



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY**

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## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY**

Ms. Colleen Young, Chair  
Lloydminster

Ms. Aleana Young, Deputy Chair  
Regina University

Mr. Jeremy Cockrill  
The Battlefords

Mr. Ken Francis  
Kindersley

Mr. Delbert Kirsch  
Batoche

Mr. Jim Lemaigre  
Athabasca

Mr. Doug Steele  
Cypress Hills



[The committee met at 15:24.]

**The Chair:** — All right. Good afternoon, folks, and welcome to the Standing Committee on the Economy. I'm Colleen Young and I will be chairing this afternoon's committee meeting. We have members joining us here today: Jeremy Cockrill, Ken Francis, Delbert Kirsch, Jim Lemaigre, Doug Steele, and Aleana Young.

During the Assembly's sitting today, Bill No. 81, *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act* was committed to the committee. Does the committee agree to add it to today's agenda?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Being agreed upon, that's carried. I would also like to table the following document, ECO 10-29, Saskatchewan Research Council: Response to question raised at the May 2nd, 2022 meeting. We will now be considering three bills today, followed by voting off the estimates for Saskatchewan Research Council.

**Bill No. 79 — *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act***

**Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — We will begin with Bill No. 79, *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*, clause 1, short title.

Minister Harrison is here with his officials this afternoon. I would ask officials for the first time they speak at the mike to state their name and their position, and if you'd just raise your hand, Hansard will know which ones to turn on. I would ask any additional officials — but it doesn't look like there is — who need to speak to take their place at the table. So, Minister, if you would like to begin by introducing your officials that are here with you and begin with your opening remarks.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Sure. Well thanks very much, Madam Chair. Thanks to members of the committee for being here this afternoon, and I am pleased to join the committee today to discuss *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*.

Joining me today are, on my right, Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation CEO [chief executive officer], Matt Smith; and on Matt's right, assistant deputy minister, Tyler Lynch.

This Act will support increased Indigenous participation in the economy and stimulate economic development in our Indigenous communities across Saskatchewan. The SIIFC [Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation] will provide \$75 million in loan guarantees to improve access to capital for Indigenous communities and their development entities to invest in natural resource development and value-added agriculture projects.

This initiative supports economic reconciliation in Saskatchewan

by helping to build stronger Indigenous communities. It also aligns with Saskatchewan's Growth Plan goal of growing Indigenous participation in the province's natural resource industries.

During development of the SIIFC, input and engagement with Indigenous communities was prioritized, with six Indigenous business leaders acting as advisors. The Ministry of Trade and Export Development also worked with the Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence to identify barriers to increasing Indigenous participation in our natural resource sector.

Round tables were held with Indigenous leadership and officials from major resource companies. During this process, Indigenous leaders indicated a desire to benefit from the entire life cycle of resource projects, something that could be facilitated through equity ownership. Resource companies also expressed their interest in Indigenous equity ownership in these projects.

The primary barrier to achieving this was also identified: a lack of access to sufficient capital. The SIIFC will help address this by providing loan guarantees to First Nations and Métis communities and organizations investing in eligible natural resource and value-added agriculture projects. Minimum loan guarantees will be \$5 million. Maximum loan guarantees will be approved up to the maximum remaining budget of the corporation.

Indigenous involvement in economic development projects is already creating positive impacts in our Indigenous communities as well as our province, and the SIIFC will build on this success.

Response to this announcement of this program has been overwhelmingly positive. I'm confident we will see significant demand for these loan guarantees because Indigenous communities have long been asking for financial support to increase their ability to invest in natural resource development. The opportunities are there, but we need to address the barrier of access to capital. And that's exactly what the SIIFC does.

Thank you, and I would now be happy to take any questions members of the committee may have.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. I'll now open the floor to questions from members, and I'll recognize Ms. Young.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. In introductory comments, Minister, you spoke about some of the consultation work that was undertaken in the development of this bill. Who was consulted and what feedback was received?

**Mr. Smith:** — Sure. My name's Matt Smith. So it wasn't consultation. Consultation, obviously, is a formal legal process. With the engagement . . . was initially done by the Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence. And they conducted some round tables. They were closed-door round tables; the government wasn't a part of them. But they reached out to both, you know, the 74 member communities of the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] as well as I believe some Métis communities as well.

We didn't have any formal engagement as government officials on the development of the SIIFC, although I mean, it was the access to capital is something that the Government of Saskatchewan has been receiving requests on kind of in differing sizes, anything from kind of 500,000 to a billion dollars. And they were kind of being handled on an ad hoc basis. And this is something that was, you know, discussed informally in a number of meetings but formal engagement has been done through the group of Indigenous business advisors.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Smith. And forgive me, how many round tables did you say there were?

**Mr. Smith:** — I would have to confirm with the Centre of Excellence.

[15:30]

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. Can you walk the committee through the decision why it's the province filling this role and not a pre-existing organization like Clarence Campeau or the SIEF [Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation]?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Maybe, Madam Chair, I'll provide maybe a high level and then Matt and/or Tyler could add some comments. We really based on feedback that, you know, we've been getting over many, many years about the challenge particularly in access to capital.

And I would kind of preface a bit of this by saying that I think committee members are aware from a discussion we had at estimates around some of these topics, where I went into some degree of detail about the background, which I'm not going to rehash right now. I mean if the questions are such that committee members wish that background to be gone through again, I'm prepared to do that. But you know, really it was felt I think broadly in the First Nations business community that the central issue really was access to capital.

And there were structural issues that existed that were not particularly based in traditional economic factors but really based in the legal position that First Nations and Indigenous entities found themselves in, owing to constitutional realities that really make it very, very challenging and difficult for First Nations to borrow through traditional financing mechanisms. And that was really the catalyst for the work that we had done, and then working with the Centre of Excellence and really hashing out in practice what that was going to look like and, you know, learning from examples as well, including the Alberta Indigenous investment corporation.

So you know, really there was a pretty clear direction that this needed to be a separate Indigenous finance vehicle that would be, you know, very much with a different mandate than perhaps some existing organizations which are tasked with much broader or more distinct matters. So we really felt that this was the appropriate way of going forward. And I'm not sure . . . Maybe Matt, if you wish to add anything.

**Mr. Smith:** — No, I think that predominantly covers it. I would say, you know, the Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation, the Clarence Campeau Development Fund, the Saskatchewan Métis economic development fund, traditionally, I would say, have

been predominantly focused on entrepreneurs. And the value of the loans and whatnot they facilitate, I would say as a rule would fall within the minimum loan guarantee amount of the SIIFC. They can still be involved, you know, if Indigenous communities want to work with them as well to help obtain part of the financing and then work with the SIIFC for a loan guarantee. That's certainly an option for them as well.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you very much. Looking at clause 4(a) where it speaks to: "The purposes of the corporation are: to provide loan guarantees to persons who make loans to Indigenous communities or organizations . . ." Then it goes on there. Can you speak to the intent of that part? Is it . . . Maybe I'll leave it there.

**Mr. Smith:** — Sorry. If I understand the question correctly, an Indigenous community or an economic development entity owned by an Indigenous community would work with a financing institution, whether it's a traditional bank or, you know, another lender. They would work out kind of the specifics of the financing of the particular project and then the Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation would potentially play a role in guaranteeing the loan to those organizations. But it wouldn't do the lending directly.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Okay, thank you. So just to make sure I understand, so Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation will guarantee the loan; they will not do the actual lending. The lending will go through an organization or an individual.

**Mr. Smith:** — Yeah, I mean I would suspect it would be traditional banks for the most part or other, you know, venture capital. An individual, I suppose, is possible but I would think unlikely.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Okay, yes. Thank you. I was just interested by the use of, you know, the terms "persons" in that. I wasn't sure if that was like a legal inclusion of corporations or if that was potentially contemplating things like VC [venture capital] or angel investors.

**Mr. Smith:** — Yeah, I believe it is a legal definition, and it also just, I think, is intentionally broad to allow for different options. And obviously the board of the SIIFC will look at the applications on a case-by-case basis and determine if it's something it wants to provide a guarantee for.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. And the Act speaks about I think a flat rate of 0.75 per cent being contemplated. Would this rate be passed through that lending organization to the individual First Nation, or is that kind of intermediary able to charge fees or interest above and beyond?

**Mr. Smith:** — No, any projects a financial institution chooses to support would be negotiated on commercial terms. The 0.75 loan guarantee fee for the SIIFC would be in addition to that. It would be collected by the financial institution who issued the loan on the same regularity as they're collecting payments on the loan and then transfer it to the SIIFC.

**Ms. A. Young:** — And is the intention to keep that rate of 0.75 stable, fixed?

**Mr. Smith:** — It is a fixed rate, yes.

**Ms. A. Young:** — In section 6, application process: (1) An Indigenous community or organization may apply in writing to the corporation for a loan guarantee. With that operative word being “may” instead of “shall,” are there other forms of application being considered?

**Mr. Smith:** — We’re still in the process of working through the specifics but there will be . . . The intent is to have an initial discussion to ensure that the project proponent and the project fit within the criteria. There will then be a pre-application form in order to ensure again that, you know, the minimum requirements are being met and then there would be a full application process following that.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. In estimates, the minister was clear that this was for the natural resource sector. And given the novelty, obviously, of this Act, are there any exclusions, any projects that, you know, the average person may consider as part of the natural resource sector that are being contemplated?

**Mr. Smith:** — Yes, so I think in regards to your question, I guess, kind of assuming what people might think of that, it doesn’t include exploration or the more speculation of projects. It has to be a shovel-ready project and it’s . . . Natural resources, value-added agriculture, or energy projects will be eligible as well.

**Ms. A. Young:** — These could be new, developing fields?

**Mr. Smith:** — Yeah.

**Ms. A. Young:** — But I’m hearing beyond what you said about exploration, there’s no formal exemptions or exceptions being considered.

**Mr. Smith:** — No. I mean we have identified, I mean so it would be forestry and kind of sub-industries within that: mining, energy, value-added agriculture, and then any infrastructure related to the above.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Perfect. Moving on to, I think it’s the regs, I note the minister’s able to approve projects under the \$5 million threshold. Can you speak to why that threshold was chosen?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Well I’ll maybe give a high-level response, Madam Chair, and then Matt can speak to some of the details. But you know, what we are, you know, the overall policy objective and intent in this was really to facilitate equity ownership positions in larger scale projects by First Nation, Indigenous, Métis organizations and/or groups. So that was really part of the reason why we have a minimum component to this. We don’t have a maximum component, but we wanted to ensure that that policy objective as far as the minimum would be reflected.

So there is a degree of flexibility around that. You know, I wouldn’t anticipate that being used for a project that was, say for example, a million-dollar equity. This would be more, you know, if we had something that was pretty close to \$5 million and we needed to have a bit of additional flexibility, that would be the idea in that. But Matt, if you want to speak further?

**Mr. Smith:** — Yeah, I think it kind of goes back a little bit to your previous question around SIEF and CCDF [Clarence Campeau Development Fund] and SMEDCO [SaskMétis Economic Development Corporation] and others, as I think, you know, they’re in a position to support potential projects kind of below 5 million or, you know, depending, maybe a bit less than that. And the 5 million was kind of a target which we felt, you know, would help an Indigenous community or group of communities obtain somewhat meaningful equity, ownership in a project.

Also, you know, there’s the potential for a lot of, you know, applications to come in for 500,000, 1 million, and whatnot. And again, there’s other institutions that are probably in a better place or position to help the financing of those. As the minister mentioned, there is a provision to go below 5 million in exceptional circumstances, but that would kind of be handled on a case-by-case basis.

**Ms. A. Young:** — And anticipated to be the exception as opposed to the rule?

**Mr. Smith:** — Yes.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Okay. Thank you. It’s noted, obviously, the challenges around leveraging capital with First Nations, and it speaks to the Indigenous Investment Finance Corp. being open to entities owned by First Nations, tribal councils, or Métis communities or the MNS, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. Can you speak to any exceptions to this that might be contemplated at this time?

**Mr. Smith:** — No, at this time, there’s no exclusion to that. The reason it’s kind of structured that way is the *Indian Act* recognizes, I believe, 70 bands in Saskatchewan. The FSIN has a few more tribal councils. There’s obviously a specific number. And then on the Métis side, unlike Alberta for example, we don’t have a *Métis Settlements Act*, so there needed to be a bit of a broader definition.

But in addition to all those, you know, the minister has the ability to approve somebody that doesn’t fall within those specific criteria, but if they do, you know, identify themselves and can prove they’re an Indigenous community organization.

**Ms. A. Young:** — So speaking to that discrepancy between the *Indian Act* and FSIN, those bodies caught in between would be . . .

**Mr. Smith:** — Yeah. I mean they would both be covered. There’s also, I believe, one First Nation that’s not a member of the FSIN either, who would also be eligible contingent on them being able to, you know, provide the necessary proof of that.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Perfect. Thank you. So what I’m hearing is the broadest application of this is being contemplated.

**Mr. Smith:** — Yes.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Excellent, thank you. Madam Chair, I have no further questions on this bill.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Seeing no further questions, we will

now proceed to vote on the clauses. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 22 inclusive agreed to.]

[15:45]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*.

I will now ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 79, *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act* without amendment. Mr. Francis so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Minister, do you have any closing remarks on this bill?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — None, Madam Chair, other than to thank the committee and the officials for their time and efforts.

**The Chair:** — All right. Ms. Young, do you have any remarks you'd like to make on this bill?

**Ms. A. Young:** — Applaud and support the good work undertaken by officials and organizations out in the community to develop and support Indigenous capital in this province. Thank you.

### **Bill No. 80 — *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2022***

#### **Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — Thank you. We will now move into consideration of Bill No. 80, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2022*, clause 1, short title. Minister Harrison, you can introduce your officials who will be speaking to this bill and make your opening remarks.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Thanks very much, Madam Chair. And we're going to be changing out officials. Innovation Saskatchewan's leadership team and the acting president and the CEO of SOCO [Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation] will be joining us very shortly. But as they do, I am happy to commence my remarks. Kari Harvey will be joining us, the chief executive officer of Innovation Saskatchewan; and Brent Sukenik, our acting president and chief executive officer of Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation will be seated at this table.

As the committee members are aware, we announced in this year's budget our intention to transfer ownership of the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation, most commonly

known by its business name, Innovation Place, from Crown Investments Corporation to Innovation Saskatchewan.

Innovation Saskatchewan's mandate is to promote economic development and advance the government's innovation agenda through funding and delivery of programs to support the development and commercialization of technology in research. It is the Government of Saskatchewan's central innovation agency. The mandate of SOCO is to create, encourage, and facilitate business opportunities in the Saskatchewan technology sector, primarily through the development and operation of technology parks. It operates two research parks, one in Saskatoon and one in Regina, adjacent to the universities.

The primary purpose of this initiative is to enhance alignment and service delivery. The two organizations offer complementary yet distinct services. Both Innovation Saskatchewan and Innovation Place serve many of the same clients in the technology and research sector, and while there is little duplication between the two organizations, creating a single innovation agency will leverage IS's [Innovation Saskatchewan] reputation, mandate, and programs and maximize the economic potential of Innovation Place research infrastructure assets.

The aim is simple: to meet our growth plan goals of tripling the technology sector in the province and by providing an investment attraction tool to encourage new and established companies from across Canada and around the world to relocate here and commercialize their research and technology capabilities.

The response to the announcement from stakeholders has been overwhelmingly positive and a signal of the government's commitment to an innovation mandate and its importance in driving economic benefits. The proposed changes in the legislation are to support that transfer of authority and reflect changes to Innovation Saskatchewan's Act to allow it to operate the research parks currently assigned to SOCO.

Specifically this means explicit authority to sell, lease, acquire, or dispose of land and property; borrow and invest money; undertake construction; and develop and operate the research parks in Regina and Saskatoon. The changes expand Innovation Saskatchewan's jurisdiction so that it has the same authority as SOCO to perform these functions. There is no change in jurisdiction, powers, or policy, just consolidation.

Other changes include provisions for a guarantee by government under the Lieutenant Governor in Council for loan, indebtedness of liability, and winding up and dissolution of the agency. There are also several housekeeping changes and updates, including removal of out-of-date provisions and references for which additional legal oversight already exists, such as *The Financial Administration Act*.

At this time, *The Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation Act* will remain. This is to address any administrative issues that may arise in contracts, existing obligations, or leases that reference SOCO's Act during the transition to a single agency, and allows time for a more comprehensive review and update of those arrangements. Innovation Saskatchewan intends to repeal SOCO's legislation through the regular call for legislative proposals next year.



Thank you, Madam Chair, and with that, I would welcome questions from members of the committee.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister, and then I'll open the floor to questions from committee members and recognize Ms. Young.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Minister, and to the officials for being present tonight. Just a couple questions. The minister cited the opportunity that this merger provides in encouraging investment and further building out Innovation Saskatchewan as an investment attraction tool. What additional incentive or benefits will this merger provide for attracting investment?

**Ms. Harvey:** — Kari Harvey, CEO of Innovation Saskatchewan. Thanks for the question. So really the opportunity, I think, is going to be really having an alignment of the existing programs that we currently offer at Innovation Saskatchewan, as well as the research infrastructure and specialized space that's available at Innovation Place or SOCO.

And so I think the timing is just really positive in that if we can wrap around, you know, a package of services and supports, whether it's through space and accommodations. And with the opening of our eight international offices, that's really going to allow us to go out and really sell the innovation ecosystem in the province. And so that's our goal, is to really try to attract more companies, tech companies to think about Saskatchewan as a place to do business, as well as, you know, a place where we can help support research partnerships and whatnot as well.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. So when you talk about the alignment of programs, am I close to the mark in understanding that tenants, current Innovation Place tenants — I suppose, future Innovation Saskatchewan tenants — may be prioritized for access to allocation of resources, facilities, technologies currently housed within the research parks to further their priorities?

**Ms. Harvey:** — I'm not sure if I would say the tenants would be prioritized to their existing programs. We have criteria that, you know, for programs such as our Saskatchewan Advantage Innovation Fund, our Agtech Growth Fund, and many others that don't require them, don't require applicants to be a tenant. But what we do hope is that we will be able to allow or to create more awareness of the types of programs that we have to offer.

And I mean, I can give you an example of a couple of different situations where currently Innovation Saskatchewan provides some support through financial mechanisms while Innovation Place has provided some support in terms of specialized space. And we've talked about NRGene as an example of that where, through actually a trade mission that the minister was involved with in 2008, where that first connection was made. We were able to create a package where we provided some funding through the Saskatchewan Advantage Innovation Fund and some specialized space, lab space, and space that's co-located or close to, you know, other partners, potential partners that NRGene would be working with.

We have some other examples, like Co.Labs is another example where we've provided, we are currently providing the operational funding from the provincial perspective to support

the delivery of the programs that Co.Labs offers. And Innovation Place has provided the specialized space for that in the research park in Saskatoon.

So I guess what we're saying is, some of these things were happening before but they weren't in a deliberately planned way. And so we think that, by having our programs or organizations more aligned, that we can do some joint planning and maybe be a bit more deliberate in how we're sharing our resources and supporting various companies.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. Understanding the intent of this bill, it's really, you know, as has been well canvassed, to merge Innovation Saskatchewan and SOCO. Are there any FTE [full-time equivalent] changes or significant budgetary impacts being contemplated as a consequence of this?

**Ms. Harvey:** — No, there is no . . . We're not anticipating significant changes in personnel. Right now Innovation Saskatchewan has 15 positions. Innovation Place has approximately 90 positions, and probably two-thirds of those are positions that actually support the operations of the park.

And so really we're going to be looking at the alignment of, you know, back office functions, of communications, administration, financial assistance, IT [information technology], those sorts of things. And in addition to that, these are areas where Innovation Saskatchewan didn't have the same level of resourcing as what Innovation Place has. And so again there's going to be benefits for leveraging what's already existing.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. And forgive me, providing those services then to tenants or simply . . .

**Ms. Harvey:** — To their organization itself. Sorry.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. No further questions, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** — Seeing no further questions, we will now proceed to vote on the clauses in Bill No. 80.

Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2022.*

I would now ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 80, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment. Mr. Cockrill so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Minister, any closing remarks on this

bill?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — No, just aside from thanking the committee for committee members' time, and officials for being here today.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Young?

**Ms. A. Young:** — Also, as always extend my thanks and appreciation to the officials for all their good work and their presence here this evening.

**The Chair:** — Minister, do you need to change out officials before we move on to the next bill again?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Yes, just about two minutes.

[16:00]

**Bill No. 81 — *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act***

**Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — All right. We will now begin consideration of Bill No. 81, *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act*, clause 1, short title. Minister Harrison, if you would like to begin by introducing your officials and your opening remarks.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Sure. Well thanks very much, Madam Chair, and I'd like to again thank the committee for your time here today to consider Bill 81. And actually I'd like to extend my appreciation to the opposition as well because we had a quick discussion this morning about how we would be able to manage the flow for 81. So the Opposition House Leader, as always, has been just wonderful to deal with. So I appreciate that very much.

I would like to introduce my officials from the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training that are here today. On my right, Clint Repski, our deputy minister. To Clint's right, Derrick Lepine, director of labour market intergovernmental. And behind us, Ken Dueck, the executive director of strategic policy and planning. And I will provide some opening remarks on Bill 81.

Like most other jurisdictions in North America or many other jurisdictions, Saskatchewan is experiencing a shortage of skilled workers. There are currently 13,000 job vacancies in the province advertised on SaskJobs, a national Job Bank, and this is a 33 per cent increase compared to a year ago and the highest on record since January 2018.

At the same time Saskatchewan consistently has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada. Saskatchewan's businesses and employers are creating job opportunities at a rate where our current supply of labour cannot keep up. A shortage of skilled labour will be one of Saskatchewan's top economic challenges over the next number of years, and our government is taking steps to adjust this through multiple strategies . . . [inaudible] . . . all of the above.

We're investing in developing our current and potential supply of labour, and this includes programs and services through the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training. Some examples

from budget 2022-23 include, but are not limited to, over \$26 million for essential skills; over 23.5 million for workforce development; nearly \$17 million for skills training; nearly \$20 million for the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission; and over \$8.5 million for newcomer and settlement. Budget 2022-23 also included a \$4.9 million increase for the Ministry of Advanced Education to expand the number of nurse training seats by 150.

Saskatchewan already has the second-highest proportion of its working-age population employed in the country, which means we also need to look beyond our borders to fill job vacancies. And our government is doing exactly that through the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program, which by a number of measures is one of the most successful economic immigration programs in the country. Saskatchewan has attracted approximately 13,000 newcomers per year over the past five years, two of which were in a global pandemic where borders were closed and international travel was very challenging.

In order to reduce barriers for workers from other provinces and territories that want to come to and work in Saskatchewan, our government has signed two internal trade agreements that contain labour mobility provisions — the New West Partnership Trade Agreement in 2010 and the Canadian Free Trade Agreement in 2017.

This is where *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act* comes into play. The Government of Saskatchewan is seeking to further reduce unnecessary barriers and delays that it can take for Canadian certified and internationally trained workers to become certified to work in regulated occupations in Saskatchewan. Regulated occupations are occupations that are governed by provincial legislation with respect to licensing and certification which is often delegated to self-governing, regulatory bodies. Examples of regulated occupations include physicians, teachers, engineers, and accountants. Although many regulatory bodies have processes in place to recognize certification of Canadian workers or to bridge internationally trained workers to Canadian standards, these processes can take too long and lack transparency.

Bill 81 will require regulatory bodies to ensure its registration practices are consistent with internal trade agreements. It also gives the minister the ability to limit the additional requirements that can be imposed on labour mobility applicants to only what is essential, such as criminal record checks.

We have all heard stories of highly skilled immigrants working in a job that is well below their potential because they have not been able to get their qualifications recognized in Canada. Bill 81 will require regulatory bodies to limit the additional training experience examinations or assessments that can be imposed on internationally trained applicants to areas where they have not already demonstrated competence to the regulatory body. This should remove unnecessary duplication and reduce the cost and time that it takes for internationally trained workers to complete qualification recognition bridging.

The Act requires regulatory bodies to make registration decisions and provide written responses to applicants in a time period determined by the minister, and this will allow Saskatchewan to have the quickest turnaround time on registration decisions in the

country.

Regulatory bodies will also be required to provide processes for internal review and appeal of registration decisions. It is important that individual registration decisions still rest with the regulatory bodies, but an administratively fair appeal process will support individuals who feel that they did not receive a fair assessment of their application with reconsideration from a new decision maker.

The Act will also improve transparency for prospective workers, will require regulatory bodies to provide applicants information on their registration requirements, how long the process usually takes, registration fees, and any support available to the applicants to assist with the registration process.

It also provides the minister with a number of tools to ensure regulatory bodies are meeting their obligations. These include the ability to issue a compliance order, the ability to issue fines for non-compliance, and the ability for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to overturn any regulations, rules, or bylaws that are offside with the Act.

In many ways *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act* is the most comprehensive legislation of its kind in Canada. This will be the first legislation that has the ability to set timelines for registration decisions to come into force in Canada. The Act will apply to more occupations than any other kind of similar legislation in Canada, and this will also be the first legislation that combines both labour mobility and foreign qualification recognition, so both domestic and internationally trained workers will benefit.

Bill 81 recognizes the independence of self-governing regulatory bodies in setting the standards of practice that they deem necessary to protect the public. However, as government we have a duty to ensure that the organizations that have delegated authority to are respecting our trade agreements and that their decisions are made in a timely and transparent manner.

And this Act will further help make Saskatchewan a destination of choice for skilled labour, which could not come at a more important time with the nationwide labour shortages.

And just to reiterate, this really is a three-step objective. And really the reason for this is that we have way too many folks . . . And I think everybody at this committee has heard of examples where those who have credentials and training, whether obtained from other parts of the country or whether obtained internationally, are not able to utilize those skills and the training that they've received. There's often a variety of reasons for that, but we want to make sure that there is a very transparent process by which they can have those skills and training recognized. So that means that we are consulting on this right now, but there is going to be a regulated period, when a completed application is submitted to a regulatory body, for that body to give an answer.

So that period of time will . . . We're going to do some additional work on this, but it will be under 60 days. It could be under 30 days even, but we're going to work with our partners and the regulatory bodies so that there is a very high degree of transparency and certainty for those who are making application, to get an answer. It's not prescribing what the answer is going to

be, but that there will be an answer. If the answer is no, that there will be a provision as a part of these three steps, the second step, that there will be transparency as to what the issue is if the answer is no, with a clear explanation as to what the applicant needs to do in order to remediate whatever deficiency that application has — so transparency.

And the third part of this, and we're working through some details, would be support from the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training for those applicants to access support to remediate whatever the deficiency is to have their application be successfully submitted. So we're not talking about changing standards. Really what we're talking about is creating a high degree of certainty, a clear pathway for those who are seeking to have a credential recognized, to understand what that process is. Because oftentimes . . . The biggest complaints that we often hear aren't so much around standards or provisions. It's more around not understanding what the process is and not understanding what the timeframe might be for those credentials to be recognized or remediated if there's an issue, or even understanding what an issue might be.

So that's really what we're getting at with this. And the reason for it, I enumerated a bit. I mean, the challenge that we really have and the economy's going to have in a very significant way — already does in a lot of sectors — is going to be around procuring sufficient labour to take advantage of the economic opportunities that exist. That really is going to be a very big challenge. And we've been working on this now for 18 months, and we've seen where things were going as far as some of the challenges we are going to have as an economy.

So our great team at Immigration and Career Training have been working through that all-of-the-above menu to make sure that the economy is going to have the labour necessary to take advantage of the opportunities that are going to present themselves. So you know, this is a part of that all-of-the-above approach, including training more people here, you know, making sure that those who live in Saskatchewan can, you know, upskill if that's something they're interested in doing, but also realizing that those from outside of the province and from outside of Canada, you know, are going to be looking in competition with many other jurisdictions, about where relocation may be the most attractive.

So we really have set out with the intention, and working with our regulatory bodies, of making Saskatchewan the most attractive place to relocate to if you are outside of this province or outside of Canada, because you're going to have certainty. You're going to know what the time frame is for having a credential or skill recognized, and you're going to very clearly understand what that process is. And government will be a partner with you in having your skill and credential recognized. So really that's what this is about.

And with that, we are happy to respond to any questions.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. I think all members of this committee, I believe, support an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to addressing some of the challenges and opportunities facing this province in the coming decades. And I

appreciate the significance of this bill and its ambition in ensuring, you know, clear mobility of workers to Saskatchewan and ensuring it's the most desirable place to work and raise a family, and of course supportive also of the intention to decrease barriers to national and international mobility and help all recognize their potential.

With that said, of course, this is a new piece of legislation and a very significant one at that, so I will have some questions. I think perhaps one to start. Was this Act modelled after any other jurisdiction?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — I can maybe give the high-level answer, but maybe Clint or Derrick want to speak to it as far as the actual drafting component. The provinces of Ontario and Alberta have legislation that basically would comprise through two different statutes what we have included in the one statute, which also doesn't include in both jurisdictions all of the regulated occupations. There are exemptions included in both Alberta and in Ontario.

So I'm not sure maybe if we want to speak to some of the drafting, but this was, you know, predicated, inspired — well maybe not inspired — but this was, you know, a piece of legislation that wasn't treading entirely new territory as far as the actual technical drafting component.

**Mr. Repski:** — So when we took a look at this piece of legislation we did do some cross-jurisdictional, and I believe New Brunswick is the only province who doesn't have this type of legislation in some way, shape, or form. So when we were doing the drafting we did take a look at other provinces. The minister had mentioned some of them already, and I don't think it's inconsistent with other jurisdictions at this point.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. In regards to engagement and consultation, can you share with the committee what consultation or engagement went on with newcomer organizations?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Yeah, I can speak to that having, you know, really had the honour to be Immigration minister for eight years — yeah, I'm not sure, but eight years at least — you know, through that period of time obviously in very regular communication and contact with newcomer organizations. And virtually the number one issue in every meeting over eight years is around challenges that are experienced by newcomers around having their credentials recognized. This is, you know, something that is consistently brought forward and has been brought forward.

[16:15]

And you know, I would say that there have been, you know, there have been significant efforts in working to recognize and work through some of the challenges that existed there. But this really is, we feel, a comprehensive response that's going to make a difference for newcomers in having their skills and credentials recognized.

So I'm not sure, maybe if Clint or Derrick . . . You want to speak to additional parts of that?

**Mr. Repski:** — No, that's exactly right. So when we're talking

about the consultation, there is a list of regulators across the province who we did consult with specifically regarding newcomers. That's exactly right.

While we did have conversations with them, this has been the theme that's come up as their priority number one on a very, very regular basis. And since then it's been largely positively received in terms of, yes, this is going to help folks who are trying to settle, who are coming to Saskatchewan.

It's been a source of frustration for them for years, probably previous to the eight that the minister had spoken to. So they are very supportive of this moving forward.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — And I can maybe add just a list of some of the associations that we consulted, which is not a exhaustive list either, but just to give a flavour: Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, College Of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Saskatchewan College of Respiratory Therapists, Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists, college of occupational . . . College of Pharmacy Professionals, College of Paramedics, Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists, Association of Medical Radiation Technologists, and the list goes on. I won't go through all of it, but there has been a very lengthy list of work that's gone in. And there'll be more.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. So in regards to newcomer organizations, were there any bodies specifically consulted on Bill 81?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — You know, that's kind of a challenging question in that we've been consulting on this with newcomer organizations for a long time. You know, we had a discussion with some of the organizations listed off, some of these regulatory associations. But you know, this has been a consistent theme for a long time around credential recognition and consistent themes about what the challenges specifically are in that space as well, which really are reflected in how we drafted the statutes and how we are moving forward as far as the development of regulations.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. In regards to the impacted regulatory bodies and professional associations, can the nature of the consultation or engagement be described?

**Mr. Lepine:** — Hi. Derrick Lepine, Ministry of Immigration and Career Training. So last fall we started outreach to a variety of organizations, some of the ones that the minister listed. And what we did is we compiled a list of our jurisdictional scan that we did of other provinces, legislations similar to this kind. And we asked them what they would feel about the impact of these kinds of changes being brought in in Saskatchewan.

A lot of it was education about the internal trade agreements and what their obligations are, asking them things about how they feel about timelines, how they feel about foreign qualification recognition processes, just kind of the whole suite of changes or regulatory statutes across the country. So we provided them a list of things that could be kind of a menu of things that we could consider.

We had a series of town halls, so virtual meetings. And we explained them and went through them, gave an opportunity to have them ask questions and answer them on the virtual meeting. And then there was also a period after where they could provide written feedback, and that feedback went into our considerations when we started drafting the bill. So there was, I think, over 20 organizations, most of them regulatory bodies, that were consulted, also some employer organizations, ministries, and just a variety of stakeholders like that.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. Can you speak to the nature of some of that feedback that was received beyond, I believe you spoke about the educational component for trade agreements, but of the 20 bodies or organizations that engaged in that process?

**Mr. Repski:** — In terms of the feedback that we received from the organizations, most were again positive, saying this is a bit long overdue. And when we were talking about the things that would potentially be impacted by this, as the minister indicated — timelines, transparency, clarity to the applicant — most were saying, okay, we're already doing these things. So that shouldn't be an issue. And others were curious — what does this mean for us? Are we going to have to amend our processes potentially?

And those are pieces that, we'll be working with them as this bill is approved. You know, we'll be having the further conversations for what this is going to mean specifically for them and for their applicants and their members moving forward. So it would range from, we were fairly supportive of what's going on, and curious to what this is going to mean for them procedurally.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. One question about the skilled trades. They will be impacted by this bill should it come into force?

**Mr. Repski:** — Yes.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Okay.

**Mr. Repski:** — Yeah. When we're looking at the piece of legislation, it is for all regulated professions across the province.

**Ms. A. Young:** — And can you speak to some of the changes being contemplated for those? You know, my understanding is an individual's either an indentured apprentice or a Red Seal tradesman.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — I'll speak to this because I think it's going in a direction that the legislation really isn't going in. We're not talking about changing or prescribing processes or standards within organizations. Really what we are trying to get at is having that transparency, administrative transparency, guaranteed timelines. That is really what we are getting at.

We wouldn't rule out, I guess in exceptional circumstances maybe looking at working with regulatory bodies on some, you know, some . . . I don't even want to speculate what the issue might be. But I mean, we wouldn't completely rule it out. But I mean, the primary purpose of this, overwhelming purpose of this really is around the transparency and certainty elements for those who are seeking to have their skills and credentials recognized.

**Mr. Repski:** — Yeah, if I could just build on that. When we are

looking at what does this do, it is very procedural, in a way, to make sure it's transparent and it's being communicated and there's an appeal process and credentials are being recognized as quickly as we can. The intent of this is not to get into the level of credentialling. That still belongs to the regulatory authorities.

So this isn't about changing what's going to be recognized. It's about how they're recognized and how long it takes them to get recognized, and again, making sure that people aren't having to go through duplication of credentialling throughout to make sure that it's expedited. But it's not about changing the standard of credentialling that the regulatory bodies are there for.

**Ms. A. Young:** — So understanding that to a certain extent, harmonization across provinces is inevitable to a certain extent as it relates specifically to the trades . . . Or maybe it's more fair to say it is happening to some level already. Is there any concern specifically around apprenticeship that individuals may be leaving for, you know, other provinces such as Ontario or BC [British Columbia] to get their hours?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Yeah, sorry, I didn't catch the entire last part. But you know, with regard to provinces having mutual recognition or similar identical harmonized standards in particular areas, this work has been ongoing for a long time. And I think we've got to a point . . . There are a number of trades that are recognized across the country at this point.

I actually want to give a shout-out to Jeff Ritter, who's our CEO of the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, who really drove a lot of this work when he was the Chair of the national body of apprenticeship and trade commissions a number of years ago, who, you know, really made a priority to work with other jurisdictions in recognizing these. This is challenging work when you're working to harmonize recognition across provincial jurisdictions. Literally it means going through a lot of the provisions line by line at a very senior level. So Jeff and his counterparts really had to do a lot of that work.

There was some very good progress made and continues to be progress made as well as far as adopting those standards across the country so that if, you know, you're a plumber in Saskatchewan, that means you can be a plumber in New Brunswick. There are too many cases where, you know, a credential that you've earned in this province wouldn't be recognized in Ontario or in Nova Scotia or in British Columbia, and that really is something that we want to address.

And that table has been working through that at the national labour market ministers for, you know, a lengthy period of time, but that work at the detailed level really has been driven by officials like Jeff Ritter at the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission.

**Mr. Lepine:** — I can just add on that too. So Bill 81 considers fully certified and licensed people. So an apprentice, they would be considered a student category, a learner, so they wouldn't have received a credential yet. So that's the same for the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement.

There is work that the minister has alluded to that has covered apprentices. So in 2015 the Provincial-Territorial Apprentice

Mobility Protocol, an agreement, provided . . . It was signed off by all provinces and territories, and it provided temporary or permanent apprentice mobility. So if you needed to go . . . your employer was employing you in one jurisdiction and you were doing your hours and then you moved across provincial borders, you were able to continue receiving credit for those hours for your same jurisdiction.

And then also the permanent, so if you were going to permanently relocate and want to get credit for the hours you've done, you could move and then receive that credit because the commissions across the country work very closely together to align those standards and share information in that regard.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Perfect. Awesome. Glad to hear that. Reciprocity is important but we obviously want people coming this way, not heading the other way.

So as critic on this pretty significant bill or piece of legislation I've been doing some outreach, just checking in with regulatory bodies and some professional associations. And I think it's fair to say that many of the regulatory bodies have expressed interest in, you know, better understanding the intent of the bill and have some questions related to kind of the balance between safety and economy, which I believe we've covered off with some of the earlier discussion in terms of, you know, the intent obviously not to water down the requirements but really provide that clarity and transparency.

You know, that said, some stakeholders have talked about other licensing timelines being 24 hours, and their ability to turn that around with challenges in meeting that time frame, you know, usually occurring in regards to documentation on the part of the individual or perhaps a readiness to move. So again, you know, recognizing the scope and ambition of this bill, what areas of the labour market specifically is this bill seeking to resolve?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Yeah, maybe I'll give kind of a high-level response and then Clint and Derrick can speak as well.

You know, with regard to any specific . . . This bill applies to all of the regulated professions so it really is targeted in a very broad way at the overall objective of making sure that we have clarity and transparency, which, you know, I've talked about that earlier, as have officials, so that really is the overall.

You know, we have at different points, different labour market challenges. You know, obviously there are labour market shortages in the health care field right now. That's why we invested the additional resources we did into another 150 nurse training seats this year. But even at that, you know, the fact that we are continuing to look at additional recruitment efforts for nurses who have obtained their training outside of Canada, or from, you know, other parts of the country as well, is something that the Saskatchewan Health Authority are continuing to undertake. I can't speak to the details of that. Minister Merriman obviously would.

But at a high level, you know, we clearly have labour market challenges in particular fields and sectors. So you know, we're going to at different points probably have a bit of a different focus on those parts, but really the bill is intended to be a broad application. It is a broad application across regulated sectors. So

sure, Clint or Derrick.

**Mr. Repski:** — Sure. Regarding the timeline piece . . . It is applicable to all groups across the province that are professionally regulated. Regarding the timelines and what's appropriate and what's not, what we're going to be looking at is having the conversation with the regulatory authorities around once they have a completed application.

So obviously when you're dealing with interprovincial it should be fairly straightforward. It's probably going to be a little more commonplace. It gets a little more complicated when you're dealing with internationally credentialled people. They're going to have a different university or technical training or experience.

[16:30]

So what we're looking at is once you have a completed application, so the back-and-forth: do they have their transcripts and letters of support and whatever authentication needs to happen from the credentialling body? It's once they have a completed application.

So we do want to seek transparency. What we need to ensure is that the applicant knows the timeline throughout the process. What is the status of their application? We do want to make sure that that is transparent so people aren't waiting without knowing when the end date is.

But when we are looking at, okay, once the regulatory authority has the application, then they have a certain amount of time to let the applicant know so they're not waiting, you know, weeks and weeks or months and months unnecessarily. But that would allow time for the regulatory authority to get the application completed.

**Ms. A. Young:** — So what I'm hearing is there aren't any particular fields or specific challenges around regulation and licensing that are seeking to be addressed by this, but broadly speaking it could be any and all, depending on labour market demands?

**Mr. Repski:** — Yeah, I think that's a fair comment. As we go out and have our conversations, we are going to be seeing where they're at. It may lend itself to a certain segment of the regulators, but for right now we're planning to go and have broad consultations with all. And we don't have a mapped-out plan for what that's going to look like quite yet.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Deputy Minister. I guess for the committee, you know, I think about the dental hygienist Act, which was . . . I wasn't around for all of it, but I understand years in the making in terms of consultation and back and forth. And you know, I've spoken to many professional associations and regulatory bodies who weren't aware of this bill. I'm not saying it was anything, you know, untowards or malicious. People are busy, but you know, you spoke of an 18-month time frame. So I'm wondering if, for the committee, you could speak to perhaps the . . . urgency isn't the right word, but the timelines around the introduction of this bill and some of that consultation work happening after the fact.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Well I mean I think I would probably disagree with some of the premise of the question. You know,

we've been hearing for a long time from newcomer groups that this is really a, you know, this is a significant issue for a lot in the newcomer community.

And you know, we have been, I think, in good faith working with regulatory bodies and how some of these challenges might be addressed, and you know, frankly there continues to be an issue for newcomers to have, whether they be from within Canada or outside of Canada, having their credential or skill recognized, and issues around process as much as any of the substantive elements of it.

You know, we hear over and over again, folks who had obtained, you know, whether it be university degrees, whether it be professional designations, whether it be skilled trades designations, who just don't know how they can actually get that credential recognized in practice. And that is really what we are seeking to address through this is providing that transparency and clarity, which really will give this province a competitive advantage in attracting newcomers from outside of the province to relocate here.

When all of the other provinces continue to have the same issues that we don't, and we're able to say, look, here's what the time frames are for you to have your credential recognized and if there is a need to add, you know, additional components to whatever that training is, that there will be a transparent understanding as to what that is. And as government, we're going to partner with you so that you can get that additional training to bridge, to become a member of whatever regulatory association it is.

So you know, there's a lot of work that goes, is going to go into this. It's not a matter of kind of identifying the problem. I mean we know what the issue is. So this legislation will give us the tool though to work with our regulatory bodies to make sure that we can address some of these issues in a systematic and transparent way. And that is really what we are endeavouring to do and that we're going to continue to do in working with regulatory associations. So you know, I just want it to be very clear. I mean this isn't about changing, watering down standards. This is about making sure that those who have credentials, trades, skills, designations can have them recognized and know how to get there. I'm not sure, Clint, if you wanted to add something as well.

**Mr. Repski:** — Yeah. In terms of the time frame, I guess it's . . . We've been hearing about issues. They've been raised with us for a while. And again Saskatchewan was a bit of the anomaly not having this piece of legislation to make sure that we are consistent with labour mobility legislation across Canada.

But maybe just to give a bit of context is . . . Today we just pulled our SaskJobs number which talked about job vacancies. We're just under 18,000 jobs posted on SaskJobs and national Job Bank. So when we want to introduce this, we are looking to make sure that employers have the right number and availability of labour. And I just wanted to identify that as that's one of the reasons why we wanted to introduce this.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. No, certainly. I mean, you know, we've spoken a lot about the internationally trained applicants in this, but of course there's the labour mobility applicants contemplated in the bill as well. And I guess maybe a specific question on this. You know, there's some regulated professions

here in Saskatchewan that will have individuals who are trained in the US [United States], as maybe there's only one or two colleges in Canada that provide that education, you know, I think in particular of like the chiropractors. I believe there's two colleges in Canada. So a number of practising chiropractors in Saskatchewan would have gone to school in the United States. Would they be considered internationally trained applicants?

**Mr. Repski:** — Yes, they would.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Okay. So moving onto the bill proper, in terms of sections 10 and 11, can you speak to what the timelines will be specifically for regulatory bodies with these processes already in place? What will the outcomes be?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Yeah, I can speak to that. I think I actually spoke to it a little bit in my introductory comments. I mean, we are looking for a relatively short period of time in which there would be a response, answer so to speak, from a regulatory body for a fully completed application. You know, that's going to be a bit of a part of what we continue to consult on.

You know, I've spoken to a number of regulatory bodies already that have relatively short turnaround times, but we want to make sure that we have, you know, quite a broad understanding as to the state of the 160-or-thereabouts regulatory organizations that this will have reference application to. So we're going to work through that yet, but you know, I had mentioned under 60 for sure, unless there are some really extenuating circumstances which could be even shorter than that. My preference is to have shorter than that by a significant amount, but we want to make sure that we do the work and aren't missing anything.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. So just to be clear for the committee, any of those specific periods of time to be determined, those will become clear as the regulations . . . Okay. I see nods. For section 13, you know, it appears for the purposes of an audit, that the regulatory body will bear the cost of any audit. Can the authority of the minister or the Labour Mobility and Fair Registrations Practices Office be expanded upon in terms of how that will operate and their, you know, ability and authority to acquire information as part of an audit process?

**Mr. Repski:** — So as we're going to be working with the regulatory authorities through the new office that's being created, it would be through, just again, just the initial conversations. We are hoping to work with the regulatory authorities to do the back-and-forth around what's in compliance, what's not. And where they're found to be requiring some additional work, we'll be corresponding with them back and forth through the new office that's being created.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. And can you help the committee better understand the role of the Labour Mobility and Fair Registrations Practices Office?

**Mr. Repski:** — So to support the implementation of the Act, the Labour Mobility and Fair Registrations Practices Office has been created. The functionality for that group is assessing compliance with the Act; doing research, cross-jurisdictional; making sure that we're in compliance with the internal trade agreements that we have; and corresponding back and forth with the regulatory

authorities regarding the application of the Act.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. In regards to kind of the scope of this Act and the general provisions, am I right in reading section, you know, 21 and 22, specifically section 22, that, you know, when it speaks to “any matters governed by this Act,” this Act supersedes all preceding legislation?

**Mr. Repski:** — Yes, that’s right.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Okay. And that would apply to professional association bylaws, rules, and regulations required to file those bylaws, rules, and regulations with the Ministry of Justice?

**Mr. Repski:** — Yes, that’s right.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Okay. So what will happen then to those existing assessment processes?

**Mr. Repski:** — Can you repeat the question?

**Ms. A. Young:** — Oh, pardon me. Existing legislation superseded by this Act.

**Mr. Repski:** — So as we’re going to be working through with the regulatory authorities, if they are found to require changes to their existing bylaws to comply with this Act, we’ll have the ability to compel them to change their bylaws to become in compliance.

**Ms. A. Young:** — And can you speak to the timelines or processes being contemplated for those bodies that may not be up to the level that this Act would want them to be?

**Mr. Repski:** — I think it’s a bit early to comment on what that time frame would look like. Again, the initial work that we’re going to be doing is to have the conversation with them so that there’s a full understanding of what’s going to be expected.

In terms of if there’s a deficiency or something that needs to be addressed, we’ll have to take a look at that on a base-by-case basis. There may be a requirement that requires a bit of time. Perhaps they don’t have an automated registration process or an IT system that’s going to let them communicate out. And it’s going to be situation by situation, depending on where they’re coming from. So we’re going to be working with them, and I suspect we’ll be fairly reasonable with how we implement this.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Appreciate those comments. Thank you so much. You know, not all but some of these organizations will be, regulatory bodies will be fairly small. You know, they’ll only have annual budgets of maybe 2 or \$300,000 a year. Obviously I have no contemplation of which organizations have which budgets or which may be lacking in which areas, but are there supports being contemplated for organizations which may have those smaller budgets but may have work to do? You know, you mentioned IT systems and processes for digital registration. Those could be fairly significant budgetary items for some of these organizations.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — I could probably address this a little bit. I would say that we wouldn’t rule out any sort of, you know, compliance support for regulatory bodies, associations. I

wouldn’t see that being kind of the standard practice, but through our office, we’ve been working through some different scenarios about, you know, what the scope of the role is going to be with regard to some of these questions. So I would just say, you know, we haven’t made any final decisions, but I wouldn’t rule anything out at this point.

**Mr. Repski:** — And some of the changes that may be required is smaller organizations who only have an annual meeting, they may have to up their board meetings. If their bylaws require that their board sign off on any new credentialled persons under their jurisdiction, they may have to increase the number of and frequency of their meetings. Pretty low-cost item, but very, very impactful to the applicant.

[16:45]

**Ms. A. Young:** — So in regards to these smaller organizations, I’ve also heard concerns from stakeholders, you know, as it pertains to section 25 for offences and penalties, that these could potentially bankrupt a smaller organization. I understand of course that there’s discretion involved in offences and penalties, but you know, looking at these and also understanding these as continuing offence provisions, I suppose I’m looking for some comment in terms of the intention of this.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — I would just say as a matter of practice in administrative law, I mean you have offence provisions. You have fines associated with those offence provisions. You hope that you don’t have to use those offence provisions at any point, but you know, as a kind of standard drafting practice obviously you do. Maybe how we came to this point, Clint, I can hand it to you.

**Mr. Repski:** — So when we were looking at other pieces of legislation as a comparator, it’s very standard language in other pieces of legislation across. And when we are looking at . . . Again as the minister said, I mean hopefully we don’t need to use this. But at the end of the day, if you are finding a group who recognizes, and we’ve worked with them through a number of different channels and escalated the process, ultimately there has to be a repercussion for not being in compliance with internal trade agreements.

**Ms. A. Young:** — And section 25(4), my read is that, you know, an executive director, employee, council, board would also be considered guilty of an offence in addition to the organization. Is this accurate?

**Mr. Repski:** — Yes, it is.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Okay. And can you speak to the differences in implication for regulatory bodies? I assume it would be most of them who carry director’s and officer’s liability and those who would not.

**Mr. Lepine:** — Yeah. So it is, you mentioned, still at our discretion whether to issue individual fines or corporate fines, or it gives us the option to issue both or either. In terms of body or corporation carries liability for individuals, I’m not an expert in that law, but I would say that it would likely be covered by the organization. And in terms if there isn’t, then it would be up to the individual’s responsibility as outlined in the Act.



**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. And I'm not an expert on this either. Is this a standard inclusion, in terms of offences and penalties, to have that apply to individuals as well?

**Mr. Lepine:** — Yeah. It's in our foreign worker recruitment and immigration services Act as well. And it is kind of standard language that we've found in other provinces in their legislation, to have it for corporations and individuals.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — I can just maybe add to that. It's a standard practice in drafting.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Awesome. Thank you. I've also heard some concern from stakeholders, you know, around — we kind of touched on it — the wording states that this Act will supersede all preceding Acts and regulations. So I guess kind of a broader question is, how do you plan on balancing the independence of regulatory bodies with the provisions laid out in this Act?

**Mr. Repski:** — I don't think it really does become an issue. So this umbrella piece of legislation, as we mentioned before, it will be the responsibility of those regulatory authorities to come in compliance with this piece of legislation. Where they're not, that's where the further work of the office is going to come into play. So what is it about their bylaws? Is it that they can't meet the timelines? Is it that they don't have an appeal process? And they may need to make changes with their bylaws and policies.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. So this language then would be typical, used in other Acts?

**Mr. Repski:** — Yes it is.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. So you know, not all but certainly many organizations would have robust and transparent, objective and fair processes, you know, aimed at protecting public interest. And I would also speculate that in addition, you know, transfers into our province are important for many bodies to maintain adequate membership numbers and to address labour market demands. So for organizations or regulatory bodies who have open, transparent, national mobility processes, will they be given a blanket exemption in the regulations?

**Mr. Repski:** — No, they won't. That's one of the things that we're going to have to meet with the regulators on, and we're going to have to make sure that they are in compliance. If they are, then they may carry on with the processes that they have in place. But at this point in time, there's no area, there's no trade, there's no profession that's going to be exempt from this provision.

**Mr. Lepine:** — I would just add that the national associations that regulatory bodies often are members of, they don't usually wade into the areas of administrative process, such as this Act describes. It's more about aligning. There's a common standard in terms of entry to practice or scope of practice, and I think that they would be very consistent with the things put forward in Bill 81.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. So for those organizations, should there be, you know, challenges, would these be handled on an applicant-by-applicant basis?

**Mr. Repski:** — The approach that we're going to take are those systemic challenges, so there may be issues that are raised, and we do get those periodically, that's going to be more of a window into the organization in terms of what's working and what's not. The approach that we want to take with the application of this Act is those systemic pieces. Chances are if it's happening for one applicant, it's happening for more. But we're going to be looking at the policies, the bylaws, the broader impact, not necessarily case by case.

**Ms. A. Young:** — So should there be any concerns around, like criminal matters, discipline histories, active practice conditions, those would still all be handled by the regulatory bodies.

**Mr. Repski:** — Yeah, I would say that's fair to say.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Okay. So there's no role for the new office in contemplating those case-by-case exemptions?

**Mr. Repski:** — Case-by-case exemptions?

**Ms. A. Young:** — You know, should an individual wish to challenge the ruling or adjudication of the regulatory body.

**Mr. Repski:** — Like I said, we're going to be working with the organization as a whole, not necessarily on specific applicants.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you. Can you provide any update or clarity in terms of timeline for the regulations?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — You know, that's one of the items we're still working through. You know, these things do take a bit of time putting them together but I would say, you know, the next number of months is what our target is. I probably am more aggressive than some on what the appropriate time frame will be, but you know, we're going to continue to move forward with this. And there's significant work being done right now. This is a priority at the ministry, and I want to see this move forward as quickly as we possibly can move it forward but making sure we do the work.

**Ms. A. Young:** — For sure. For sure hearing that. But in coming into force, this Act comes into force on assent, which I believe means is Bill 81 will take effect likely on the last day of session based on, you know, kind of past practice. What are then the implications for the regulatory bodies when this Act comes into force?

**Mr. Repski:** — So when the Act does come into force, it does stand on its own as a unique piece of the legislation. It doesn't require regs to come into force. But you're right in terms of, you know, this is an Act and it is going to be enforced. So we are going to be meeting with the regulatory bodies. We're planning to do that very, very soon once this is in effect. But it will be the responsibility of those regulatory bodies to get in compliance with this, with the Act.

**Ms. A. Young:** — So all these areas where there is some, you know, looser language around timelines, my understanding would be that would be specified in the regulations, which I've heard are going to be developed in the next several months in consultation with these bodies. So any enforcement of this bill will be done in the interim at the discretion of the minister?

**Mr. Repski:** — That would be the powers of the minister to prescribe these time frames. So in absence of having the regulations, they could be a policy that is implemented that we post that's going to make very, very public what these time frames are going to be.

But you're right. As soon as this receives proclamation, we will have the ability to prescribe the timelines. So obviously the regulatory authorities will be given, you know, written correspondence for what those are going to look like, and we haven't developed that yet.

**Ms. A. Young:** — But just to be clear . . . And you know, I recognize the intent and spirit of this legislation is positive. But you know, some of the concerns coming from stakeholders specifically around not understanding what these time frames are, some of the concerns around offences and penalties, is there any intention to enforce this prior to the regulations being drafted or passed?

**Mr. Repski:** — Well the Act itself is in force, so it is live and they are going to have to come in compliance. But in terms of jumping straight to a fine or a penalty, that's not the intent, where we're going to start issuing citations for non-compliance right out of the gate. The intention and the process we'll be taking is to work with the regulatory authorities. Ultimately it could escalate to a point where there's a fine, but that would be a number of steps to get to that point. So as we are having conversations, we'll have a better handle on what is that time frame and we will be communicating that with them.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Yeah, and I would just add to that as well, I mean, the intention is absolutely not to be out imposing penalties and punitive measures on associations. Really we're going to be endeavouring to work with them very closely. I really see this as being a collaborative thing, and I think that the vast majority of associations — I hope all, but for sure the vast majority — are going to see this as a positive and something that, you know, in collaboration working with the ministry and the associations, is going to end up benefiting the people who we all really want to benefit, which are the workers who would be members of those associations.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you and final question. Just to be clear — it was kind of discussed earlier, but to be real clear — all professional associations required to file their bylaws, rules, regulations with the Ministry of Justice will be subject to this Act. There's no exemptions being given.

**Mr. Repski:** — Under the Act, the minister does have the authority to exempt. But as this comes in force, no, there are no professions that are going to be exempt from this.

**Ms. A. Young:** — And have all of those professional associations been consulted? I've got a list. I can read it, but that doesn't seem like a good use of the committee's time.

**Mr. Repski:** — No, not all have been consulted. Across the province there's over 60 regulatory authorities across the province. We had conversations and consultations with approximately half to inform the draft of this. The rest of the organizations, we'll be in contact with them in the next couple of months.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. No further questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Seeing no further questions, we will proceed to vote on the clauses. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 28 inclusive agreed to.]

[17:00]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act*.

I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 81, *The Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Act* without amendment. Mr. Steele so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Minister, if you would like to have any closing remarks on this bill. Any closing remarks?

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Sorry, Madam Chair. No, other than to thank the committee and thank officials.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Young, do you have any closing remarks?

**Ms. A. Young:** — I'd extend my thanks to you, Madam Chair, to my colleagues in this committee, as well as to the minister and to the officials for their hard work on this legislation and in being present here tonight.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. And ministry folk can leave if they so wish to at this point in time while we finish voting off the estimates for SRC [Saskatchewan Research Council].

### General Revenue Fund Saskatchewan Research Council Vote 35

**The Chair:** — Okay. We will now proceed to voting off the estimates for Saskatchewan Research Council. Vote 35, Saskatchewan Research Council, page 103, Saskatchewan Research Council, subvote (SR01) in the amount of 20,309,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Saskatchewan Research Council, vote 35 — 20,309,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2023, the following sums for Saskatchewan Research Council: the amount of 20,309,000.

Mr. Lemaigre so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. The Clerk will now hand out the draft report to committee members. Committee members, you have before you a draft of the third report of the Standing Committee on the Economy. We require a member to move the following motion:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

Mr. Francis, I recognize.

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

That the third report . . .

**The Chair:** — Just one second. Your light needs to come on.

**Mr. Francis:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. I move:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Mr. Francis has so moved the motion. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. That concludes our business today, and I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment. Mr. Steele so moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. This committee now stands adjourned to the call of the Chair. Thank you, everyone.

[The committee adjourned at 17:05.]