



STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY

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The Battlefords

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Kindersley

Mr. Delbert Kirsch
Batoche

Mr. Jim Lemaigre
Athabasca

Mr. Doug Steele
Cypress Hills

[The committee met at 18:02.]

The Chair: — Welcome and good evening, everyone, to the Standing Committee on the Economy. I'm Colleen Young, and I'll be chairing this evening's committee meetings. And other members we have here this evening are Jeremy Cockrill, Ken Francis, and we have Joe Hargrave in for Doug Steele, and Erika Ritchie in for Aleana Young.

**General Revenue Fund
Environment
Vote 26**

Subvote (EN01)

The Chair: — Today the committee will be considering the estimates for the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Highways. We will begin with vote 26, Environment, central management and services, subvote (EN01).

Minister Kaeding is here with his officials this evening. And I would ask that officials, the first time you speak at the mikes, that you state your name and your position. You don't have to touch the mikes. If you raise your hands, the Hansard person will turn them on for you. I would ask officials not seated at the table who wish to speak to take a place at the table prior to speaking if you're asked to come up to answer a question. So, Minister, you can begin with your introductions and introducing your ministry folks who are here with you this evening.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Good afternoon, or evening I guess, Madam Chair, members of the committee. Thank you for taking this time to consider the estimates of the Ministry of Environment, and I look forward to your questions and a very robust discussion about the work of our ministry.

Here with me this evening are members of our A-team. So we've got Mark McLoughlin, our deputy minister; Elias Nelson, my chief of staff — where did he go; there we are — Veronica Gelowitz, our ADM [assistant deputy minister] of corporate services and policy division; Wes Kotyk, our assistant deputy minister, environmental protection; Kevin Murphy, our assistant deputy minister, resource management and compliance; Aaron Wirth, our executive director of climate change branch; Brady Pollock, executive director of environmental assessment and stewardship branch; Miranda Carlberg, executive director of environmental protection branch; Brant Kirychuk, executive director of fish, wildlife and lands branch; and David Cobb, executive director, forest services branch, who has joined with us remotely; and Christine Rathwell, our executive assistant to the deputy minister, who I believe is in the back room.

So I like to tell everyone that the Ministry of Environment covers everything from A to Z, from atomic energy to zebra mussels, and I think we're well represented by the group we have here tonight. This year really is an important step for the Ministry of Environment. While we look to continue our focus on making Saskatchewan more resilient to the effects of a changing climate, we're also introducing new initiatives that are going to reflect our government's commitment to the objectives in Saskatchewan's Growth Plan.

Our role in achieving our growth plan targets is we're going to continue our focus on making Saskatchewan more resilient to the effects of a changing climate. We're also introducing new initiatives that reflect our government's commitment to the growth plan.

So our role in achieving our growth plan targets is to foster job growth, support our world-class natural resource sectors, and provide effective regulatory oversight of our industries, ensuring responsible and sustainable development. Our role is reflected in our '22-23 budget, which sees the ministry balancing environmental protection and safeguards with economic growth and development. These investments are going to meet the urgent needs of today while laying the groundwork for the future.

The ministry's 2022-23 budget of 92.6 million represents an increase of 4.1 million, or 4.5 per cent, from the '21-22 restated budget. The restatement reflects a transfer of the compliance and field services program in its entirety to the province's recently announced provincial protective services branch within the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

While I'm mentioning the compliance and field service branch, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of the conservation officers, the customer service representatives, and other staff who are moving to the new branch.

Conservation officers, or COs, have been an integral part of the ministry since its inception as a Saskatchewan department of Natural Resources on October 1st, 1930. Since that time, COs have been involved in some of the most diverse and challenging work in the Government of Saskatchewan, from the traditional roles of conducting fisheries and wildlife compliance checks, to environmental inspections, investigations, and provincial park enforcement, to the day-to-day responsibilities of a conservation officer, which vary greatly.

However one thing has remained the same over that time, and that's their dedication to the safety and protection of Saskatchewan's people and natural resources. And we wish them all the best in their new home.

Our budget will enable the Ministry of Environment to lead and support several key commitments in Saskatchewan's Growth Plan, including ongoing delivery of *Prairie Resilience: A Made-In-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy*. The strategy contains more than 40 commitments in five key areas: natural systems; physical infrastructure; economic sustainability; community preparedness; and measuring, monitoring, and reporting.

This year's budget includes an increase of \$1 million to expand the output-based performance standards, OBPS, that program to add additional sectors including chemical manufacturing, wood product manufacturing, mineral product manufacturing, along with agricultural and industrial equipment manufacturing and food and beverage processing. By expanding the OBPS to additional sectors and more companies, our government is following through on our commitment to protect Saskatchewan families, workers, and businesses from the harmful effects of the federally imposed carbon tax.

The OBPS is a made-in-Saskatchewan industrial emissions pricing system under the Prairie Resilience climate change plan. The Saskatchewan OBPS is designed to maintain economic competitiveness and protect against carbon leakage. The OBPS provides relief to industrial emitters from the federal carbon tax that would otherwise lead to globally harmful carbon leakage and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

The federally imposed carbon tax is a bad economic policy that does not help families, workers, or businesses. In fact, it makes them more vulnerable. Currently under Saskatchewan's provincial OBPS, regulated emitters will save more than \$2.3 billion compared to the federal industrial pricing scheme. This helps keep industries, jobs, and the families that they support in Saskatchewan, and avoid carbon leakage that ultimately results in higher overall global emissions.

The ministry continues to support our government's plan to double the growth of the forestry sector, providing opportunities for northern Saskatchewan's largest industry while ensuring responsible and sustainable forest harvesting is taking place. In Saskatchewan, the forest industry supports many families in northern communities with 8,000 jobs, and an additional 2,500 jobs are on the way thanks to new investments announced by the forest industry last fall.

For this reason, the ministry is investing an additional \$400,000 per year over the next five years to produce a forest inventory mapping, mapping the entirety of the commercial forest and surrounding lands, a total of more than 14 million hectares. This work will produce estimates of the currently available timber within the provincial forest and adjacent Crown lands, private lands, and First Nation reserves, helping increase harvesting in the forest sector and ensuring that it happens in a sustainable manner.

Our forests contribute to our quality of life in many important ways. Sustainably managed and healthy forests will continue to provide ecological and economic benefits for generations to come. To ensure that continues to take place, in December our government approved up to \$1 million to fight the threat of mountain pine beetle in Alberta. It's the second year of a three-year agreement with the Government of Alberta to stop mountain pine beetle from spreading into Saskatchewan's northern forests. Recent studies have shown that our joint efforts are working by significantly slowing the eastern spread of the mountain pine beetle. This is a cost-effective, proactive approach to control the spread of the beetle and support our efforts to keep it out of northern Saskatchewan.

This year the ministry is also continuing its efforts to remediate abandoned non-uranium mine sites through corrective action planning. Due to a change in public sector accounting standards, this budget includes a \$34.5 million non-cash allowance to account for the estimated remediation of six former non-uranium mine sites. This does not have an impact on ministry expenses.

For the '22-23 fiscal year, the ministry plans to spend 1.4 million on three of the six mine sites in various stages of rehabilitation, including \$96,000 for post-remediation maintenance and monitoring of the Newcor abandoned mine, \$1.1 million for preparation of a complete corrective action plan design for the Western Nuclear abandoned mine, and \$230,000 for the initial

corrective action plan design of the Anglo-Rouyn mine.

The work to come in the '22-23 fiscal year complements recently completed work at the abandoned Newcor mine site near Creighton. The remediation of the Newcor mine site was completed with a proposed \$1.6 million cost estimate for the project, and brings us just another step closer to our government's commitment to address abandoned mine sites on Crown land and reduce the number of contaminated sites in the province.

Additional funding of \$587,000 within the environmental protection branch is planned for '22-23 to enhance regulatory oversight as Saskatchewan's economy and industries continue to grow. These resources will help increase responsiveness to industry by enabling application reviews and permitting to be completed as efficiently and effectively as possible.

As we move forward with our solid waste management strategy, our government recognizes the importance of reducing waste being discarded in landfills. The target of our strategy is to reduce the amount of waste generated per person by 30 per cent by 2030 and 50 per cent by 2040. The provincial solid waste management strategy strives for a practical, sustainable, and integrated solid waste management system that achieves a healthy, resilient environment and protects the well-being of residents and communities.

Since the strategy's launch in 2020, we've made progress on many of the action items despite the challenges related to COVID-19. Our government launched two new recycling programs last year. Both programs help divert potentially harmful materials from Saskatchewan's landfills.

A product stewardship program for consumer batteries was launched by a call to recycle in January 2021, with battery collection at all Sarcan depots and many other locations throughout the province. In the first eight weeks of the regulated program, we saw a 24 per cent increase in volumes compared to the same time the previous time under the voluntary program.

The second program launched last April is for household hazardous waste and domestic pesticides. In its first year, there were household hazardous waste events scheduled in 35 municipalities across the province. A new solid waste management advisory committee will further guide oversight of the strategy in the years to come. This committee has participation from rural and urban municipalities, First Nations, northern communities, businesses, the waste management and recycling industry, and the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council. The members of this committee bring a board and diverse background and understanding of solid waste management issues and solutions, and we look forward to the work that they will undertake.

[18:15]

The ministry is also on track to meet its commitment to implement Saskatchewan Environmental Code chapters for transfer stations and composting facilities this fiscal year. The draft composting-facilities code chapter is currently being reviewed and revised by a focus group, and the ministry plans to engage with stakeholders and interest groups on the draft chapter

this fall. The ministry has also completed a review of household packaging and paper stewardship program regulations in multi-material recycling program to find opportunities for improvement and consider alternative policy models.

During stakeholder engagement last spring, the ministry heard support for harmonizing regulations with neighbouring jurisdictions and shifting to a program fully funded and operated by producers. Some of the benefits of shifting to this new model include more consistent and accessible recycling services across the province, an increase in the amount of material diverted from landfills, reduced administrative burden on municipalities and stewards, and supporting a circular economy and encouraging local solutions. The ministry will be working with stakeholders this spring to discuss potential change further.

One of the ministry's more well-known programs that has been successful in keeping containers out of landfills is the Sarcan beverage container collection and recycling program. This year the ministry will see an increase of \$462,000 to the annual grant provided, bringing the province's total funding support to 35.5 million. Sarcan employs more than 900 people at its 73 collection depots across the province. This important and ongoing funding contributes to the well-being of persons with disabilities and others who work within Sarcan's recycling operations.

This year's budget will also provide information technology capital funding of 3.6 million to modernize customer service business applications to enable the people of Saskatchewan and ministry clients to easily access information about Ministry of Environment programs and services. While ministry staff continue to provide top-quality customer service, aging technology is starting to impact that level of service. For anyone that has ever been frustrated while trying to contact a company or organization for information, this investment will be very much appreciated. The funding contributes to an information technology landscape that is increasingly transforming to digital services. The adoption of this technology will ensure that we are meeting the needs of our citizens and industry now and well into the future.

This budget will also see an increase of \$980,000 to the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund. The FWDF is an excellent example of the importance of partnerships in the ministry, as it is administered in conjunction with colleagues at the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation and several conservation groups throughout the province. The fund is a key component to protecting and enhancing Saskatchewan's wildlife and landscapes. It's a continued focus on the protection of vulnerable fish and wildlife habitat, the promotion of resource education and endangered species program that supports the sustainability of our province's vast and biologically diverse landscapes and wildlife populations.

Halting the spread of chronic wasting disease continues to be a priority for our government. That is why we're pleased to partner with the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Conservation Association on a multi-year initiative to fund research into the science behind the development and delivery of an oral vaccine to combat chronic wasting disease in wild cervids. Our government will provide a total of \$400,000 to this multi-year research initiative, with a commitment of \$50,000 for the first

two years and \$100,000 in each of the remaining three years. This funding will complement a commitment from Alberta's Ministry of Environment and Parks, as well as a \$500,000 pledge over five years from the Alberta Conservation Association to support vaccine research at the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta. This shared funding agreement has the potential to yield an effective tool to protect cervid populations across the prairies and be of tremendous value in the fight against chronic wasting disease.

Halting the spread of invasive species is another facet of the important work of the Ministry of Environment. I'm incredibly proud to share with you today that last year more than 2,000 watercraft were inspected for aquatic invasive species. Of those, six watercraft carrying invasive species were intercepted. And I recognize that's not really a very large percentage, but the importance of stopping these species before they reach our waters cannot be overstated.

I believe that small percentage is very closely related to the good work that the ministry is doing on prevention and awareness activities. Due to the *Anglers Guide*, social media, paid advertisements, signage, education materials, and inspection and decontamination presentations, the ministry has demonstrated the importance of this issue. People of Saskatchewan have heard that message and are responding in kind, making sure that they clean, drain, and dry their watercraft every time they move it from one water body to another.

And finally on the aquatic invasive species file, the Ministry of Environment worked closely with other provinces as well as Fisheries and Ocean Canada. This close working relationship was key last year when moss balls contaminated with zebra mussels were found at retail locations across Canada and the United States, including here in Saskatchewan.

The early detection and rapid response plan was put to the test and it worked admirably. We were able to coordinate a very collaborative response to address the sale, import, and distribution of these contaminated moss balls. We're also able to provide guidance for the disposal of those who had already purchased them. So far it appears as though our efforts have been successful, as monitoring in our 2021 showed no presence of invasive species in any water body that was sampled. We will build on this work in this fiscal year.

The ministry is working to modernize the fisheries regulations and will build on the existing measures to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species. These modernization efforts will improve the ministry's ability to respond to threats and increase the number of species regulated to prevent harmful ecological and economic impacts.

The '22-23 Ministry of Environment budget supports efforts to make Saskatchewan more resilient to the effects of a changing climate. It creates jobs and grows Saskatchewan's natural resource sector through investment and revenue opportunities.

Madam Chair, I thank you and the members of the committee for your time this evening. I do appreciate your interest and look forward to your many questions.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister. I'll now open the floor to

questions from committee members, and I'll recognize Ms. Ritchie.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I'd like to start with the removal of the compliance field services group over to Corrections and Policing services. I think that this is something that's a fairly significant change for the ministry.

I'm wondering if you can tell me how coordination is going to be maintained between the ministry and Corrections and Policing in order to ensure service levels are maintained, and how those lines of communication will be also maintained.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So we'll refer to the CPPS [Corrections, Policing and Public Safety] as kind of the body now that's going to be housing these officials. And it's in the process of finalizing an umbrella MOU [memorandum of understanding] with each — with the PCC [Provincial Capital Commission], with Environment, and with Highways — because each one of those has members that have moved over to this.

These MOUs are going to speak to the general approach that we're going to use to communications, working together. And they're going to be tabled as soon as they're finalized. So we'll certainly make sure they're available when they're tabled.

In addition, we're in the process of developing an MOU kind of around file transfer and data sharing with each of these partners, and these agreements are in the process of being drafted as well. So it's an action in progress. They've officially moved over as of April 1st with the new fiscal. I believe they're on the road, you know, working right now as we speak under the CPPS banner.

Ms. Ritchie: — So during this transitional period then, how can we be confident that there aren't service disruptions while these details are being sorted out, or what mechanisms are in place to ensure that?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So at this point each member or each responsibility is doing what they were doing before the transfer was to take place, and ultimately don't expect any changes in their service delivery unless there is a significant event that they may need to respond to or answer to. But ultimately the role doesn't change for any of these members, whether they come from Highways, they come from Environment, or they come from, you know, deputy sheriffs or sheriffs working in the court system.

Each one of them had provisions and allowances to support *The Highway Traffic Act*, I believe. You know, each one of them had opportunities to support all our provincial and federal statutes that they're allowed to. And that hasn't changed and won't change unless they need to, you know, be involved in a specific action or some activity that they may be called to do. But other than that, their duties are going to remain the same. Our COs are going to remain to be COs.

Ms. Ritchie: — How many in-scope and out-of-scope FTEs [full-time equivalent] were involved with the transfer?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So I'll give you the total number transferred. What I won't have available for you right now is in-scope and out-of-scope, but we can certainly provide that later.

Ministry of Environment, who we're certainly referring to today, transferred 173.7 full-time equivalent positions. And as you heard in my comments, the budget's 25.032 million, and that's all moving over to the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. So in that number that's going to include 147 conservation officers, as well as management and support staff, and including two that are going to come over from corporate services. The entirety of our compliance and field services team is going to be moved over into the CPPS, provincial protective services branch.

So what I don't have for you is that breakdown between in-scope and out-of-scope, but we can certainly endeavour to provide that later.

Ms. Ritchie: — And so what about any associated capital, you know, facilities associated with those services? Have they transferred over as well?

Ms. Gelowitz: — Hi. Veronica Gelowitz. The capital, the buildings that were part of compliance and field services will be transferred to SaskBuilds and Procurement. They will manage those properties on behalf of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. There is a portion of capital, the operating equipment, that will transfer to Corrections. Some of the items will transfer to integrated justice services. Expenses for accommodations and corporate-type supports, that will go to integrated justice services to provide services on behalf of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Ms. Ritchie: — And just one more question, Minister. I guess what I'm still sort of struggling to understand is what benefit is being derived from this relocation of the ministry to the people of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — What this is going to do is certainly a couple of things. One is to consolidate our efforts when it comes to dealing with rural issues, certainly, you know, predominantly rural issues. Certainly going to be some urban issues that support can be provided through there.

[18:30]

But we're also looking at, you know, coordinating . . . You know, like we've talked about capital, about coordinating the equipment, and ultimately providing, I guess, an opportunity for these to be under a single structure. You know, we can gain, I think, better management of our resources when we're under a single structure.

Ms. Ritchie: — And by management of resources, what are you referring to exactly?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Manpower. Manpower resources, full-time resources. Yes.

Ms. Ritchie: — And so I guess you mentioned the MOU and that sounds like, you know, the details will be covered off in those agreements. But how are you going to ensure that those resources are covering off on the priorities that the ministry has for compliant services and not be redirected into other areas?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — All of that would be detailed in the MOU

from, you know, the deliverables, responsibilities that each one of these entities will maintain. And that will be very well articulated in the MOUs when they're completed.

Ms. Ritchie: — Are there some guiding principles that you can share with us tonight that will govern the development of those MOUs?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Part of the MOU is also going to include a review. And the review can be done annually or certainly more frequently if required, but a lot of that area of responsibility will be identified very well in the MOU.

Ms. Ritchie: — And will that be a document that will be publicly accessible?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Yes, it can be tabled when it's available.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay. Then I would just ask that it be tabled with the committee. All right. So within the central management and services grouping (EN01), can you tell me what the FTE count is and the organizational breakdown within that grouping?

Ms. Gelowitz: — Thank you for the question. In total there's 90 FTEs in that grouping, and that includes the deputy minister's office, so executive management, the corporate services and policy division, and communications and client service branch. So this subvote also includes all the accommodations and the IT [information technology] costs for the complete ministry.

Ms. Ritchie: — So I think I heard it mentioned last night, the total complement for the ministry, somewhere in the range of . . . Is it 400? What is the total ministry staff complement or FTE?

Ms. Gelowitz: — The budget supports just less than 370 FTEs now with the transition of CFS [compliance and field services].

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay, so that looks to be about, I don't know, somewhere around a quarter to a third of the total FTE amount. Around a quarter?

Ms. Gelowitz: — That's correct. That would be about a quarter.

Ms. Ritchie: — All right. And so I'm just wondering, with a loss of that number of FTEs, what other adjustments organizationally are being contemplated. It seems to me that you have some significant central management oversight, and whether that will require some rationalization now.

Mr. McLoughlin: — Mark McLoughlin. Thank you for the question. Yes, agree. You know, with the change now that's occurring, it gives us the opportunity to take a look at our entire sort of functionality in regards to our respective divisions, branches, you know, how we're going to sort of be taking advantage of this change structurally, and what that will mean from, you know, how we divide up those different sort of managements and accountability measures inside the ministry. That work is under way right now with the Public Service Commission.

Ms. Ritchie: — Well hopefully that doesn't come as a surprise to anybody other than myself in the room. Okay, so looking some more at some of the organizational structures within the ministry,

so in the climate change and adaptation subvote, can you please tell me again how many FTEs reside and what the breakdown is? I guess I understand you've kind of got two functions within there, and just wanting to understand resources in those two areas.

Ms. Gelowitz: — Thank you. The total FTE for that division is forty-three and a half. Sorry, it's fifty and a half. There's 38 FTEs in the climate change branch and there's twelve and a half FTEs in cumulative impacts and science branch.

Ms. Ritchie: — Right. And then within the climate change branch, I guess, then you've got a further breakdown of, if I'm reading the description correctly, that more sort of focused on climate policy versus SMRs [small modular reactor]. Am I correct in that understanding?

Ms. Gelowitz: — There is a specific unit for SMR policy.

Ms. Ritchie: — And how many FTEs are within that branch?

Ms. Gelowitz: — There are five.

Ms. Ritchie: — So does that mean, then, the remainder of 38 in climate change?

Ms. Gelowitz: — So there's 33, then, in the rest of the climate change branch.

Ms. Ritchie: — Yeah. Okay. So I mean, I guess we touched on some of this last year in terms of the SMR group within the climate change division. And I must confess I honestly still can't quite wrap my head around the placement within Environment of that group, recognizing of course that obviously there's been some other developments of late. But could you please maybe give me a little bit more of a description of the priorities of that group as they currently sit?

Mr. Wirth: — Hi. Aaron Wirth. Thank you for the question. So the SMR unit in our climate change branch works very closely with SaskPower. So whereas SaskPower is predominantly focused on SMRs as an electricity power project, the SMR unit takes a bit of a broader focus in terms of SMRs as part of our climate change strategy in Prairie Resilience. Because the way to get to net zero emissions, for example, or to decarbonize is through clean electricity. That's how you do it, so it requires clean electrification.

So the work that they're doing is largely looking at how SMRs can fit into the growth plan and also help with significant emissions reductions. So they're looking at all the things that you need to have in place to have SMRs operating in Saskatchewan from a safety perspective, from an environmental perspective, from a supply chain perspective. And so they work across all ministries and agencies, and there's a working group that works across these areas to make sure all those components are in place.

They're doing a business case analysis right now, for example, with the results to be finalized soon that will continue to provide information about the feasibility, both economically and technically, about SMRs and the types of SMRs that could work in Saskatchewan. So those are the types of things that they're working on right now.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you for that description. And, Mr. Minister, I understand that there's been some recent organizational changes of shifting one of the former leads over to CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan]. Perhaps you could provide a little more of an explanation there in terms of that relationship, how that's shifted, and what the go-forward is with that shift.

Mr. McLoughlin: — Yeah. So David Brock, who was our ADM, went over on a seconded 18-month agreement with Crown Investments Corporation to assist in the establishment of work around energy security. We have a very close working relationship still. We actually convene quite a bit and have regular communication pretty much on a day-to-day basis. The need to move and shift and have that respective focus at that time was necessary as far as a government priority, and we were prepared as a ministry to help support that.

Ms. Ritchie: — Oh, so it's just a secondment.

Mr. McLoughlin: — That's correct.

Ms. Ritchie: — I see. Okay. I very much appreciated the opportunity to receive the presentation on the strategic plan for the deployment of small modular reactors. And I just was seeking some clarity on some of the information I received during that presentation because it was presented as an option. And I mean, obviously there's considerable resources going into, you know, the studies for feasibility.

And I'm just wondering, obviously you're dealing with some fairly aggressive timelines, and you know, ambitious work here to introduce basically a new industrial sector to the province, one that, you know, I do know a little bit about.

And I mean, just kind of given the timelines, I wonder if you could sort of speak to what the fallback position or the mitigation plan if things don't progress in the direction that you're hoping that they will?

[18:45]

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Right now I think everyone's well aware SaskPower has indicated that they're going to get to 50 per cent renewables by 2030 — very aggressive time frame.

But we're also seeing a number of projects being announced, in the hopper, just being discussed now, you know, recognizing that we've got a number of sources of energy that we're currently utilizing in our portfolio right now and ultimately looking at a number of other resources into the future, SMRs being one of those. SaskPower, you know, through their planning process has a number of off-ramps all the way through the planning stages to, you know, to provide opportunities if they arise, whether it's interties with other provinces, other sources of energy development, certainly expanding on SMRs. So I would say right now . . .

And the other thing is SaskPower is certainly doing a lot of community engagement to also get the community's response to what they'd like to have for energy sources and what's that going to look like, where would they see it come from. There's a significant amount of community engagement, and there's a

significant amount of planning that is going to be ongoing to get to these very aggressive time lines.

Just remember it was the federal government had imposed on us that we needed to be out of coal by 2030, so we're also hoping that we get a lot of federal support in our transitioning as we move to other alternative sources of energy.

Ms. Ritchie: — As I recall, that was under the former Harper government when those measures came into place. You mentioned other sources. You had said interties. Maybe you could just elaborate a little bit for me what you mean by other sources?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Well sources of energy that we're currently using, certainly renewables right from geothermal to wind, solar, biomass, looking at . . . I believe there's some agreements that have been signed on methane to energy production, you know, Saskatoon, city of Regina converting methane to energy in their power grids. You know, we currently source hydro from Manitoba. I believe there's some interties even between Alberta and Saskatchewan, if I'm not mistaken. So there's a number of sources that we're currently getting energy from.

Ms. Ritchie: — So the net metering program has ended a couple of years ago now. Is there any thoughts to bringing that back?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — I think that's probably best answered by SaskPower at this time. We don't have any responsibility on the net metering side of this. I understand SaskPower has some net metering opportunities, but it's not under Environment's responsibility.

Ms. Ritchie: — In reviewing *Hansard* earlier today from last year, you explained to me that the net metering program, administration of it, had been brought into the Ministry of Environment. So I guess I'm just a little perplexed at this point because you had a significant role in its rollout and you are in charge of the climate strategy in Prairie Resilience. So I guess I'm a little bit shocked by that answer. Is there anything more you could say?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So the only role that Environment played in that was providing the rebate, or administering the rebate part to that. And that part now is over. That's completed. So that now limits our role when it comes to net metering. I understand there's still some great programming that's being offered through SaskPower, and that's probably best responded to by them.

Ms. Ritchie: — Yeah, the difficulty is always kind of getting sort of, you know, shopped around a little bit in some of these answers but . . .

So I guess my understanding is right now that with the announcements and commitments made between SaskPower with the 50 per cent by 2030 and the 10 per cent with the output-based system, presumably that's going up. And there's a third component. It's just lost on me, right off the top of my head. But anyways there's sort of these three components that amount to reductions of I believe 12 million tonnes per year. And it's not clear. There seems to be some changes to the website. I'm wondering if you can tell me what the current commitment is

towards reducing emissions by 2030?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So the 12 million tonnes, just I guess for everyone's clarification here, is kind of through our . . . it's built into Prairie Resilience. And that's ultimately what we're indicating through the things we're initiating through Prairie Resilience. We'll end up with over 12 million tonnes reduced in greenhouse gases by 2030.

So that's going to utilize a number of initiatives, a few that you've referred to. Certainly SaskPower moving with their aggressive plan to reduce emissions by 50 per cent by 2030, I think below 2005 levels. You know, we just recently expanded our output-based performance standards. And that certainly will help our private sector work towards, especially those with high emissions, working towards emissions reduction. You know, we're certainly seeing, by increasing building efficiency, our building footprint, that we're seeing some significant emissions reductions there.

I think the other thing you have to take into account too is that we're very much export-oriented in this province. So you know, apart from electrical generation, a lot of our emissions are generated through the private sector. And I'd say the oil and gas sector has done a remarkable job in their methane reduction. In fact I think they had a goal in place and have actually beat that goal earlier than they anticipated. And that was getting to a 50 per cent methane reduction from 2015 levels. And they were going to do that by 2025. And I think if I remember right, they've actually gotten ahead of that target. Certainly we're going to continue to sequester CO₂ through our Estevan facility, through Boundary Dam.

But I would love to talk about some of the great opportunities and initiatives that the private sector is certainly undertaking to reduce emissions through our provincial profile. Federated, just the other day, announced their \$2 billion integrated ag complex. So that's in conjunction with AGT Foods. They're going to build a canola crushing facility. That's going to generate a 15,000 barrel a day renewable diesel plan. So that certainly is working towards emissions reduction.

You know, Covenant Energy is going to be producing renewable diesel. So this is now ultimately going to be replacing conventional fuel. So it's certainly going to have a significant emissions reduction component to it.

A couple of really great examples of private sector engagements: Flying Dust First Nation, you know, working with delta power, moving flare gas to power that we talked about earlier; Highrock Resources, another one.

Ms. Ritchie: — I'm asking what the commitment is. Like what . . . Is there a target? Like just is there a target and a plan to reach that target?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So Prairie Resilience is what we're utilizing for our plan to reduce emissions. So reducing emissions, we've talked about 12 million tonnes there. But I think part of the responsibility that we have as well, if we're talking climate change, is also to ensure that we've got resiliency built into our communities. So that as well is part of our function.

But I think you cannot dismiss what the private sector is doing to reduce emissions. And that is going to be done through the support of this government allowing them to be able to take these initiatives on and be supportive of the innovation and technology that they want to implement. As well we have the methane reductions. That's our regulations. So we've created regulations as well that are going to be responsible for reducing emissions in the province.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay. So do you support the scientific consensus to limit global average temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius? And if so, what role do you see Saskatchewan playing in achieving that?

[19:00]

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — We recognize that our federal government has certainly taken a very active position in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, working towards targets that they've agreed to. The unfortunate thing is that they have not consulted with us as to how we're going to help them achieve their targets. Because the unfortunate thing is, is that they have a target, they built a target, didn't consult with us as to how we're going to get there, not recognizing the significant financial investment that we are going to have to make as a province because we are very export-oriented.

And certainly not recognizing as well that we are playing a very active role in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions through the utilization of the uranium that we produce, the uranium that we produce or mine and generate in this province to support clean energy around the world. Not taking into account, you know, the oil and gas sector. It's probably the cleanest oil and gas extraction sector in the world, and not taking into account the contribution that that has to reducing the global greenhouse gas emissions. Not taking into account the role that agriculture plays and the significant role that agriculture plays in sequestering carbon in this country.

Ms. Ritchie: — So I guess all of that . . . Well I mean, that may be your world view. It certainly doesn't square with my world view. And I think that if we're going to talk about the federal government's role, I think that your government has missed several opportunities to be part of a collaborative conversation as part of a federation in Canada. And I would ask, with your most recent submission for equivalency to bring back, you know, carbon pricing within the jurisdiction of Saskatchewan, what it is that has been proposed as part of that plan.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — The responsibility that we've got is to take control of the carbon tax and bring it under Saskatchewan control. We need to do that on the fuel revenue side, on the gas tax side, and we need to do that on our electrical generation and gas transmission side. So the responsibility that we have is to bring that back to provincial control and to manage it provincially.

Ms. Ritchie: — And what have you proposed to the federal government in order to do that?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Sorry, what was the question?

Ms. Ritchie: — What have you proposed to the federal

government in order to bring that back to Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So our plan or our proposal is to take administrative control of the carbon tax so that the revenues stay here in the province. You know, our expectation is that we're going to get the same treatment that has been provided other provinces, other regions of the country that certainly they have had accepted and have been able to enjoy up to this point in time.

And the second part of our proposal is to bring SaskPower and SaskEnergy back into Saskatchewan's existing OBPS program because we need to ensure that they're protected from that exposure to the full force of the federally imposed carbon tax. Those will be our plans.

Ms. Ritchie: — And what is the plan to recycle the revenues from the fuel tax?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So our focus at this point is to take control. That question would probably be better answered by Finance as to how they would like to distribute the proceeds.

Ms. Ritchie: — I guess I'm just assuming that those sorts of details would have been necessarily defined as part of the submission to the federal government for them to understand how the program works, that it's going to meet the same stringency level. What kind of detail did you have to provide to them in that application?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So ultimately what the federal government wants to ensure is that we're not changing the price of carbon, and that they would like us to not change the exemptions basis to the level that they're currently offering. That's what they have required.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay. Thank you for that response. Based on the measures that you've identified in your responses and your description of the Prairie Resilience plan, where are you forecasting our economy-wide emissions to be at in 2030?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So we've got a number of variables, factors right now that we need to get a better handle on. One is we need to get through COVID and certainly understand where the manufacturing sector, where the supply chain's going to be, where ultimately industry is going to end up. You know, with this two-year issue with COVID, we've also had now some issues with modelling, trying to get an accurate model, establish some kind of trend analysis, recognizing that the last two years have . . . likely going to create an outlier effect in this. The other thing we need to do is ensure that our federal government quits changing where they want the targets to be. That seems to be a moving target on a regular basis as well.

So the third factor we need to take into account is that this province is destined for growth, for significant growth. And we have . . . well, certainly well aware of the announcements we've made, recognize there's going to be a number more. This province is set for incredible growth. And certainly it's going to be in the manufacturing. It's going to be the food, fuel, and fertilizer side of things.

And again, to even estimate where that is going to be into the future is going to be difficult until we get these facilities

operational. So we've got an awful lot of variables that we need to have a better understanding of before we think of trying to understand where our emissions levels are going to be and where they may be into the future.

Ms. Ritchie: — It's my understanding that there's been significant dollars spent on acquiring modelling capability within your ministry, that those funds have been, by my understanding, fully spent. And so I'm a little bit shocked that you don't have better answers for me in terms of projections.

Perhaps one could even maybe just do a back-of-the-envelope calculation and get some orders-of-magnitude numbers in terms of, based on your growth projections, where you expect to be in 2030. I think that that's a pretty reasonable question to be asking you, and you seem to be . . . I'm trying to go at this from a couple of different directions because you've already told me that, you know . . . I'm not seeing anything more beyond the 12 million tonnes here.

You've kind of, you know, alluded to a few different things. I'm trying to understand where that's going to get us to at the end of the day. And can you tell me why, although you have a climate change division with 33 FTEs that have been spending millions of dollars, and you can't answer this question?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So part of the problem we've got is currently right now there's 24 federal initiatives that honestly the dust hasn't even cleared on: clean fuel standard, methane cap, a number of emissions caps that they have initiated that honestly they haven't even put the details out as to what those are going to look like. Pretty difficult to model when you don't have a base to start with. Modellers? Absolutely, we've got the best modellers in the country that work in our environment department. But when you do not have something to start with, it's very difficult to put a model out that anybody's going to have any comfort level with.

[19:15]

Just to give you an example, abatement costs. When we were at a 30 per cent reduction below 2005 standards, you know, we had seen some data that said that abatement costs were going to cost us \$32 billion in the next seven years between this, between the government and private sector. Now we've moved to 40 to 45 per cent. Have no idea what those abatement costs are going to be, because there isn't even a runway or a ramp provided in so many of these sectors to get to a level of emissions reduction. So it's going to be pretty difficult to model when we have an awful lot of factors that we don't even have a base to establish from.

Ms. Ritchie: — Now I don't want this to get adversarial. However, yeah, it's challenging for sure. And I said this last year, and I'll say it again this year — you've been in government for 15 years. And I understand the need for runways and the unpredictable nature of the situation. Time is getting short, and there need to be plans in place and forecasts generated.

And I guess I am looking for greater assurance beyond what I've heard here so far in what's contained in the Prairie Resilience plan, that there is a path forward here that the government is taking to ensure that we're protecting everyone's future. And yeah, lots of complexity, for sure.

But maybe I could ask some more specific questions. Well maybe just one other point before I do that. Yeah, I appreciate that there is . . . that the ground is constantly shifting on you. But I think you know as well as I do that that is the nature of the international negotiations with the nationally determined contributions and their need to increase, over time, the level of ambition. And so you should be working that into your models. That's not something that will come as any surprise to any of the experts in your branch. So you know, I think that anything that alludes to, well you know, we didn't see that coming, is a little hard to accept.

I want to ask about the National Energy Code which was recently, maybe it was 2019, January 1st it came into effect. Lots of talk about the need to move on to the 2020 standard and have that in place for new buildings, I believe, by 2024 or 2028. What are the plans to move forward with moving into the next National Energy Code?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — I think that question's probably best answered by Government Relations and SaskBuilds. Those would be the two entities that actually would make recommendations on building codes and bring that forward.

Ms. Ritchie: — Well that's also disappointing to hear. I appreciate that, you know, this obviously impacts all areas of government. I guess I'm expecting that, sort of as the lead agency, that you're sort of the keeper of those plans.

So maybe you could just explain to me then what that working relationship is going to be. Are your officials working in coordination with them to sort of identify what those priorities need to achieve some presumed target that I haven't been able to even identify yet that actually exists? Or like, how are you ensuring this government-wide coordination overall? Because I expect answers to these questions here as the lead on the climate file, and it's disappointing that I can't get them.

Mr. McLoughlin: — Thanks very much for the question. So there are a number of working groups, committees, or subcommittees that come together from an enterprise perspective across governments. We've convened a number of deputies from various ministries, agencies, and representative of the Crown corporations looking at everything that is sort of general, regulatory in nature, or initiative-based to be able to get a sense of what is under way, what has been completed, what is needing further engagement, who's leading who, who's representing, and who's sort of facilitating the process. So you know, we do have a pretty robust level of activity today where you'll start to see the culmination of that work in the very, very near future, to be able to get to the points of your questions.

Ms. Ritchie: — And so when you say that, I'm just wondering what's sort of the North Star, the guiding force for these efforts? Like is there an overall . . . Yeah, what's the strategic objective that you're driving towards?

Mr. McLoughlin: — I would say one of them has to do with collaboration and communication and consistency in respect to approach, the dissemination of information and ensuring that our timing in regards to expected responses is ultimately being addressed and met, and that there's a clear level of understanding in all the different areas across government so what each — you

know, whether it's ministry or agency or even representing the Crowns — you know, what is under way and what is active. Because you know, ultimately the impact is quite broad to all of us.

Ms. Ritchie: — Is there a quantified objective that is driving the work?

Mr. McLoughlin: — Well there's a number of components that obviously are driving from an objective perspective. A number of them are deadlines that have to be met in respect to coordinated responses, which is critical, and certainly driving around our own expectations, you know, as a province, around how we want to collectively be delivering that information.

Ms. Ritchie: — Is there a project charter?

Mr. McLoughlin: — There is not at this time, but there will be.

Ms. Ritchie: — Recently there was enabling legislation to allow municipalities to implement programs to fund energy efficiency improvements through property tax bills. That came forward from the city of Saskatoon with the PACE [Property Assessed Clean Energy] financing. Are there any plans to create a province-level program to help municipalities, as we've seen in other jurisdictions like Alberta and Nova Scotia?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So I know we have this ongoing discussion with SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], and certainly appreciate the input that we've received in that area.

I know that one entity that we continue to direct municipalities to is the ClimateWest centre in Winnipeg, and certainly appreciate the work that ClimateWest has done. And I know they get participation from, I believe, the U of R [University of Regina], a couple of other entities here in Saskatchewan, as well as the University of Manitoba and other research and climate-based organizations.

You know, we have ongoing discussions with SARM and SUMA and New North as to, you know, what their expectations are, ultimately what is, you know, what are they working towards, and certainly appreciate the collaborative effort that we've had so far. And you know, looking forward to helping them fill some of their goals and ambitions here into the future.

Ms. Ritchie: — And are there any plans to implement energy efficiency programs across sectors? Maybe building in particular, if you could speak to that, but any that are in the works?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Again that would probably be best answered by SaskBuilds when it comes to government buildings. I do know, as we've talked to officials over there, that that's certainly very much in mind as they want to continue to reduce operational costs through all their structures moving to the future. Yeah, SaskBuilds would probably be the best venue to get that kind of information from.

Ms. Ritchie: — And maybe just going back to the earlier response regarding sort of that government-wide approach that

the deputy minister was referencing, could you please tell me how that effort will be reported out on, and also, I guess, maybe kind of what sort of metrics will be identified as part of that program?

Mr. McLoughlin: — Thank you for the question. You know, certainly our resilience framework around climate is ultimately what will drive a number of these pieces. A lot of that work is still in development. You know, the components of how we structure that, you know, how we sort of align the accountabilities and responsibilities, I think, will evolve over the short period of time. But that's still in the works.

Ms. Ritchie: — Has there been a timeline identified for when that will occur?

Mr. McLoughlin: — It's under way right now.

Ms. Ritchie: — Okay. Now you mentioned in your introductory remarks sort of these five areas of priority in climate resilience, and I did have a question about one in particular. You mentioned that natural systems are one of five systems needed to strengthen our province and our economy against climate change. It's quoted as saying, continued implementation of Saskatchewan's agricultural water management framework helps assure continued productivity and enhances wetland habitat conservation.

There's also a commitment to maintain or restore landscape integrity, to optimize ecological goods and services, enhance resilience to extreme weather events, and manage risks to biodiversity. According to the Water Security Agency's 2020-21 annual report, as of March 31st, 2021 a total of 6,300 quarter sections of agricultural drainage have achieved compliance, but none of those approvals required any wetlands to be retained or restored.

[19:30]

So when I asked Minister Bradshaw how then is Water Security incorporating wetland retention and conservation into the Prairie Resilience plan, he said that that would be a question for the Minister of Environment. And so I wanted to ask, what is the Ministry of Environment doing to ensure the continued productivity and enhancement of wetlands and the carbon they store?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So we undergo a lot of joint work with WSA [Water Security Agency]. And this would certainly be one of those areas that we would do a lot of the cumulative effects analysis. We would do a lot of the, you know, the land-based solutions analysis, and then ultimately WSA would be responsible for implementing the strategy. So the work that we're doing, certainly in Environment, is working on those areas in particular.

You know, just for example, we played a very important role in the initial stages of the Diefenbaker lake development, and Environment did a lot of cumulative facts analysis in determining loss, recovery, all of those areas. So I'd say it's a mutually beneficial arrangement that we're working between the two entities to help support WSA, ultimately come up with a wetland management strategy, which I believe they've indicated they're

going to be coming up with shortly.

Ms. Ritchie: — And are there targets or standards that your ministry has developed to guide the decisions or work undertaken by Water Security?

Mr. Wirth: — Aaron Wirth. Thanks again for the question. Yeah, so I think overall we work closely with WSA. We're definitely looking at the impacts and trying to monitor those and study those, and that's really the work that our branch does and our cumulative impacts and sciences group does in particular. So they work on cumulative effects for example, and they've identified a number of areas of interest in terms of climate risk analysis that they're doing.

And so they've got a number of tools that they're using and actively working on to again mitigate and adapt to climate change. These tools are applied to the forestry sector, for example, where they're doing quite a bit of work right now, but also other sectors including water resources. That's a big area of focus for us, and agriculture as well.

And so the minister mentioned the Lake Diefenbaker irrigation expansion project. That's one where we're actively involved in terms of doing a regional assessment of cumulative effects, and so working with a team there and a number of other ministries and agencies. So at the end of the day that's what the group does. It provides the cumulative impact analysis that allows us to better understand those impacts, and then other ministries and agencies determine basically what they value in terms of ecological standards and economic development and that sort of thing. So we provide the tools and the analysis, and it helps them make decisions that are in the best interests of the environment and the ecosystem.

Ms. Ritchie: — And so whose responsibility is it to set targets and objectives for wetland retention and conservation?

Mr. Kotyk: — Hi. Thank you for the question. Wes Kotyk. Although we don't have the responsibility for setting standards on wetland recovery or targets, what we do when there are developments that if there's potential for impacts to wetlands, we would look to ensure that there is some mitigations to offset that. So there may need to be some wetland development to offset any potential impacts, or some protection of wetlands that are there just to ensure that there is no net loss of wetlands when developments are occurring.

Ms. Ritchie: — And when you say developments, does that include agricultural activities or what?

Mr. Kotyk: — Currently I'm speaking to developments that would apply to our legislation under *The Environmental Assessment Act*. So agricultural operations themselves, just the most agricultural activities, would not be covered or captured. But if there is an industrial development that maybe has some agricultural component to it, like our canola crushing facilities, you know, any of those larger developments, that is something that we would look at in their project proposal to ensure that they aren't significant impacts to wetlands.

Ms. Ritchie: — And so my question relates specifically to agricultural drainage. That's what I'm asking about in terms of

retention and conservation.

Mr. Kotyk: — No. WSA would have the responsibility for agricultural drainage requirements.

Ms. Ritchie: — And yet when I asked him, he said that I needed to ask you.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So Environment is responsible for the reporting, or for the accumulation of information so ultimately we can put together our final report. WSA is responsible for providing the information that we require to fill that specific component of the report. So I think probably what I would recommend is that you be very specific in ultimately what the question is, and we could provide a response that way or certainly get Minister Bradshaw to provide the response for you.

Ms. Ritchie: — Going back to the question of industrial developments, when wetlands are I guess lost as a result of that, can you please tell me what policies are in place to mitigate for habitat loss?

Mr. Kotyk: — Okay. Thank you for the question. So we don't have a set policy that says a one-for-one trade-off or anything like that. But typically when we speak to the proponents for projects, we will identify that that is something that's important for them to include in their proposal. How are they going to either protect wetlands, conserve wetlands, or how will they look at offsetting?

And then, like with the environmental assessment and the review process, it then has the opportunity to go through technical review and then through public review. With what we're finding with most proponents, if there are wetlands being impacted, they are typically looking at greater than, greater offsets than what they're impacting, and largely for their social licence. Most companies are seeing that that is a benefit, and that's what we're seeing in proposals that are coming through.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you for that response. This week, you know, there's been some debate around the use of the per capita emission metric for its application to describing or assessing Saskatchewan's greenhouse gas emissions profile. I'm wondering if you could tell me, Minister, what you believe would be a more suitable metric.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Certainly. I think it's very simple. Really the more appropriate measure is emissions intensity, and really that shows where, you know, like we indicated before that our economic growth really far outpaces our emissions growth.

You know, when we look at production per unit, emissions production per unit, like I've indicated before, you're going to find a number of companies are working on reducing their emissions profile while increasing their output. I mean, it's just simple efficiency factors that so many of our companies are working towards. I mean, many of our major companies have net zero plans. They certainly have emissions reduction plans. They're very responsive to their ESG [environmental, social, and governance] requirements. So they're certainly very responsive to reducing emissions while maximizing output.

[19:45]

Ms. Ritchie: — According to your website, there is an interprovincial comparison of greenhouse gas emissions intensity for 2005 to 2018 where it shows that the emissions intensity of, you know, tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per million dollars for 2018 was 876. And that was far and away the highest intensity level of any of the provinces with perhaps, you know, a notable mention to Alberta, who is a close second behind.

So I'm wondering if you can explain to me how this, you know, puts Saskatchewan in any better of a light when you do a province-by-province comparison, and yet still we're, you know, head and shoulders beyond any other jurisdiction.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Certainly one of the concerns that we've got is we are very much based on an export economy. So we are naturally producing food, fuel, fertilizer for the rest of the world. I think we have shown a significant reduction in emissions intensity literally year over year, and I think that metric is one that will continue to show that we are on the right path to reducing emissions.

I think I'd just like to also mention that when we compare 2018 and then 2019 emissions, the change in emissions there, we had the largest absolute emission reduction in the nation when you look at an absolute emissions reduction. And it ultimately ended up with a 1.8 per cent change in emissions. That's just in a singular emissions reduction year over year, 2018 compared to 2019.

So I think that shows . . . I know that shows that we are on the right track and that our industry is continuing to take emissions seriously and that they're working towards reducing that over time. But again, we have a very small population. We have a very large production base. You know, whatever the metric that we're going to use, we don't want to see our industry penalized for where they're located and what they're producing and where they're sending it to.

Ms. Ritchie: — Well I think that I'm looking for some more sort of concrete evidence that we're on the right track, and the lack of objective information in the terms of forecasting and other information is not really giving me much confidence in that response. Certainly I mean I thought perhaps you were going to talk about the methane action plan and the . . . Yeah, you could have got some points there. Certainly that was a long time coming, a very welcome initiative.

And yet I guess it seems to be a lot of lowballing with these initiatives, and I'd like to know if there are plans to further implement capture of associated gas from the oil and gas sector. We know that there are many opportunities to do that from ancillary facilities and so forth. What will be your role in driving reductions in that sector?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you for reminding to continue to talk about the methane action plan. I think that's certainly a significant success and supported well by the industry.

But I think we've got a number of other initiatives that certainly are going to be resulting in some pretty significant emissions reductions. We certainly have our new OBPS system that is going to support best performance in all sectors. And included in that, there's going to be the CCUS [carbon capture, utilization,

and storage] credit. But I think even the CCUS tax credit in itself will help support emissions reduction, and certainly by the interest that we've seen in that tax credit should result in some pretty significant mainstream or large-stream emissions reductions.

The other thing to certainly get on record is our tech fund. And you're going to find that the tech fund is going to be coming on stream here soon. And ultimately what that is going to do is, again, support innovation within each of our sectors. It's going to have access to the monies that are contributed to the tech fund to support other emissions reduction innovations as they come forward.

Ms. Ritchie: — And how much are you forecasting that tech fund to generate?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — That's one of those things that again we need to get final confirmation with the federal government on, you know, on support of their new performance standards that we need to work towards. The tech fund is going to be contributed. Again, not sure of how many companies are going to be contributing to the tech fund, versus how many others may be utilizing the performance credit component of the OBPS system. So it could be a very wide range that unfortunately I can't give you a number or even an estimate right now because there's just too many things that we don't have a complete answer to yet.

Ms. Ritchie: — Well that's not my understanding. However, I'm going to move on.

I had the great pleasure to meet with Peter Durocher of Ile-a-la-Crosse, who is a project manager for the Sakitawak conservation project. It's my understanding that you've also had the opportunity to meet with him. I wanted to ask you what kinds of assurances or responses that that project can expect from your government.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So we're in the process, continuing to engage with that organization. There's a lot of unknowns again that we need to have an understanding of, areas of significant concern that they have. And we need them to certainly identify with and then, you know, to review the options that we can, I guess, continue to both work towards and pursue.

So any time you're working with a protected area, there is certainly a significant amount of discussion and negotiation and just getting, you know, a good, basic understanding of where both parties are at. So I'd say we're in the initial discussions. There's a long process ahead, but continuing to engage with them with our officials.

Ms. Ritchie: — I think we've got time for maybe one or two more questions. We're not quite at 8 o'clock yet. I was also interested in the Island Forests 20-year forest management plan and the modified cut. Pardon me if I'm getting my terminology confused, but there's the alternate scenario. I think that was kind of the new development with respect to this. I'm wondering if you can tell me a little bit about the alternate scenario and how it's going to be able to achieve equivalent outcomes.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So an alternate plan is really just that. It's an alternate so it's not guaranteed to happen. It's subject to

numerous triggers and specific scenarios to come into effect. Ultimately the alternate plan was developed because there were some significant changes in the harvest area there. There was some new developments there, so you then need to ensure that there is an alternate plan that's provided and presented.

[20:00]

Ms. Ritchie: — Are you able to elaborate on what those modifications are?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — So what they're looking at is better utilization of the forest by using pulpwood that would normally be burned or brought back to the cutover.

Ms. Ritchie: — And is this particular area also one that is sort of a mature forested area that is at risk of fire?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Yes, it is.

Ms. Ritchie: — And is there a reforestation plan as part of that?

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — All of our plans involve reforestation in one form or another, whether it's replant or just allowing to regenerate naturally.

The Chair: — Having reached our agreed-upon time for consideration of these estimates, I'll ask the minister if he has any closing remarks at this point in time.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Well thank you, Madam Chair, and for the attention of our committee members, certainly to Hansard. I certainly appreciate the questions that were asked here. I appreciate everyone's attention, certainly to my officials for participating here tonight, as I continue to call them the A-team. I think that was evident here in tonight's session. So again, thank everyone for their attendance and attention.

The Chair: — Ms. Ritchie, if you would like to include any thank yous.

Ms. Ritchie: — Yes. I would just like to join in and thank the minister and his officials for their presence here this evening and their efforts in providing me with responses. I appreciate your time this evening. And thank you also to legislative services, Clerk's staff, for this evening.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister. You and your officials don't have to stay. We're going to move now to vote off the estimates for this part of the Economy. So as they are leaving, we are going to move to the voting off of vote 26 for Environment.

Under central management and services, subvote (EN01) in the amount of 14,583,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Climate change and adaptation, subvote (EN06) in the amount of 5,827,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Fish, wildlife and lands, subvote (EN07)

in the amount of 15,985,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Forest service, subvote (EN09) in the amount of 8,563,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Environmental protection, subvote (EN11) in the amount of 84,112,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Non-appropriated expense adjustment in the amount of 1,745,000. Non-appropriated expense adjustments are non-cash adjustments presented for informational purposes only. No amount is to be voted.

Environment, vote 26 — 129,070,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2023, the following sums for Environment in the amount of 129,070,000.

Mr. Hargrave: — I so move.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. We will now take just a five-minute recess until the next . . . We'll just take a five-minute break until the next officials are able to set themselves up in the room. Thank you.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**General Revenue Fund
Highways
Vote 16**

Subvote (HI01)

The Chair: — All right. Well welcome back, committee members. We will now consider the estimates for the Ministry of Highways, and we will begin with vote 16, Highways, central management and services, subvote (HI01).

Minister Bradshaw is here with his officials, and I'd ask officials the first time you speak at the mike to state your name. And you don't have to touch the mike — Hansard will turn them on — but just wait until the light comes on before you do speak. And I would ask officials, if you're sitting in the back and you're requested to answer a question, that you come to the front table, please.

Minister Bradshaw, if you'd like to begin with the introduction of your officials and any opening remarks you may have. Oh, sorry. Before you begin, we have Mr. Wotherspoon sitting in this evening for Aleana Young. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Madam Chair. And I'd like to take a few minutes to give you an overview of this year's budget from the Ministry of Highways. I want to thank all the people, all the thousands of people who are out there watching tonight because this is very interesting.

I'll start by introducing some of the officials here to assist me. I have Angela Currie, my chief of staff; Blair Wagar, deputy minister; Tom Lees, assistant deputy minister, operation and maintenance division; Wayne Gienow, assistant deputy minister, design and construction division; Ryan Cossitt, assistant deputy minister, planning, policy, and regulation division; Kelly Moskow, executive director, corporate services division; David Munro, director strategic planning and budgeting, corporate services division.

Madam Chair, Saskatchewan is back on track. It's been a difficult few years, but we're emerging stronger than ever. People are excited to travel our great province. Producers are working hard to get their product to market. Whether it's fuel, fertilizer, food, or a family vacation, a safe, reliable transportation network helps us all get to where we need to be.

Our government is investing in our transportation system. This year's highway budget is 846 million. Our capital budget will invest 453 million. We will improve more than 1100 kilometres of roads. Since 2008, this government has invested close to 11.5 billion in Saskatchewan highways. Those dollars have improved more than 18 000 kilometres.

We're moving into the third and final year of the stimulus program. The stimulus program was designed to be temporary. It provided a 300 million economic booster shot. It delivered improvements across the network. We built passing lanes, upgraded thin membrane surface roads, and put additional dollars into municipal programs. The stimulus kept people working. It did what it was designed to do.

This year's investments are driven from the growth plan. We pledged to improve 10 000 kilometres of highways in 10 years. We're improving 1100 kilometres in this budget. We're now three years into this commitment, and we will hit the 3500 kilometre mark this year. That's ahead of the pace we need to meet our target.

[20:15]

Our strategic investments improve safety and strengthen our economy. That will keep us on track to maintain strong communities and strong families. We will invest 88 million in major projects. We will twin Highway 3 to roughly 8 kilometres west of Prince Albert. We'll build 14 sets of passing lanes on Highways 5, 7, 12, and 16. We'll continue to make improvements to the Highway 5 corridor between Saskatoon and Humboldt. And we will plan for twinning projects between Regina and Weyburn on the Highway 6 and 39 corridor that connects to major Canada-US [United States] border crossing.

We said we would spend 100 million over five years to improve safety on our highways with a particular focus on intersections. This year we will invest 12.4 million through our enhanced intersection safety program and 6.8 million through our safety improvement program. It all adds up to 19.2 million of safety

improvements that include turning lanes, street lights, warning lights, rumble strips, crosswalks, and sight-line improvements.

We have maintained a 1.6 million increase in our pavement marking program. Pavement marking includes centre lines, edge lines, lane lines, intersection layouts, and pavement signs. Pavement marking is a cost-effective investment in safety. Good pavement markings help decrease collisions. Pavement markings assist drivers when it's dark and in poorer weather conditions.

We will also repair, replace, and install new signs to keep our inventory of 120,000 highway signs in good condition.

Several key corridors will see repaving work in this year's budget. It adds up to 170 kilometres of repaving on Highway 1, west of Moose Jaw; Highway 4, north of North Battleford; Highway 5, west of Humboldt; Highway 6, south of Naicam; Highway 11, north of Kenaston; Highway 21, south of Kindersley; Highway 23, Porcupine Plain; Highway 37, Shaunavon north and Gull Lake; Highway 210, Fort Qu'Appelle.

In addition to rebuilding roads, we will also maintain and preserve what we have. To maximize the life of our assets, we will be working on nearly 900 kilometres of roads. We will dedicate 137 million for 200 kilometres of thin membrane surface highways and other rural highway upgrades. That includes 160 kilometres of upgrades delivered through the stimulus package. We will seal and resurface our pavements to extend their life.

Our bridge program will invest more than 55 million this year to replace or rebuild 15 bridges. Some of the more high profile projects include bridges on Highway 1 near Swift Current and Highway 11 near Lumsden and near Regina. And we'll replace more than 100 culverts.

Last year we added 455,000 to our mowing program. We are maintaining that increase this year. This improves safety by ensuring clear sightlines on secondary roads. It also helps control weeds. We will mow approximately 42 000 hectares. That's about 25 per cent more than we did in 2020.

Last year due to drought conditions, we did our best to slow down mowing especially in the Southwest to allow producers the opportunity to cut hay. It's dry in the Southwest so we will continue to try and help with hay salvage wherever possible. We will work with our agriculture producers to ensure they have access to hay in areas where they need it. At the same time, we'll provide enhanced mowing particularly in the northern areas where weed growth can make it difficult to spot wildlife.

We'll continue to support our municipal partners. This year we'll provide 6.6 million for the urban highway connector program that supports cities. The rural integrated roads for growth program grant is 22.5 million this year. That number includes a 7.5 billion boost from the stimulus program. We are rehabilitating approximately 100 RM [rural municipality] roads over three years and approximately 100 RM bridges over four years.

We will continue to support the aviation sector. We'll invest 850,000 in the community airport partnership with matching dollars — that means 1.7 million — to improve local airports.

Once again \$530,000 will be invested in improvements to shortline railways. With matching dollars it works to more than a million invested in shortlines.

We'll continue to demonstrate our commitment to northern Saskatchewan. We're also investing 62.7 million to build, operate, and maintain the transportation system in the North. We will continue making improvements to Highway 155. The Wollaston Lake road is nearing completion, meaning we won't have to build an ice road next year. The Premier recently promised to build the Saskatchewan portion of the Garson Lake road. And we'll continue to operate 16 airports that service our northern communities.

Those are some of the highlights of this year's budget. I look forward to our discussion over the next couple of hours. And I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all of our Highway Hotline staff, customer service staff, as well as our snowplow operators who have had a very busy winter season and will be busy over the next few days with a major storm approaching. With that, I'll be happy to take any questions.

I guess I would like to mention one more thing because I think it's rather important, to me anyway. I come from Carrot River. And I want to give a shout-out to the Nipawin crew. Those plows have just been going steady up there and I've seen them go past our farm at 5 o'clock in the morning. They just are doing a fantastic job. So I want to just give a shout-out to them. So I'll be happy to take any questions.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister. I'll now open the floor to questions from committee members and recognize Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and to all the officials that have joined us here tonight and to all those that are involved in this important work all across the province. And certainly thinking of all those that are keeping those roads safe as we deal with another spring storm. Hopefully it's not as bad as it's forecasted right now.

I'd like to get a little bit more of a breakout on the three-year stimulus dollars, the 300 million. What's contained in this budget as a part of that program?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yes. Like we've already spent some of that money, but this year's stimulus investment of 119.1 million includes 7.5 million for rural integrated roads for growth program and 111.6 million in capital for passing lanes and TMS [thin membrane surface] upgrades.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks. Of those dollars, those stimulus dollars, are any of those attached to federal transfers?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — No, there's no federal funding attached to those projects. I will say like the Wollaston Lake end before, that was mainly done through Indigenous Services Canada. We put \$250,000 into it on the bridge. Like we're done phase 1 and 2, but what we've done is we're applying to the federal government to be able to put money in for phases 3 and 4 so we can finish that to end up being an all-weather road.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. So just on that project — and

thanks for that information — on that project, what's the breakout of costs and what are the costs required to complete that project?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yes. So the money that's been spent thus far on phase 1 is 6.75 million, and phase 2 is 9.75 million. And phase 3, yeah, phase 3 is probably close to 30, and phase 4 would be about 22 million to actually make. That would give it a complete run on that. But as for right now, this coming winter, like I said before, we will be able to run our trucks up there. So that's going to save on the ice road and, you know, you can take the heavier loads going on. You know, it'll be kind of a . . . This is only going to be just through the winter months obviously, but it's definitely going to help out because we'll be able to haul heavier loads on there. And you know, if we don't have to worry about the ice conditions, who knows what's going to happen. You never know from year to year on the ice conditions.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No, it's a real important project I know to the First Nation and to the community there. So it's an important project to come to fruition. It's one we've pushed for, for many years, of course. We're glad to see it progressing. So right now, the first phase, the first two phases are complete which is about \$17 million of spending. The other two phases, what's the status of those two phases? And that's the \$55 million, is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yeah. Truthfully I've met with the Hatchet Lake First Nation and the Prince Albert Grand Council. We've talked about the next phase of that project and we sent a letter to the federal government urging them to commit further funding to the project. So I guess we'll see how that turns out. We don't know yet, but we're certainly, you know, we'll help where we can there.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So the project, the first two phases are complete. The other two are what we await then and they don't have funding in this budget, provincially. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — No. We are looking for Indigenous Canada to bring that on. So this is something that we're hoping that they will put money towards. We don't know for sure yet, but we have sent a letter asking for that and so has Hatchet Lake First Nation and Prince Albert Grand Council.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Of the 55 million that is outstanding for those final two phases, are you committed to a cost-share in your appeal to the federal government on that, or are you asking for the entire 55 million?

[20:30]

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Okay, I can correct that just a little bit. The phase 2 is just not quite. . . We're about a month away from that being completed. As for phase 3 and 4, we don't have anything committed in this budget for it. But you know, we'll see what the federal government comes up with and we'll look at it at that time.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So the completion of phase 2 will, as you're saying, not require the ice road next year. It'll allow the all-weather connectivity.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yeah, that is correct. So like I said, it'll be, you've probably been on some of the forestry roads, you know, that's what it'll be like. It'll be like one of the forestry roads, you know, our winter forestry roads. So they will be able to haul their heavy loads up there. So they won't have to use the ice road this winter.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I know they'll be looking forward. They'll be very appreciative, you know. I know the chief has been very vocal about the importance of this to the community, the municipality as well. Certainly they'll appreciate the connectivity, but they'll want to see that project through to completion. So your continued attention on the matter and commitment in subsequent budget years will be important.

Moving along just a little bit, there's a new budget line, and maybe it's come from somewhere else. Just looking for an explanation. That's the — what is it? — \$88 million for the remediation of contaminated sites.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yes, it's kind of an accounting kind of thing. What it is, is it's mainly . . . it's land that where there was salt stored and maybe a little bit of diesel fuel spilled. And the accountants wanted to have a number in there for that particular, for that land because if you were ever to sell that land, then it would have to be cleaned up. And I'll let Blair explain it better than what I probably can.

Mr. Wagar: — Thanks, Minister. Blair Wagar, deputy minister of Highways. And the minister did a pretty good job. So yeah, it's the application of an existing accounting rule under the Public Sector Accounting Board, I think is the standard that we use. And because of that application . . . Again, it's not a new standard; it's just the application of that standard. And as a result of our operations, when you think across the province, we have multiple sites where we store salt to apply to the road. So any contamination associated with salt storage is with that liability as set up on our books. It's a non-cash, but it's just set up as a liability.

That's the biggest portion of that \$88 million. And then the other part is for . . . Of course we have lots of trucks. Those trucks require fuel. We store fuel on sites. So fuelling, if there's any kind of spillage, you know, that creates a liability for us as well.

And then the last piece that it considers is we have a number of different pits across the province that we use for aggregate. And in some cases we have situations where there's been dumping of garbage or anything like that that ends up in those pits. And if we were to, you know, clean all those up, these are all land-based liabilities that are put on our books. And if we were to sell any of these parcels of land, we would have to first clean that land up before it could be sold. And this just represents an estimated cost of all of that cleanup that we would need to do if in the future we ever decided to sell any of those lands.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. So this represents the total liability then for all the contamination of all of the Highways properties. Is that correct?

Mr. Wagar: — So yes, that's correct. And just to take it a bit further for you, so the salt cleanup is estimated to be about \$64 million — very specific. It's an estimate, though, in terms of

what we know today. This will be reviewed as we go along. If we'd ever actually clean one up and if it's higher or lower, this might get adjusted. There's about 151 sites across the province for salt.

Hydrocarbons, estimated to be in around that \$14 million and about 82 sites that were identified as some risk of some hydrocarbon contamination. And then unlicensed landfills, or public dumping in our pits is the more technical term that I didn't use before, and that one's probably in around that 4 million. Again these are best estimates. And we have about 140 sites that were assessed there.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So this is, you're saying, a requirement with PSAB [Public Sector Accounting Board] to account for in this way the total liability on these lands. In the event that you were to sell them, this would be the cost of cleaning them up. So if you don't . . . So it's a non-cash item you identified if there's no sale of lands.

Is there any actual decontamination of those lands occurring? Is there a program on this front, or is this simply an accounting function?

Mr. Wagar: — So yeah, at this point there's no plans. And you're right in terms of this setting up as a liability non-cash looking at, you know, an estimated cost if we were to clean up everything all at once. But at this point, yeah, there's no plans that we have right now to do remediation at this point.

There's, you know, there's environmental assessments that we do on some of our sites. For the most part looking at our sites, you know, we don't obviously want to waste any salt. And we want to manage carefully within our site and protect our surrounding area, so we keep that all contained. So there's those kinds of reviews that we take, and we'll take action to make sure nothing kind of goes off of our site.

But for the most part when we're looking at doing these reviews, it's to make sure that if we're improving an existing location, building a new salt storage facility, that we learn from where we are and what changes we make when we're building new stuff. So we do those kinds of things in terms of assessments and reviews.

But right now we have no plans to actually go out and remediate any of the existing sites that we're continuing to operate on.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Now if you don't sell any of the lands, if you don't need to remediate any of the lands as you've budgeted for here, what happens to that budget allocation? I guess I'm not quite understanding how it's a non-cash item when it's in the budget estimates as a line item here. And it's not there as a liability, you know, in some of the other statements.

Mr. Wagar: — So yeah, it's put on the books appropriated as a liability but not cash against it. If we were to again clean any of that up, then we would allocate and actually have to have cash to clean it up, and it would come off that liability. So that liability will be there every year from this point going on. It will be adjusted if we figure out and learn more that that number may need to go up if our liability we've underestimated, or it could go down if we've overestimated. So this is the first year that that's

been put on.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay, thank you for that information. Looking at one of the other budget lines there, infrastructure and equipment capital. Looking at infrastructure enhancement itself, and it's down from . . . Last year was \$361 million. This year it's 278 million, so down about \$80 million, a little over \$80 million. What's, you know, what's impacted by that reduction or that cut?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yes, that was, that was stimulus money that was used. And you know, of course the stimulus is going down now so that, you know, that is where that amount is changing. The contractors knew that this stimulus was, you know, was going to be, it was \$300 million which was a very good shot in the arm for our contractors, but they also knew that that was going to be, you know, that was going to be coming down. So that's how come that number is down.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks for that. What was that number then prior to the stimulus? What was in the budget prior to this three-year program?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yes, the overall capital's been pretty consistent. It's the stimulus that is coming down. Does that explain it to you?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Not exactly. So the budget line is 278 million right now. Prior to the three-year stimulus program, what was that budget line?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yeah, we don't have that number sitting here. That would be in previous estimate books.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you. Moving along a bit, I'm hearing from contractors. I'm sure you're hearing from our road builders just with the incredible stress that they're under right now, huge inflationary pressures that they're facing from a cost perspective, you know, impacts as well with significantly reduced tenders that are coming out. So a challenged fiscal environment for them. You know, I'm hearing from them that they're facing significant challenges around retaining labour, financing equipment. You know, the costs of getting bonding and even bidding are a serious challenge right now, just sort of keeping those operations viable. And it, you know, has been made such a challenge by the extraordinary inflation in fuel.

So I'm interested in, I know the contractors, the road builders have been advocating for some fuel relief or for some, an adjustment to the compensation, some of the factors that are built into the funding here because they just haven't kept pace at all. I know other provinces are making those adjustments.

[20:45]

I guess my question to you, Mr. Minister, is what we're planning to do on this front. Because what I'm hearing right now is that the current situation isn't tenable for the road builders.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Okay. Yes, I was . . . Actually I was very happy. I met with their board on Friday and, you know, to listen to their concerns, you know. And their concerns are founded. And there is one thing that we do have in some of the contracts. We do actually have a fuel escalation clause that, you

know, if it goes over 7 per cent more of when they tendered the project that we would be helping them out on that end.

Another thing that we are doing is on the progress payments. We're going to try and make those progress payments a little quicker than what we normally have done in the past. But you know, I will . . . You know, I certainly, I certainly understand their concerns. Of course these are the concerns of people, various different businesses, not just the contractors. And I give them great credit. Like I mean these contractors do a fantastic job here in Saskatchewan and . . . But it's also, it's not just them. It's inflationary pressures on whether you're going to build a new house or . . . And I can use one of my old sayings. I said everything's gotten so high that even the price of down is up. Yeah, it's hard, and so I guess we'll see how things shake out here in the end. But you know, I certainly give them credit. And of course they're the same as anybody else, you know, they're also looking at manpower and everything else.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I understand that fuel is such a significant cost for these operations, such a costly component of a project that it's really putting many in a real challenge situation here. Other provinces are acting on this front. The fuel escalation clause that the minister identified has been in place for a long time, and it only applies to some aspects of the work. I understand that the buffer as well is, you know, deemed to be too high as far as for it to be triggered.

I'm hearing from folks that it would be helpful to have all dirt components added to the fuel escalation clause. I guess first off, is the minister recognizing the challenge that the road builders are facing? Are you open to providing some relief or some adjustments as other provinces are? And if so, I think there's a few things that can be done, that I'm hearing directly from the road builders. One of those is to add all dirt components to the fuel escalation clause that the minister just identified.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Well we certainly, you know, will listen to their concerns, and you know, really we have had a \$300 million stimulus put in there. But you know, and who knows what's going to happen here? Maybe the price of fuel will go down too. We don't know for sure, so I think it's a kind of a wait and see what exactly will happen.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The fuel escalation clause, of course, if you had that in place, it wouldn't be triggered if the fuel cost went down as discussed. But right now, folks are facing those costs and, as described to me, it seems to put these operations, these Saskatchewan companies in a very precarious situation.

I appreciate hearing that the minister's open to some adjustment on this front. I think that this is critical. We're facing extraordinary times, and if we want to build the highway and reseal and pave and do the work that we're doing, we're going to have to make sure that there's some adjustments to support those that are going to do the work.

A second piece that they've identified is that the consumption rate that the province provides is significantly lower than the actual realized consumption rate, particularly for earthmoving items, I understand. And I have examples of how low the rate is compared to the actual consumption on this front. I think it's 90 cents a litre for metres cubed, is what the rate is. Costs are often

twice that, I understand, by way of consumption on earthmoving.

So a piece that they've identified with me, and I believe with you, that they feel would be helpful is an adjustment on that consumption rate to more reasonably reflect the reality that they're facing.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — We'll let Wayne Gienow explain on this.

Mr. Gienow: — Hi. Wayne Gienow, ADM of design and construction. So as you mentioned, we do have the fuel escalation clause. We actually put it forward and it's been in our contracts since 2005. So it has been quite a while. The consumption rates are fairly old. So at that time we worked with industry to come up with what they are.

The difficulty of course is some of the equipment has changed since then, right. It's become a bit more, probably a bit more fuel efficient. But the other piece that we've heard from some of our contractors is the work that we're doing has changed a bit. So if you're out there doing things like passing lanes and stuff, it's a lot different where, you know, you're moving earth and actually building those than if you're doing one continuous section of roadway, right. So we've heard that from our contractors.

We have to be a little bit cautious with that, looking forward though of course because, you know, we're doing a whole bunch of passing lanes over the next couple of years, but our work mix continues to change depending upon the needs that we have. So when you're actually looking at the fuel adjustment rate it is, you know, 7 per cent, based on where they tender. The date that the tenders come in, we look up what the fuel rate is there, and then we monitor that throughout the actual season and see if they're above or below. So if fuel prices do drop, contractors may have to actually pay back a portion as well. So it goes both ways.

And you're right that it doesn't apply to all contracts or all contract items. So we have major contract items that it applies to, things like surfacing and paving, aggregate crushing and the hauling component if it's coming from a ministry aggregate source. But there are a number of components where it isn't actually included. So the difficulty of course is a lot of these contracts, we entered into them in the fall with contractors, right, so . . . But we're working through that process now.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks for that. Thanks for your knowledge of the file and your responses. I guess I would just urge the minister, folks are expressing that they're facing significant hardship. We are in a situation where we're in an extraordinary time with inflationary pressures.

The province itself, you know, receives significantly more revenues in this current economic environment by way of oil and gas and other resources. We need to make sure we're building out the highway system that folks can count on and depend on, so there seems to need to be an adjustment, you know, in face of these extraordinary times.

And I've heard the same piece that the types of projects that folks are working on right now, the types of stuff that's being tendered, the passing lanes and whatnot, really up that consumption. So it seems as well, if that's the type of projects that are on the books

and that are being let, then maybe there's a special factor for those types of projects as opposed to, you know, continuous twinning or some other project that . . . where I understand consumption is less.

So I would leave it with the minister, and I would urge him to work with the businesses across the province, the road builders, and to make sure that they're in a position to carry out the work that we need them to do, and make some adjustments here to provide some relief for folks.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yeah, to that, at the meeting the other day, we have made a commitment to meet with them more times throughout the year to listen to their concerns, so . . . And they were quite happy, they were quite happy with that. And it's something that we are committed to doing, is to meet with them and listen to their concerns so we can move forward. And you know, we want to keep these people working in the province also. You know, there are people that provide great economy to the province of Saskatchewan and, you know, and also to our transportation system, which we so desperately need.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I appreciate the minister identifying that he's heard these concerns. I would urge, you know, acting on it in a fairly responsive way right now. This is . . . They're getting out to be doing that important work, and we need to make sure they're in a position to do so.

Just looking back to the highways. The year that closed on Highways, it's my understanding that there was \$30 million that wasn't deployed of the budget last year. Is that correct, and what's that impact on this year?

[21:00]

Mr. Gienow: — Wayne Gienow. I'm not sure if I have to say my name again. Thanks.

So yes, it will probably be around \$30 million that will be underspent in the last fiscal year. We're still going through year-ends. We don't have that number exactly, but that is pretty close to what our estimate will be. And with that we know each year that, you know, some projects don't actually get done. Not everything we plan can get done.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No. Thanks for that information. I know it's a concern to folks that are wanting to see the budget deployed and see projects move forward. It's important to the road builders who are, you know, planning their operations around those tenders. And of course then those projects have been deferred so they take up, you know . . . It's a loss going into the year ahead where you're hoping to advance new projects, where instead you're dealing with, you know, deferrals from the year before.

And on that front I hear significant concerns with the fall and spring tender schedules. Specifically, you know, to speak to the fall tender schedule, there's a significant deferral of the budget. I see that originally that it was 470 000 tonnes of asphalt concrete that was planned and that there was a deferral of 132 000 of that. So almost a third of those projects, three major projects or bigger projects, I understand, that were deferred.

So I guess I'd just speak to the minister. That's a big hit. I mean

those are important projects to communities that they're counting on. And they're important of course to the road builders and their operations as they plan their labour and finance their equipment and work to be ready to complete those projects.

Mr. Wagar: — So just maybe . . . Unless I wasn't following the question just exactly the way and the comment you were making, maybe just a clarification that this is work that we've put on the marketplace. So it's in the hands of the contractors right now.

And many of these projects are quite large projects that are coming largely from the stimulus program but also our normal base capital projects that we do every year. And so it's work that's been put onto the market.

And a lot of them are multi-year projects, so contractors decide more or less, you know, the pace that they go and what projects they look at. And often that's to make sure that they have the room to optimize their equipment and their labour and get as much work as they possibly can get done.

So when we started the year this year, we were — with them — were pretty, I guess, aggressive or optimistic about what work they would get done when we looked at where we are, kind of, most of the way through the year in the forecast.

And they were anticipating to get a lot more work done than they thought. They had a slow start. I'm not sure exactly all the different reasons. They talked about, you know, some challenges they had at the beginning of the year.

So at the end, that \$30 million work wasn't work that we didn't get on the market, it was work that we put on the market that we weren't able to get done with the contractors. So those projects had to carry into this fiscal year, and so we used the funding from this fiscal year to top those up to make sure that those projects still got done, the ones that we committed to.

But in our fall tender plan for work that we needed to do this year, we needed to find some savings. Otherwise we would have been over budget with those projects. So that was the reason we had to take a few of those projects that you referred to and defer them till next year, to make sure that we got our commitments met on the projects that we started last year that didn't get done.

Mr. Gienow: — The other thing I do want to add to that is you mentioned the fall tender plan. The fall tender plan is just new projects that we're putting on the market. So as Blair said, there were a lot of other projects, multi-year projects, that were already in contract — most of our stimulus projects as well as some of our regular programs. So you know, the fall tender plan is not just the amount of work we're planning to get done in this construction season, right. So our intention is we're planning to get \$453 million worth of capital work done this year.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I appreciate that explanation. I know it's been noted as a concern by the road builders to see what's a very significantly reduced fall tender program, as well as the spring tender program. And if you look at the previous tender schedules, you know, 2021, 2020, 2019, pretty much on all areas — excavation, granular, asphalt, concrete — the number is a fraction of what it's been in previous years for the fall 2021 and the spring 2022 programs.

So is the reason that that's a fraction, in many cases a third, of sort of what a low had been in some cases — if you look at granular for example — is that because there's so many projects that had been let, or committed to contracts that had been let previously, that are unfulfilled? But of course you need to have the budgetary capacity to pay those. Or is that projects from previous years that are going to be executed this year? Or why the massive reduction on these fronts?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Well you have to realize that back in before . . . This was stimulus money that was going in and, like I said, when I had those discussions with the road builders here the other day, you know, that was put forward that that was stimulus money. So what we got is we have all those projects out there that are ongoing. But you know, we will be coming back more to our base amount once that stimulus money, that \$300 million is used up. And I'll get Wayne to explain it a little better as we go through here.

Mr. Gienow: — Thanks, Minister. Yeah, so just to build on that. It's different when you talk about quantities versus actual value of projects because when we look at our tender plan, 2020 was by far the largest tender plan we've had, right. So both the spring and fall of that. It was extremely large. Now when you look at actual quantities, it's difficult to compare year to year because we do different types of work.

So if you're looking back, you know, 5, 10 years, we did a lot of repaving, for example, on our major highways, so you know, 1, 11, 16. We did repaving, huge actual quantities, that sort of thing. But when you look at our roads now, they're in, you know, better condition, so we don't have to do as much repaving on those types of highways. You know, we do more maintenance or preservation work like sealing and that type of stuff to keep the water out.

But we've moved more to our lower volume roadways which take more to upgrade. So if we're repaving on one of our lower volume roads, we may have to do shoulders or something else which, you know, it costs more for that roadway and you don't get quite the quantities. But we're still doing that type of work.

So you know, our actual work makes us change quite a bit. You know, we focused a lot more on, for example, northern airports over the last couple of years than we had 5, 10 years ago type thing. So we're changing sort of where our focus is. And as the transportation system changes, and you know, as we look forward we'll have to continue to make those adjustments. So we want to make sure we are continuing to work with the road-building industry on that.

Because overall, our capital budget, as in our base — you know, if you take out the stimulus, which was a huge jump; but if you take that out and you take out the Regina bypass — our base has been very consistent over the last few years.

So the actual amount of money we're putting out there for the road-building industry has been very consistent. It's really about the mix of work and really trying to work with our contractors and our consultants to make sure that we can get the best forecast so that we aren't leaving money on the table, essentially, for work that isn't being completed.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks for that information. I don't know if you'd have it readily available here tonight, Mr. Minister, or your officials, but I'm wondering if you could provide then to give a bit of that context . . . Of course we have the volumes associated with the fall and spring tender schedules that are available, and so you see the dramatic reduction in this year's fall and spring tender schedules associated with, not just the years where the stimulus occurred but with the years prior to that as well.

So I guess just to the point about, you know, that there's now possibly higher-cost projects that are being taken on and so that's not reflected in the volume. Could we have an update to, or be provided the information back to this committee in a reasonable period of time, the actual values associated with each of those years, and breaking it out for excavation, granular, asphalt, and concrete, and the seal coat.

[21:15]

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — We can supply some of the tender plans, but it's going to take us a while on the volume part. But you know, you have to realize, like I mean \$11.5 billion since 2008 when — I just thought I'd get this on the record, you know — when the '07-08 budget was 448 million and this year it's 846. You know, that is a dramatic increase of money that we have put into highways over the years. So it's not as if we're not putting the money into highways. We definitely are.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Yeah, no. We have the fall and spring tender schedules. We have the volumes. Is the minister able to undertake to the committee that in a reasonable period of time in the coming weeks, that he will be able to supply the value for each of those fiscal years associated with those volumes?

Mr. Gienow: — So I can go through the actual values on the tender plan right now, if that works. Okay. So I'll start with the most recent one. So in the spring of '22, the spring tender plan was 39.3 million. The fall of '21, the tender plan was 157.3 million. The spring of '21, the tender plan was 85.4 million. The fall of 2020, the tender plan was 437.4 million. The spring of 2020, the tender plan was 55.9 million. The fall of 2019, the tender plan was 250.9 million. The spring of 2019, the tender plan was 53.6 million. The fall of 2018, the tender plan was 221.3 million. And the last one I have, the spring of 2018, the tender plan was 64.8 million.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And what was the fall in that one, the fall of 2017?

Mr. Gienow: — I don't have the fall of 2017. I just have the fall of 2018.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. Thank you very much for that information. The numbers are, you know, reductions from where we've been over the previous numbers of years. And I know I'm hearing concerns from those that are out involved in this work with respect to the lower volume being tendered, and then the deferrals. And I appreciate you providing a bit of added context here today. And just to make sure I fully understand as well here, this year the reason that this would be significantly less than say the last two fiscal years is because there was so much work that was tendered but not completed, not executed. Is that correct?

Mr. Gienow: — Okay. So I'm going to go into a little bit of detail now just to go through sort of how we look at our overall capital plan. And as we started off the discussion, we talked about, you know, how we're going to be about \$30 million under this year, right. So one of the things we do to manage that is we actively overcommit.

So in the past, we've overcommitted somewhere, you know, between 50 or \$60 million all the way up to 70 or 80 million because we know that some things won't get done, right. The design won't get done. We'll get out there; we'll start working; there'll be an environmental problem. There'll be something else that pops up, and some projects won't get done.

So we actively plan to try and do more work and get more on the market, and then what we do throughout the year is we carefully monitor how things are going by doing . . . We have to do detailed forecasts every month where we talk to our project managers about every single project we have, trying to get a sense of where they are, what's going to be completed, and what that looks like going forward. So we're able to make adjustments sort of throughout the year.

What happened to us back in 2020 was we had the best season I think we've ever had, right. Contractors started early. The weather was great. We really got a lot done. And we realized really early in the year that, you know, our overcommitment, we were too zealous. We probably had too much overcommitment there, and we were going to be above our budget. So we as a ministry looked at that and said, you know, we can't really go above our budget. What do we do? So we had to go back, and we got permission that year to actually go over our budget a bit, but it made us a bit more cautious.

So what we did is we actually reduced how much we overcommit going forward the following two years. So last year we overcommitted somewhere around, I think it was around 35 to 40 million. And we're somewhere around that number again this year. So you know, the fact that we were 30 under, that we're sort of realizing that now, we're looking at that and going, hey, we went from, you know, a high of 80, 90 million we overcommitted down to 30, 40.

And there's quite a gap there, and that's work we would put on the market. Now the expectation is that work wouldn't get done, but the contractors would be trying to get it done.

So it really highlights one of the management tools we have of trying to, you know, change that dial a bit. Where it used to be very, you know, we'd be very I guess risky by having a huge number, and then as things happen we have to drop our risk profile down because we don't want to go over our budget. So we are fairly low, right. Now and then, you know, we'll have to take a look and see where we go going forward.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks for the context and the detail there. And so does that sort of describe then the situation where . . . I think you shared that in the '20, the fall 2020 tender, that was \$430 million. The one following this past one, fall 2021 is, you know, almost a third of that — \$157 million. Does that sort of explain that difference?

Mr. Gienow: — Not really because, like I said, it was really, I

think it was 2020 where we had our tremendous year. But it was in the fall of that year, sort of after we had done that, where we had put out a huge amount of work, right. So part of that includes stimulus, but it also includes some projects even that we were putting out there and saying, we're going to tender those for construction essentially last construction season. And some of those didn't get done.

And it's not because the contractor was late, right. Because I've heard that perception out there: well, you know, that project didn't get done. But with a lot of our projects there's a lot of work to be done on them, so we give contractors often two construction seasons for some of the really big ones. Now our thought often is, hey they'll do a bunch in construction season one and they'll come back and finish it in construction season two. But the contractor has that ability to decide how they, you know, how they do their work and where they focus their attention. So it's part of the fun of managing the capital program.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Right. No, I appreciate some of the context. Thanks for providing the information around values. That's really helpful as well and, you know, I think this is, you know, good reasons as well for, as the minister says, those ongoing meetings with, you know, with industry and all the stakeholders that are involved in the road building to have their input. They need some adjustments, as I've said, around . . . or some relief around the inflationary costs that they're facing. And then of course it's important to them to see the commitments or the tender opportunities to compete on.

I'll shift . . . I always think we need more time for this committee. I'm sure the minister will give us a couple extra hours here tonight. But I should shift my attention a bit to some of the actual projects out there.

Of course I know the minister will hear from lots of folks. I hear from lots of folks from around the province that are concerned about a certain portion of highway or a certain highway. And I know, you know, I hear from lots of municipal leaders as well on this front, and folks across the province.

Just to get to a few of those, could the minister provide an update as to where Highway 8 south of Langenburg is at, some of the improvements that are needed there?

[21:30]

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Okay. Just to answer your question on that particular road, it's not due for this year. We'll be doing routine maintenance, but it is . . . We're looking at it on the five-year plan. And Tom can maybe talk more on the routine maintenance that we do on highways such as this.

Mr. Lees: — Tom Lees, assistant deputy minister with the operation and maintenance division. So as the minister had talked about in terms of there's that, you know, overall rehab and rebuild of a road to bring it near new condition. But in the meantime, our operation and maintenance staff, who are across the province, will deliver annual routine maintenance. Depending on the road type, the time of year really dictates the type of treatment that they'll go and do out there.

You know, when you look at spring and especially our freeze-

thaw cycles, we see a lot of potholes that pop up in the spring. But because of the nature of the road still being wet, lots of times our crews have to go out and do some immediate repairs, or in some cases even just signing so that the motorists are aware of the hazard, until they can go out and material is available and the conditions are adequate to do longer term maintenance treatments on that.

So you know, from an annual perspective, we go out. We assess each one of the roads, what type of maintenance is required for that year to keep it safe and operational for the motorists. And then we'll go out and deliver that throughout the season.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks for that information, certainly for folks in the area. I know they've been corresponding with their MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in the area there as well. They've received some commitments. I'm not sure that this undertaking is consistent with what they've received. But it's an important project to those folks that are connecting.

I want to follow up on a serious safety concern that I've brought to the minister's attention that's been brought to me and to the minister by some community leaders in around Vanscoy, and that's the Highway 7 and Christensen Road intersection. Now this is Highway 7 heading south to Calgary. It was a single lane until 2021 when it was turned into a double lane. Prior to that twinning, there was a left-hand turning lane onto the correction road, which is the 350 correction road. And I understand there's been, you know, it's a very dangerous corner. Prior to having that turning lane, there was a death there as well.

The folks that have represented this issue to me and to the minister are, you know, the fire chief, the police, head of police, the rural municipality, and local residents as well as folks that work at the mine that have a lot of concerns. I understand there's 11 shift changes a day and the mine, if you're heading south on this road, the mine is . . . you turn right. And so what happens is the right-hand turning lane fills up with traffic, 11 different shift changes in a day, 60 to 100 semis a day that are making that turn. And then the issue is that there's no longer that turning lane to get off onto that correction, which is a significant road with a lot of traffic as well. And so you've got folks that are pulling out and using the passing lane where folks are humming along, you know, at much higher speeds, and they're having to slow to make that turn. So they've been pushing for that left-hand turning lane to be built out.

When I hear from, you know, the police and the fire and the community, they're very clear about the very serious risks that are in place right now. I recently attended a meeting with some of the ministry officials along with some of the community members on this front. I appreciated that meeting. But what folks are looking for is a commitment and a plan to ensure safety at that intersection. So I guess I'd look to the minister to hear what commitment and what plans he has to resolve this situation.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you for that. As you well know, you know, the intersection safety aspect has been a priority of this government ever since we've had the tragic Broncos bus crash. And thus far it was determined that the left-turn lane from Highway 7 onto Christensen Road wasn't warranted. But you know, we're pleased to meet with the citizens, and I know you were there too. And we certainly want to listen to their concerns.

And thankfully there haven't been any recorded collisions there since the completion of the twinning in '18.

But you know, after the meeting, the officials went out; they visited the site to make sure that all the flashing lights were working, the intersection signs were up and whatnot. And they were. Now, that being said, we're looking at other improvements that we may be able to consider, in addition to the signage in place, and you know, maybe there could be some conditions or some things that would warrant change there. And Tom, I guess I'd let you speak to that more.

Mr. Lees: — Yeah, absolutely. So in terms of this intersection in particular, I'll talk a little bit about kind of what our short- and our medium- and long-term plans are there. So in our short-term plan, it is going out — and we've already completed this assessment — going out taking a look at the intersection, what warning signs are already in place in advance of that. And there are flashing lights with important intersection signs that are installed. And then looking at what other opportunities there might be to put additional signing up while we can get through a full analysis of the intersection and look at what some of those longer term improvements are.

So our medium-term and what we're going to focus on now, is doing a conflict analysis of the intersection. So when we look at intersections, we take into consideration traffic volumes. We would look at what historical collisions at the intersections would be. What we heard at this location is that, you know, there are what I would say near misses, where they're not being registered through SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] as an actual collision, but near misses. And so that's what this conflict analysis will do. And ultimately it's setting up cameras at the intersection that will be monitoring the traffic so that we can go back and assess the near misses and take that into consideration.

So once we have that information in hand from the study, then we can go back and look at what improvements . . . And it may be the extension of the right-turn lane. It may be adding in a left-turn lane there as well.

The one thing that we want to keep in mind though as we do the conflict analysis, is what we heard is that there's a lot of truck traffic, primarily in the winter, from some of the salt they're hauling out of the Vanscoy mine. So we'll make sure that we're timing our assessment adequately to get that traffic volume and that turning movement information in hand.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you for the information. And I'm glad it's on your radar. And I'm glad that there's been a review of the site. You know, certainly the community has been making the case, you know, for over a year. And they also identify that there's much higher truck and traffic volumes at different parts of the year, including actually a period in the spring as well that they describe with another business that interacts with that site. Obviously the mine site is busy all of the time.

You know, I appreciate the official's attention and response and detail. I'll continue to be clear with the minister though that this does need to get resolved and there needs to be an adequate, you know, safety measure brought about. The left-hand turning lane that was taken away is really recognized as a loss by those that utilize that artery, and they really feel at risk. So I will continue

to urge the minister on this front because, you know, when you sit . . . It's pretty compelling when you talk with that police chief and the fire chief and with the local community, and then all those workers and all the families that connect to that mine, and with all those shift changes every day. There's a lot of lives at stake there every day.

Moving along a little bit. The minister knows I present a petition a lot of days in this legislature for the good people through Hudson Bay and Preeceville who had connected with me a while back. And I supported them to build out a petition for the community, and it's, I think, almost been signed by everyone in the area because we've got a real stack of them and many signatures through Preeceville and so many through Hudson Bay. And this is Highway 9 between Preeceville and Hudson Bay that I'm speaking to. I'm interested in hearing from the minister what actions he's committing to to resolve the serious concerns they're identifying.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yes, well I have, certainly, I've travelled over that highway numerous times. I was over it . . . I have to say I wasn't over it this winter, but I was certainly over it last fall. And you know, there's been some hand patching and some deep patching, machine patching and base mix. And we've spent quite a bit of money on that. Actually we spent \$535,000 on just routine maintenance last year on that section.

And as I stated in my letter to you, the Ministry of Highways was also . . . They've hired Stantec to conduct an audit of the construction and the design from Usherville on to Highway 983. We've certainly been working on doing some fixing on it, and actually over the last five years that highway's received 2.6 million in maintenance.

But right now we've got a little something else going on too. And we're working with the feds on . . . We put an application in for the National Trade Corridors Fund, so I don't know whether we will get that or not. That fund is made for trade. So you know, when you take a look at the logging industry up there with Weyerhaeuser being there, it's important. Not to, you know . . . It's important to Saskatchewan. It's important to the people of Hudson Bay. But it's also very important to Canada to maybe put some funding into that.

So these are the things that we're working on, on Highway 9 there, south of Hudson Bay.

Mr. Wagar: — If I could just add a little bit to that as well, that you specified and the minister talked about the corridor specifically between Hudson Bay and Preeceville, and that by itself is an important corridor. But right from Hudson Bay almost right down to the US . . . well it is right down to the US border. It's actually emerging as a pretty important corridor. At the end of Highway 9 is the Ceres development, which is that Burlington Northern railway services that area, and a major kind of inland hub, transportation hub. So that's why I just wanted to add on to why we've positioned that with the federal government for a national trade corridor investment.

When you think of the forestry sector in and around Hudson Bay in particular, you move a bit south to Yorkton along that corridor and all the agriculture that takes place in between that, and Yorkton becoming kind of an ag value-added processing hub.

And then continuing along that, down to either . . . You get on CN or CP [Canadian Pacific Railway] from Yorkton, or you can go down to Burlington Northern using Highway 9 and connect on to that hub.

Again, this is much longer term planning, but that's why we wanted to position — with the minister's help and support — position that with the federal government for a national trade corridor investment with the federal government. So we don't know what the outcome of that will be yet, but we're hopeful.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Is that Highway 9 all the way down that entire corridor?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yeah, it runs all the way, all the way through.

Mr. Wagar: — Yeah. Basically Hudson Bay starts and runs continuously all the way down through Yorkton right down into Northgate, specifically, at the US border.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Right. Well I know the minister heard a fair amount about Highway 9 and various portions of it at SUMA here recently and I think SARM as well. So certainly commitments to that artery are important. Certainly if we can leverage some federal dollars to be deployed there, that's great. So thanks for that undertaking. But ultimately we need to make sure that it's, you know, that it's safe and has the kind of renewal and rebuild that's required.

I'm interested in getting an update with respect to Esterhazy . . .

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Just to add on to that, we did, you know . . . We've got Highway 55 that's running east of Carrot River, and we managed to get money out of the federal government to cost-share on that one. So you know, this isn't something that's impossible. Like we did manage to get money on that one, which also is a very important corridor for us. Highway 55, as you know, runs all the way across the top end of the province, so it's an east-west corridor also, so we were fortunate there. So it's not impossible to get the money. I hope we do. We'll see what happens.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No, it's important for us to receive those federal dollars and continue to make those applications. It's not always the kind of message we hear from your government with respect to the federal government, but they do play an important role to support this kind of renewal of course as well.

[21:45]

With respect to Esterhazy to Whitewood, I think the minister took the question at SUMA on this as well. But you know, the local EMS [emergency medical services] there says that, you know, it's just in a horrible situation. He said, like, you have to come and drive it. I know that area. I've been on that highway. I've been on those highways, but I don't know the current situation. But responding to the very serious concerns that have been brought to the minister, what's planned on those highways?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yeah, the answer to your question there is . . . Now these are planned. They are not tendered yet, but they're planned for repaving for 19 kilometres south of the

Qu'Appelle Valley. And we've got a culvert installation at kilometre 27 and we've got a preservation for 5 kilometres. That would be on that same highway. But these haven't been tendered yet, but this is in the planning for this year.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Certainly it sounds like it's in horrible condition, so the action's going to be important.

With respect to some of the highways in through the Northwest in the province, namely Highway 155 that's in a real bad state — this is sort of Beauval to La Loche — I'm looking for what your commitment is on this front. I think that you've got a stretch that's about 175 kilometres there that's in a real bad state. This year there's a modest bit of money that's dedicated there, but I'm interested in knowing how many kilometres will be addressed this year of that important highway.

And while we're talking about that area of the province, I'd be interested in getting an update as well on what actions are being taken to address the conditions on Highway 905. And maybe just a bit further detail on the Garson Lake road, as far as what's being advanced in this budget year.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — That was between Beauval and La Loche?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — That's right, 155. For anyone that's driving the highway too, it's in a bad state, but there's incredible fried chicken at the gas station there at Beauval if you're looking to fuel up.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Okay. The Garson Lake, we're going to do the design and the study on it, and it will be tendered this fall for completion next year. And Blair will do 155.

Mr. Wagar: — Thanks, Minister. We're just checking to confirm the distance basically from around Beauval to La Loche, just confirming the length of that. But we worked with the northern ATPCs, area transportation planning committees, which are community-based whether their membership is usually municipalities or northern communities that make up these. And the whole province is divided up into regions. But the northern ATPCs are who we worked with. They raise concerns about road conditions in the North, from the Athabasca . . . Basically the northern administrative district north is what their regions are. So we work closely with them on areas that they're seeing challenges.

And this corridor, while it being quite long, there's some . . . Like any road network, some parts of it are in better shape than other parts. So what we did — just because if we were to look at that whole corridor and upgrade it all at once, the numbers get to be quite large and it becomes pretty hard to find the budget room to do a one big project — so we thought, well what can we do to improve that corridor? In many ways looking at a couple of the spots along that way, if we could make improvements to those, it changes the feel and the ride for that whole corridor.

So that's the approach, working with the ATPCs, that we took up there. And so again there's different spots, probably about, I'm looking at this, about 8, between 8 and 9 kilometres that we'd be making improvements. But they're not continuous. They're in different spots where we see the worst condition of the road.

So I can give a bit of location. They talk about kilometre 9, kilometre 12, kilometre 19, kilometre 84, and then kilometre 93. So again, different spots along that corridor. So we know that it's at least 93 kilometres long. But I think I'm going to venture a bit of a guess here in terms of the actual length. I want to say it's between 100 and 125 kilometres, but don't hold me to that. That's off the top of my head.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No, I appreciate that. And the Garson Lake road, of course we'll be taking it to the Alberta border. Now we need Alberta to finish their side. What undertakings has the minister taken to ensure that Alberta does their side?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Well Alberta did say that they would do their side, before we sent a letter to the Alberta government telling them what we were going to be doing and asking them, you know, if they would now complete their side of it. And you know, this is pretty important because, you know, it gives us a good shot going up to Fort Mac [Fort McMurray]. And you know, there's a lot of equipment, people can be going up there and working and whatnot. So this would be great if Alberta would now come on board and finish up on their end of it.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And you'll make sure that that commitment is there. I mean I know we need to make sure we're advancing our project, but ultimately we need to know that that road is going to be able to continue on through into Alberta, that you're going to make sure that that commitment's there?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — As I said, we sent a letter to Alberta telling them that we were going to finish up our end of it, and you know, trying to persuade them to do their end of it.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Would you build to the border without their commitment that they're going to connect it?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — We've made a commitment. We're going to build there.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well let's make sure that Alberta connects their portion. And I think that's, you know, critical. Otherwise we have a road to the border but it doesn't serve its purpose, and we don't have the value with that expenditure that the people and the region and taxpayers deserve. So it's critical that Alberta is committed to their portion.

Shifting just a bit, of course, you know, transportation encompasses many aspects. Rail itself is so important to this province, to our producers, to our exporters, to our economy. We see the challenges of our underperforming rail system regularly. We see, you know, exceptional operations by way of the shortlines across this province.

But certainly reforms around rail and building out a system, including port capacity and access, is critical for us as an economy, critical to anyone who's getting into the fields here for this growing season and taking on that risk as a producer, again knowing that they need to get that product to market in a timely way.

So just, you know, a couple pieces within that. I know that the port of Vancouver, it's a long-standing concern as to their governance. And I believe we share a position that Saskatchewan

and that Western Canada, the provinces in Western Canada aren't properly represented. The federal government, of course, has the lion's share of those directorships on that board right now. And I know we've been advancing the position that there should be representation of each of the Western provinces, Manitoba through British Columbia. I think the case has been made that two reps for each province to adequately represent the provinces that, I think, make up 85 per cent of the trade that goes through that port. And then an accommodation obviously for the municipality there in BC [British Columbia] around that port, as well as a couple seats for the federal government.

Where is this initiative at? I mean, it's an important reform. It's a very important port. Where is this initiative at?

[22:00]

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Oh boy, I could talk a long time on this one. Yeah, so the port of Vancouver, you know, has been a bone of contention for quite some time. You know, there are 11 directors on the port of Vancouver. British Columbia has one; Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba have one; and the rest are all from out in Vancouver. Now I have written to the federal government saying that, you know — and Alberta signed it and Manitoba signed it — that we should have better representation on the board due to the fact that, and you said it right, 85 per cent of the product going out of that port is coming from us.

And you know, the port . . . And I realize COVID has caused some problems, but as of two weeks ago there were 65 ships sitting at anchor waiting in the port. Now, you know, you're paying demurrage on those vessels and whatnot. I fully believe that we should have a far better say in the port. And it's next week, actually — I think it's next week — we're having a meeting with WESTAC [Western Transportation Advisory Council] here to, you know, where we'll be talking about some of the shipping problems.

And also another thing I've been pushing on and have written a letter to the federal minister, we do have another port. We do have another port, and that's called Churchill. And I have belonged to the Hudson Bay Route Association for many years, for almost as long I can remember, probably since the association started. I've always been an advocate for the port of Churchill.

I believe, you know, with what is happening in Europe right now, we should be taking a very strong look at getting the port of Churchill running full bore. You know, it's a good, it's a deep-water port. We could be shipping product out through there, and especially since, you know, since Europe is reliant on a lot of the grain that comes out of Russia and the Ukraine. And let's face it, Ukraine's going to have . . . you know, I don't know if they're going to have any kind of a crop this year the way things are going over there. I would hope things would end, but you know, apparently some of the fields are mined over there and everything else. You know, chances are that there isn't going to be that much grain coming out of the Ukraine. And of course everybody has the sanctions against Russia.

So here we are in Canada. We can provide, we can provide that food for them. And to tell the truth, we can provide oil for them too going out through that port. So it's something that I really want to push on is to try and get stuff moving out that way to help

Europe, you know, not rely on Russia so much for their food stocks.

And like I said, you know, I for one would dearly love to see everything end and go back, but I think everybody has seen now what Russia is like. And even if the war were to end tomorrow, I don't think a lot of people are going back to be dealing with Russia in a great big hurry. And Canada is well situated to supply Europe with that product. Anyway that's . . . I could go on for a long time on this subject.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — It's such a critical one to the economy, isn't it? And without a doubt, I mean, the exports that we can offer the world from a democracy like ours — our fertilizer, our potash, our food and our grains, our energy, as discussed — is critical. And certainly we need to be advancing that trade and securing those contracts and displacing, you know, Russia's markets on this front, now and well into the future.

Europe of course is far too dependent on these fronts. Lots of the world are. If you look at Africa itself and the countries within it, the vast majority of its grains are supplied from Russia and then Ukraine. And so I mean, there's an economic imperative. There's a moral imperative as well, both in intervening to have the serious consequences for Putin and his regime but also to feed hungry people who . . . you know, to address the food security needs.

So there's no doubt that we need the export capacity, the transportation capacity on these fronts. You took Churchill. Port of Churchill was on my list as my next question, so you've spoken to it. And I know you have interest in this file. I do as well, and I'm interested in what undertakings you've taken on with the federal government and other provinces on this front, what you're committing to here in this current year. And what sort of scope of infrastructure needs are there to take the current port and transportation route and to make it a potential viable alternative to consider in the way the minister describes?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Yeah, well there's a few things there. One, I did raise it up with all the federal Transport ministers also. I brought up the port of Churchill. I've talked to the minister in Manitoba about that. And so it's something that, you know, it's something I think that we definitely should be looking for. I think it should have been done a long time ago. But anyway, that's beside the point.

They're working on the rail line right now to improve the rail line up there. Like they have had . . . You know, the rail line, as you well know, was shut down for a while and it is now being . . . I believe it's three Indigenous bands have taken over on the railway, and they're working on the railway at the present time to improve the railway going there.

The other thing that we . . . You know, and I just mentioned Highway 55. Also it runs through and it joins up with Highway 9 at Bainbridge and then it goes . . . And that's just a little ways away from the Manitoba border.

Now the Manitoba side would have to do some work on their end too. The bridge that just goes into The Pas has to be changed. They've worked on their other bridges, bringing them up to specs, but the final bridge . . . And I don't know if you've ever been there. Where it goes into The Pas, there's kind of a turn and

it actually has to go onto the OCN [Opaskwayak Cree Nation] reserve land. But they don't have a problem with that. So Manitoba highways would also have to do some work on that. But that's also, you know, that's a highway that gets it to The Pas, which gets it that much closer.

You can have a loading . . . Actually there is a loading facility, a small loading facility at The Pas, and of course it's not going right now because they're working on the rail line there. But it's definitely something. This has been something I've wanted for a long, long time and I believe that it is only politics that is keeping that port from going. And I really want to see that port up and going because, like I said, it's a direct hit on ocean vessel. You have to take a look at when our grain goes out through Thunder Bay, you know.

And you're right. We can be supplying the potash. Like I mean because most of the . . . Our main competitor where it's coming out of, it's coming out of Russia. And so we can be sending our potash through there too. But right now if you go through Thunder Bay, it all has to go to Montreal. And then everything has to be unloaded at Montreal and then reloaded onto an ocean-going vessel because the lakers can't go across the ocean. So the port at Churchill just makes sense.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — With respect to the, again, rail performance and the *Canada Grain Act* review that is under way — it hasn't concluded yet — did you take up a position or any undertakings with that review around rail performance and producer cars?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Could you, Mr. Wotherspoon, could you just . . . I don't know exactly where we're sitting here, exactly what you were talking about there.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So of course around rail performance, it's important that we push matters, you know, that are pertinent to the CTA [*Canada Transportation Act*] as well. But with respect to the *Canada Grain Act*, it is under review right now. They've received submissions.

Some of the pieces there, they're important aspects because they impact our ports and some of the submissions as well have made calls to bolster producer cars, which would be a real asset for agriculture in our province, for producers in our province, and alleviate other stresses within the rail system. So I'm wondering if as a province, as transport minister, if you've made a submission on this front.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — We're thinking that we actually don't have that end of it here. I'm guessing that that would be with Ag would be taking the head on it, and they haven't consulted with us.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No, I appreciate the response. I know the Chair's giving me the eye here that the time is up. It all connects, of course. We need that system to perform. I took these questions up with, I took these up with the Minister of Agriculture. In fact, we took up, you know, rail at a bit greater length, of course. It's so important that we have some reforms and some change to make sure that we have the capacity and a system that can perform for producers in our province.

But the Chair's giving me that eye, so what I'll do with that is say thank you to Madam Chair and committee members, but importantly the minister and officials for all their time here tonight, more importantly for their work throughout the year. And of course there's so many others that are connected to the work here tonight and that are involved in rebuilding those roads, maintaining those roads, keeping us safe throughout the year. We've got a looming storm that we're going to walk back out the doors to be greeted to, and so we send care to all those and thanks for all those that keep us safe. So thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Wotherspoon. Minister, if you have any closing remarks that you would like to make.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank all the committee members for being here and all the questions. I hope we answered them all properly for you. And I want to thank all the officials that came here tonight to spend this lovely, breezy night inside. And I also want to thank Hansard for being around here tonight and listening to this. I'm sure it was just, you know, you were paying rapt attention to everything that was being said. Anyway, thank you again and again thank the committee.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister. Having reached our agreed-upon time, the Standing Committee on the Economy will now move to vote off the vote 16 for Highways. Minister, you and your officials are welcome to leave if you'd like, so thank you.

All right. We have vote 16 on Highways. Central management and services, subvote (HI01) in the amount of \$17,263,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Preservation of transportation systems, subvote (HI04) in the amount of \$118,193,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Transportation planning and policy, subvote (HI06) in the amount of \$3,968,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Infrastructure and equipment capital, subvote (HI08) in the amount of \$454,622,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Custom work activity, subvote (HI09) in the amount of zero dollars, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Operation of transportation system, subvote (HI10) in the amount of \$219,160,000, is that agreed?

[22:15]

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Strategic municipal infrastructure,

subvote (HI15) in the amount of 32,697,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Non-appropriated expense adjustment in the amount of 259,239,000. Non-appropriated expense adjustments are non-cash adjustments presented for informational purposes only. No amount is to be voted.

Highways, vote 16 — 845,903,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2023, the following sums for Highways in the amount of 845,903,000.

Mr. Francis so moved. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund
Agriculture
Vote 1**

The Chair: — We will now move to vote 1, Agriculture. Central management and services, subvote (AG01) in the amount of 11,972,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Industry assistance, subvote (AG03) in the amount of 3,889,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Land management, subvote (AG04) in the amount of 4,689,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Policy, trade and value-added, subvote (AG05) in the amount of 6,032,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Research and technology, subvote (AG06) in the amount of 34,978,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Regional services, subvote (AG07) in the amount of 35,307,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Programs, subvote (AG09) in the amount of 24,838,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Business risk management, subvote

(AG10) in the amount of 338,487,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Non-appropriated expense adjustment in the amount of 2,319,000. Non-appropriated expense adjustments are non-cash adjustments presented for informational purposes only. No amount is to be voted.

Agriculture vote — 460,192,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2023, the following sums for Agriculture in the amount of 460,192,000.

Mr. Cockrill so moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund
Energy and Resources
Vote 23**

The Chair: — Energy and Resources, vote 23. Central management and services, subvote (ER01) in the amount of 23,197,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Energy regulation, subvote (ER05) in the amount of 124,483,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Resource development, subvote (ER06) in the amount of 77,490,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Non-appropriated expense adjustment in the amount of 3,949,000. Non-appropriated expense adjustments are non-cash adjustments presented for informational purposes only. No amount is to be voted.

Energy and Resources, vote 23 — 225,170,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2023, the following sums for Energy and Resources in the amount of 225,170,000.

Mr. Hargrave so moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund
Immigration and Career Training
Vote 89**

The Chair: — Vote 89, Immigration and Career Training. Central management and services, subvote (IC01) in the amount of 18,716,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Immigration, employment and career development, subvote (IC02) in the amount of 11,680,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Training and employer services, subvote (IC03) in the amount of 5,141,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Labour market programs, subvote (IC04) in the amount of 122,552,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Non-appropriated expense adjustment in the amount of 1,620,000. Non-appropriated expense adjustments are non-cash adjustments presented for information purposes only. No amount is to be voted.

Immigration and Career Training, vote 89 — 158,089,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2023, the following sums for Immigration and Career Training in the amount of 158,089,000.

Mr. Cockrill so moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund
Innovation Saskatchewan
Vote 84**

The Chair: — Vote 84, Innovation Saskatchewan. Innovation Saskatchewan, subvote (IS01) in the amount of 122,227,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Innovation Saskatchewan, vote 84 — 122,227,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2023, the following sums for Innovation Saskatchewan in the amount of 122,227,000.

Mr. Francis so moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund
Trade and Export Development
Vote 90**

The Chair: — Vote 90, Trade and Export Development. Central management and services, subvote (TE01) in the amount of 6,173,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Strategic policy and competitiveness, subvote (TE02) in the amount of 3,122,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Economic development, subvote (TE03) in the amount of 9,381,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. International engagement, subvote (TE04) in the amount of 17,490,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Saskatchewan economic recovery rebate, subvote (TE05) in the amount of \$0, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Non-appropriated expense adjustment in the amount of \$70,000. Non-appropriated expense adjustments are non-cash adjustments presented for informational purposes only. No amount is to be voted.

Trade and Export Development, vote 90 — 36,166,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2023, the following sums for Trade and Export Development in the amount of 36,166,000.

Mr. Hargrave so moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund
Water Security Agency
Vote 87**

The Chair: — Vote 87, Water Security Agency. Water Security Agency, subvote (WS01) in the amount of 68,778,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Water Security Agency, vote 87 — 68,778,000. I will now ask a member to move the following

resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2023, the following sums for Water Security Agency in the amount of 68,778,000.

Mr. Cockrill so moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. That concludes our business this evening. I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment. Mr. Francis so moves. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. This committee stands adjourned until the call of the Chair.

[The committee adjourned at 22:26.]