people that we serve in northern Saskatchewan. But I appreciate the time given here. And I wish we had a lot more time to be able to discuss it, but appreciate all the work here tonight.

Chair B. McLeod: — Thank you very much for those comments. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to Chair this as well. So I thank the minister and all his officials, and you're free to go. But we have to stay because we'll go through the committee votes here shortly. But we'll just give a moment for . . .

I'll just poll the group: anyone need just a real quick break as well? If we're good, we'll continue on. Okay, we'll just let the staff make their way out. Thank you so much for being here. Appreciate it. Thank you, then.

Before we move to the vote, I will also declare my intention to use my vote as well. Vote 73, Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. Central management and services, subvote (CP01) in the amount of 940,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — Carried. Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, subvote (CP06) in the amount of $295,278,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — Carried. Custody, supervision and rehabilitation services, subvote (CP13) in the amount of $39,578,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — It's carried. Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, vote 73 — $335,796,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — Carried. Bear with me. I'll now ask a member to move the following resolution:

> Resolved that there be granted to His Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2026, the following sum for Corrections, Policing and Public Safety in the amount of $335,796,000.

Hon. Jamie Martens: — I so move.

Chair B. McLeod: — MLA Martens. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — It's carried. One more time, check for a recess? Everybody's good? We'll call in the members from Government Relations then, please.

General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — No. 1
Government Relations
Vote 30

Subvote (GR12)

Chair B. McLeod: — So next we'll consider vote 30, Government Relations. And we'll start with First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs, subvote (GR12). Minister Schmalz is here with officials from the ministry. And I'd ask that officials please state their names before speaking at the microphone. And just a quick reminder, don't touch the microphones. Hansard operator will turn the microphone on and off when you are speaking to the committee.

Minister, please introduce your officials and make your opening remarks.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm joined this afternoon by Acting Deputy Minister Jeff Markewich to my left, and executive director of corporate services Heather Evans.

Government Relations requires an additional 17.1 million in First Nations gaming agreements and Métis Development Fund payments to be paid to First Nations and Métis organizations. This payment reflects annual net casino profits and online gaming profits from 2024-2025 coming in higher than forecasted. Gaming payments are made based on casino and online gaming profits in accordance with a formula set out within the gaming framework agreement and *The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Act*.

This concludes my remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

Chair B. McLeod: — Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor for questions and opening remarks. MLA McBean.

Don McBean: — Thank you very much. Thank you, Minister Schmalz. This is a great opportunity for me to get a little more immersed into the world of the SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] and the work that's going on.

And so my opening question is kind of to explain to me how this happens, maybe as if I'm 10 years old and don't really understand how the formula is. I know in a very general sense, but what it is that's taken place that's brought us to the committee this evening.

Jeff Markewich: — Good evening, everyone. Jeff Markewich, acting deputy minister of Government Relations.

So to answer your question, thank you for the question. When it comes to these payments for the gaming framework, there's kind of two parts to it. So there's the budget that is based upon forecast, and then that forecast is paid out throughout the year.

And I'll go over the formulas here for you in a second here, how it's all split out. But then midway through the year, we do a comparison of the actuals from the prior year as well, just to see where those numbers landed. And with that then, that's what we call a reconciliation payment.

So we have the budget and then we have a reconciliation payment now. So what this is for, the $17.1 million the minister mentioned, so that's for the prior year reconciliation where we paid out on forecast. And it turned out once the audited financial statements were in from the casinos, it turned out that more money came in. And that's how we ended up having to pay out more money this year.

And I can give you the breakdown of the casinos. No, you're

good?

Don McBean: — Is that available to me in another place, or just tonight with you?

Jeff Markewich: — I can read it out for everyone.

Don McBean: — Sure, give me the . . .

Jeff Markewich: — So the profits, as the minister mentioned, it comes from two spots. There's the gaming framework agreement and then there's also *The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Act* that has formulas in there.

Now, SIGA [Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority Inc.] profits. So SIGA profits are part of the gaming framework agreement. And those profits, as money comes in for the casinos that pertain to SIGA, $2.5 million goes to the First Nation Addiction Rehabilitation Foundation right off the top, 25 per cent of those profits go to the General Revenue Fund, and 50 per cent of those profits go to the First Nations Trust, and then 25 per cent of those profits go to the community development corporations.

Now *The Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation Act*, as I mentioned, distributes the Crown casinos. So that's Regina and Saskatoon. And those are split by 50 per cent to the GRF [General Revenue Fund], 25 per cent to the First Nations Trust, and then there's a split here by 25 per cent. So part of it goes to the Community Initiatives Fund, and part of it goes to the Clarence Campeau Development Fund. Now this amount is split 80 per cent to the Community Initiatives Fund and 20 per cent to the Clarence Campeau Development Fund on the first 10 million, and then 50/50 on the balance, anything over that $10 million mark.

Now on top of that we also have online gaming profits. So the province has the PlayNow.com, which is the province's first and only online gaming and sports-betting site. And the profits for that are split 50 per cent to the General Revenue Fund and 50 per cent to the First Nations Trust.

I'll just stop there if you have any questions on that.

Don McBean: — Well I think that, yeah, you're reinforcing what I basically understood to be the situation. Although I'm curious, is this a common occurrence that we're coming in mid-year and having . . . Like over the last number of years, is this typical that the budgeted amount is exceeded?

Jeff Markewich: — If the profits are higher. So you know, some years it could actually be lower, and then we're actually taking away from profits from some of the organizations. But historically over the last few years, profits have been a little higher than what was actually forecast and paid out.

Don McBean: — Okay. So with that, you know, is there something particular going on or some areas of the revenue that are performing better or that that's coming from? Or is it just sort of a general . . .

Jeff Markewich: — I would say it's just generally the market at the time. So if the market's doing good and the casinos are being profitable, then that's where it kind of lands.

Don McBean: — Okay. MLA McPhail, you were lined up for a question here. No? Then that really sort of satisfies me. The degree of briefing that I received was that this would be a pretty straightforward process.

Chair B. McLeod: — Thank you. I want to make sure that the record is correct in regards to the provincial casinos. I'm pretty sure you said Regina, Saskatoon? You would have meant Regina, Moose Jaw.

Jeff Markewich: — Regina, Moose Jaw. That is correct. Thank you for that correction.

Chair B. McLeod: — So I just want to make sure that record is appropriately acknowledged there.

Don McBean: — [Inaudible interjection] . . . Yeah, that's what I was going to say too.

Chair B. McLeod: — Okay. So seeing no more questions, we will proceed to vote on the supplementary estimates no. 1 for Government Relations. So before we begin the voting process, do you have any closing comments? Minister Schmalz.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Yeah, I'd just like to thank our ministry team here for their diligent work in implementing the framework, the agreement framework for the monies to be distributed to the Indigenous organizations that are benefiting from it.

Obviously, you know, it's a double-edged sword. Casino profits are up, but that also means that funding to Indigenous organizations goes up with it. So with that I would like to again just thank the ministerial team for their efforts.

Chair B. McLeod: — MLA McBean, any closing comments?

Don McBean: — Just as I said in the opening comment, it's a good opportunity for me to get my eyes on how this really works. I'm kind of new to the game. And the bit about the double-edged sword, yeah. You know, I appreciate that you would make that comment, and if the casinos and PlayNow and everyone's making more money, that means someone's losing more money too. Thank you.

Chair B. McLeod: — So thank you everyone, Minister and your officials. Brief, but to the point and appreciate that. You're free to go while the committee votes unless you want to stay and watch those exciting proceedings take place.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — I think we're okay.

Chair B. McLeod: — Okay. Thank you again. All right, let's get to the votes because I think we all have other places to be.

Vote 30, Government Relations. First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs subvote (GR12) in the amount of 17,129,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[18:15]

Chair B. McLeod: — Carried. Government Relations, vote 30

— 17,129,000. I will sign that. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

> Resolved that there be granted to His Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2026, the following sum for Government Relations in the amount of 17,129,000.

MLA Patterson. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — Carried. So we're just going to hand out the committee report here, the draft report, to the members. And I'll wait until our Clerk is finished passing those out.

So committee members, you have before you a draft of the second report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice for the thirtieth legislature. We require a member to move the following motion:

> That the second report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice for the thirtieth legislature be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

I recognize MLA Martens. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — Carried. So that concludes our business for today now. I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment. MLA Patterson has moved. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Chair B. McLeod: — Carried. This committee stands adjourned to the call of the Chair. Thank you very much, everyone.

[The committee adjourned at 18:17.]