



STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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Ms. Lisa Lambert
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Mr. Tim McLeod
Moose Jaw North

Mr. Greg Ottenbreit
Yorkton

[The committee met at 17:30.]

The Chair: — All right. So welcome to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. My name is Mark Docherty. I'm the Chair. With us tonight as part of this committee are Gary Grewal, Travis Keisig, Lisa Lambert, Tim McLeod, Greg Ottenbreit, and substituting for Ms. Betty Nippi-Albright is Nicole Sarauer.

Committee members, I'd like to advise you that the live broadcast is temporarily audio only. You can access the proceedings of the committee on your local legislative channel or online. The *Hansard* verbatim will continue to be made available at the earliest opportunity.

This evening the committee will be considering estimates and supplementary estimates for Justice and Attorney General; Corrections, Policing and Public Safety; and Integrated Justice Services.

**General Revenue Fund
Justice and Attorney General
Vote 3**

Subvote (JU01)

The Chair: — We'll now begin our consideration of vote 3, Justice and Attorney General, central management and services, subvote (JU01) and vote 91, Integrated Justice Services. Mr. Wyant, please introduce your officials and make your opening comments.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. To my left, Glen Gardner, deputy minister of Justice and deputy attorney general. And of course we have a number of officials that are online who are prepared to help us in an adjoining room.

Well, Mr. Chair, good evening, everyone. I'm pleased to be here to provide the highlights of the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General's 2021-22 financial plan and to answer any questions. Before I begin, I do want to thank Elder Elmer who provided a smudge ceremony for us on the west lawn of the legislature this afternoon — he's our senior Indigenous advisor — to help us start tonight in a good way. So thank you to him for that.

Mr. Chair, every citizen in our province relies on the justice system to provide them with access to justice, whether that be criminal, civil, family, or through a tribunal. With our partners in the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, we maintain a fair and equitable justice system that responds to the needs of our citizens. There are over a million court appearances made each year in 85 court points. We coordinate and administer all the services required to make that happen.

We protect vulnerable people in our society, including those who cannot manage their financial matters independently, those that suffer from interpersonal violence and abuse, and children and parents that need support during family breakdown. We ensure that citizens have mechanisms in which to resolve disputes with each other, such as between landlords and tenants, or with other entities such as the police service or SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance].

Throughout the province we have a team of highly dedicated and experienced people providing these services. They unfortunately are not able to be here with us in person today, but the work they do is remarkable, and they certainly have my thanks. Today I'm only joined, as I mentioned, in the room by Glen Gardner, the deputy minister of Justice and deputy attorney general. We will do our best to answer the questions, but may need to step out of the room to gather more detail from officials.

Mr. Chair, this budget aligns with our government's goals of protecting Saskatchewan people through the remainder of the pandemic, building the infrastructure that a robust economy needs, and growing Saskatchewan to help ensure a strong economic recovery. We have additional funding in place to assist the court system in maintaining its pandemic measures this year. This includes additional staffing, cleaning, and the use of temporary space to maintain physical distancing. These measures are critical to ensuring the courts continue to function during the pandemic and that public confidence in the justice system is maintained.

We're implementing a package of initiatives that support our ongoing commitment to access to justice. This includes new resources for family dispute resolution, protection for vulnerable individuals, and enhancements to our provincial justice system.

We're also expanding access to justice in the area of family law. The child support recalculation pilot has been quite successful over the last three years. Now that this project has proven its effectiveness, we will be making it permanent and increasing its funding.

We will also be taking significant steps over the next year to implement online innovations to modernize processes for ourselves and for the public. For example, we are devoting nearly \$5 million to implement the first phase of the e-justice initiative, summary offences project. This initiative will allow the public to resolve disputes online without having to travel to a court house. We are excited about this project's potential to improve access to justice and court operations, and for how it will inform future e-justice projects.

Mr. Chair, in partnership with Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, we are devoting nearly \$4 million to the expansion of the courts' use of video technology to RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] detachments, municipal detention centres, and correctional facilities. Video conferencing has proved itself to be an effective tool in managing inmates' court appearances, even prior to the pandemic. Since the pandemic became, it has become indispensable.

This budget also includes \$800,000 for addressing interpersonal violence and abuse in our province. This funding will provide for a number of initiatives, including the implementation of family intervention rapid support teams in two Saskatchewan communities. Once established, these teams will be responsible for working with families experiencing violence or at risk of violence. We are currently exploring which communities would be best suited for these teams. We're also providing more funding for transportation for individuals and their children who are fleeing violence.

Additional interpersonal violence initiatives coming out of this year's budget include the enhancement of interpersonal violence services available through United Way's 211 call line, the continued development of our interpersonal violence awareness campaign, an expansion of the victims' advocate case review project, and support for a second domestic violence death review.

We're also taking significant steps in improving police oversight in Saskatchewan through this budget. The Public Complaints Commission will receive \$287,000 in additional funding to begin transition to the serious incident response team model. The SIRT [serious incident response team] will investigate all deaths, serious injuries, sexual assaults, and incidents of spousal violence related to the actions of an on- and off-duty police officer.

At the Office of Residential Tenancies, we're providing additional online and in-person resources aimed at improving client experience.

Mr. Chair, in closing, the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General is taking significant steps this year to improve the administration of justice of our province. We are proud of our accomplishments over the past year, and we will continue to collaborate with our stakeholders and community partners to achieve greater success in the future. The funding for the 2021-22 fiscal year will ensure that the ministry can continue to provide a fair and accessible justice system for the people of this great province.

Mr. Chair, those are the highlights. I'd certainly be pleased to answer any of your questions about the plan and the budget for the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister. Ms. Sarauer, the floor is yours. Any questions?

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Minister, for your opening remarks, and I appreciate you being here tonight as well as Mr. Gardner. It's a shame I don't get the opportunity to see the rest of the officials that I normally get to see at estimates. It's always a pleasure to get to speak with them and I only get to, often, see them once a year. I regret not being able to see them but understand what we're doing to make sure that everyone stays safe this evening.

My first set of questions, I'm going to try to do the best I can to lump questions into topics just so that it's a little bit easier for you and your officials, but I can't make any guarantees. I'm also used to, because there's some overlap between Justice and Corrections and Policing sometimes, as you know . . . Some of those areas fall within Corrections and Policing, so forgive me if I ask something that's appropriate for the other ministry and I'll save those comments for a couple of hours from now.

My first set of questions is around the coroner's office. Mr. Weighill had made 44 recommendations for that office in 2018. Can you give an update on whether all of those recommendations have been implemented? And if not, which ones are outstanding?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The Saskatchewan Coroners Service has implemented over half of the recommendations to date. I can go through them if you like.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you just commit to tabling the ones that are outstanding for the record instead of going through them all that are outstanding?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Sure. We'll undertake to provide you with a list of the ones that have been implemented and the ones that are pending.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Could you also provide a timeline for the outstanding ones for when they are intended to be implemented?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That would be a conversation that I'll have to have with the Chief Coroner to determine what the timing is on those. But certainly I'll undertake to have that conversation with him and provide some estimates.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Has the coroner's office undertaken any COVID-related investigations since the onset of the pandemic?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There's not been any COVID-specific changes. And they're treated as natural deaths, and the coroner's office doesn't investigate natural deaths. And COVID deaths are classified as natural deaths and are investigated by the doctors. So the answer would be no.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, so just to confirm, there's been no increase in workload at the coroner's office that would be related to the pandemic?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well I wouldn't say that. I mean there's certainly been an increase in workloads for all areas within Justice just simply because of the nature of the pandemic, but nothing specific. Although certainly the general protocols that would be put in place in an office may well challenge them in some ways. But nothing specific.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. From what I understand, I believe in Health estimates, the Minister of Health had mentioned that the coroner is implicated in how deaths have been reported. We might just pull the exact quote just to make sure that we're all speaking from the same songbook. Oh, I can read you the exact quote that Minister Merriman said in committee. So our critic had asked if the minister could confirm that these deaths, COVID deaths, are currently being accounted for, or will the data be delayed until after a coroner investigates them? And could this be contributing to the number of excess deaths reported over the last year?

And then Minister Merriman said . . . Oh, this was in question period; my apologies. He said:

I do recall that question was asked of me in committee last week. And that was a study out of the U of T that was brought up in question period, Mr. Speaker, about how we are recording [deaths].

Mr. Speaker, every doctor who does a certificate of death . . . they fill out that certificate of death with extreme accuracy, Mr. Speaker. That is because it is very important to have closure for the family, and that if there are extenuating circumstances with any death, there is the

coroner that gets involved. There is pathology that is done to make sure that the certificate of death is accurate, Mr. Speaker. To be able to say that the doctors aren't doing their job, Mr. Speaker, is just completely inaccurate.

So I suppose the minister had mentioned that sometimes, as we know, when there are extenuating circumstances in deaths the coroner gets involved. But what I'm understanding, you're telling me is that the coroner's office, which doesn't investigate natural deaths, which is what COVID deaths have been labelled as, the coroner's office has not investigated any of the deaths that have been labelled due to COVID.

[17:45]

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — This is whether the coroner hasn't investigated any deaths related to COVID, that's your question?

Ms. Sarauer: — Correct.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I think we're just going to have to step out and have a quick call with the coroner, if you don't mind.

I hope this is the answer to your question. When the coroner has attended a death that's been ruled to be COVID-related, there's no investigation. But he does then report those COVID deaths to the medical health officer.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you for that answer. I have a question about the Public Complaints Commission and the new serious incident response team. Now as we both know, the former Chair of the PCC [Public Complaints Commission], when *The Police Act* was being reviewed about a year ago, had mentioned that their current workload at that time was unmanageable, I think, is how he described it.

So when you remove the additional SIRT funding from this budget, which I believe is about \$287,000, that only leaves about a \$17,000 increase for the PCC. Does your ministry feel that this will be adequate to address the workload at the PCC?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — You may recall, there was some additional funding to the PCC in last year's budget. Currently there's no backlog at the PCC. The thinking is that with the new investigation, the new individuals that will be retained to do the investigations at the PCC, certainly there'll be staff individuals which will be able to backstop any PCC work to the extent that they're not doing serious incident responses.

So there'll be some additional resources made available to the PCC to do their work to the extent that those new staff positions aren't tied up doing SIRT investigations. But there's currently no backlog, and I think the resources that were provided in the budget last year were sufficient to be able to resolve that.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. I have a question about the carbon tax Supreme Court challenge. And my question is around the total costs associated with that court challenge.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — As you know, the majority of that work was done by staff lawyers at the Ministry of Justice. There was about \$580,000 that was spent by the ministry in respect of support for that application throughout. So it was \$580,000.

Ms. Sarauer: — \$580,000. Did that include flights and accommodation while the challenge was being argued in Ottawa?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — So \$580,000 is the total cost that was paid to the third-party firm?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That's correct.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Could you tell me what the ministry is doing to address systemic racism within the justice system?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I'll start this conversation. I may ask Deputy Minister Gardner to step in. There's certainly a number of things that are being done within the Ministry of Justice and within the Ministry of Policing and Corrections and Public Safety around this issue. And you'll note it in my opening comments, the engagement of the Indigenous advisor within the ministry to continue providing ongoing advice to us.

But I'll just highlight a couple of things for you. Since March of 2018 we have appointed five Indigenous provincial judges to the Provincial Court, three of whom are women. We believe that appointing more Indigenous judges is part of our continued commitment to increase representation and enhance the voice for First Nations and Métis people.

Within the justice system we've established an elders forum that provides advice on justice-related issues, policies, and programs, as I'd mentioned, including male and female First Nations and Métis elders from all Indigenous language groups throughout the province.

We provided \$29 million annually in Indigenous justice programs and services including First Nations on-reserve policing and enhanced policing, community justice and alternative measures programs, crime prevention initiatives, northern victim services, and interpersonal violence and abuse programs.

We have signed an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with Whitecap Dakota First Nation and Muskoday First Nation back in 2019 to work collaboratively to find solutions to enforce First Nations laws on reserve. We've established a joint working group in that area.

Certainly we continue to support the work that's being done and the values of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We're quite proud of the fact that Saskatchewan was the first government to support the initiative that had brought forward by the federal government with respect to that inquiry.

Since that final report was issued, we've done a number of amendments to *The Police Act*, as you mentioned. We've talked about the serious incident response team which is going to involve as part of it, as you know, a community liaison in respect of any action or any circumstance that involves a First Nation or Métis individual.

We've done a number of other things across government, but I think that that at least highlights a few things. I think we could

probably talk about this for quite a while, the work that we're doing in terms of the conversations around missing and murdered and a number of other conversations that are happening within the ministry.

This is one of the initiatives within the ministry. Although all initiatives are important, we take this one very, very seriously.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Could you tell me who participates on the elders forum that you had just mentioned?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We'll get the names for you.

We don't typically divulge the names. They're certainly representative, but for privacy reasons we don't publish those names. I can tell you that, as I mentioned before, they're certainly representative of gender and community. The ministry works quite hard to find traditional elders across all languages: Métis, First Nations, etc. So we would have to ask the elders if we could publish or disclose their names.

Mr. Gardner: — And I would add, at any given time there's about a dozen on the elder committee.

Ms. Sarauer: — The Kimberly Squirrel review, is that just with the Ministry of Corrections or is the Ministry of Justice participating in that as well?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Both the ministers, myself as the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety have requested an internal review of the circumstances surrounding her release, and that was in accordance with section 105 of *The Correctional Services Act*. So that review is being done in addition to the independent investigation done by the Saskatoon Police Service and the Coroners Service. And so I don't have any advice for you as to where those investigations are at, just that they're ongoing.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. I was hoping for a timeline for when that would be concluded. Is what you're saying is that you don't know when they'll be finished?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes, I don't have access to any information from the Saskatoon Police Service. We could certainly get an estimate from the coroner's office and from within the ministry, but I wouldn't want to pin us down to a particular time frame. Just that I think it's important that these investigations are done quickly, thoroughly of course, but quickly because I think there's . . . The public and the family certainly want some answers on this. So we'll get them done as quickly as we can but certainly without any compromise to the thoroughness of those investigations.

[18:00]

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. So the ministry's investigation has not been concluded yet?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — It has not been concluded. No.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Could you tell me how many Gladue reports were prepared over the past year?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The Gladue principles are incorporated to all pre-sentence reports. As I understand, there was two formal reports that were done.

Ms. Sarauer: — Two actual Gladue reports?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Right. Noting, as I mentioned, that those considerations are taken into account in all pre-sentence reports.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you provide an update on the progress with the Law Society on the paralegal program? That's been a program that's been a bit ongoing. From last year's estimates there was an indication that by fall of 2020, there was some hope to make some progress with respect to the categories and regulations that would be needed to bring a formal paralegal program to the province.

Mr. Gardner: — I haven't had any updates from the Law Society. I expect, like many things, it's been up in the air with COVID. Certainly we are continuing to expand our use of paralegals within the ministry and we'll continue to do that. It's a great support for our professionals. But I haven't had an update on the status with the Law Society. and I'm not aware of any other groups that have applied for limited licence practitioners or anything of that nature.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Certainly the question around categories and oversight, as Deputy Minister Gardner says, the Law Society continues to work on that.

Ms. Sarauer: — Hopefully that's something that the Law Society can pick up on again once we're through this, the time that we're in right now. That's for sure.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We have regular conversations with the Law Society and we'll talk to them.

Ms. Sarauer: — I have a question about . . . and you had indicated this in your opening remarks, and I was aware of this before, that the 211 phone line has been now utilized for assisting individuals who need access to services for interpersonal violence. Could you tell me why 211 was the line given this contract?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — So the call line was initiated; certainly the organization that provides that had existing infrastructure in place. They provide similar services inside and outside of Saskatchewan with interpersonal agencies. So we felt that that was certainly the right agency to be able to provide the service.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. And how much . . .

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — And the most important thing is that they did have an existing infrastructure in place, which certainly has a material effect on the cost of the delivery.

Ms. Sarauer: — How much was provided to them for funding for this?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — \$450,000 over three years.

Ms. Sarauer: — 211, does it employ staff within Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There's one FTE [full-time equivalent] in Saskatchewan, and that's the one we're funding.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sorry, can you repeat that?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There's one FTE in Saskatchewan.

Ms. Sarauer: — One what, sorry?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — One person.

Ms. Sarauer: — One person. Okay, I've got you.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Sorry.

Ms. Sarauer: — The company, 211, where is it based?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The call centre is based in British Columbia.

Ms. Sarauer: — Was there an RFP [request for proposal] put out for this contract?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There was not. It was sole-sourced, falling within the parameters of the government's ability to sole-source the contract, of course.

Ms. Sarauer: — The individuals who answer 211 calls, so the 211 employees, have they received trauma-informed training?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — It's part of the contract that we have that they have that training.

Ms. Sarauer: — And so it's required in the contract that their employees must receive trauma-informed training?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That's correct, yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you, Minister, agree to provide the committee a copy of that contract?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I'll have to take that under advisement and have a conversation with Deputy Minister Gardner before I make the commitment.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you provide me with how much the ministry allocates for funding for judicial training?

Mr. Gardner: — I may be able to get you more exact numbers, but there is a specific allocation for judges' training in the compensation package for judges which is their money to spend.

We also provide money to the National Judicial Institute to support training for judges, and we significantly increased that this year at the request of the National Judicial Institute. And of course they have their own internal training that court services funds as part of operations of the court.

So there's several places they can get training from. I'm not sure that I've got an exact number, but let's see what we're pulling up here.

Ms. Sarauer: — I'm interested specifically in the amount that's

provided to the National Judicial Institute, if that helps. If that makes it easier for you to find.

Mr. Gardner: — I just signed the cheque. I'm trying to remember what it was.

It hadn't been updated since the 1990s, and the NJI [National Judicial Institute] made a request of all provinces. We were the first to comply and actually upped our current allocation this year. We'd already paid it, but we topped it up to the recommended amount and we'll pay that amount in the future. It's about \$900 per judge, if I recall right.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There was an amount that was requested by the institute and as Deputy Minister Gardner mentioned, we met that request and somewhat exceeded it.

Ms. Sarauer: — The number is about \$900 per judge, you'd say?

Mr. Gardner: — If I recall right. I'm just waiting to see . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — That's including the top-up? Is that total?

Mr. Gardner: — That's the new number, yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. And all levels of the judiciary are able to access that training institute?

[18:15]

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well the number that relates to the judges of the Provincial Court, yes. The other judges of the superior court, dealt with differently. But this is the money that's provided for the training of the Provincial Court judges which we're responsible for.

Ms. Sarauer: — Training for superior courts are covered by the federal government, correct?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Gardner: — Most of the funding for the National Judicial Institute comes from the federal government, and then this is top-up to provide training to Provincial Court judges across the country.

Ms. Sarauer: — Do the feds provide any funding for Provincial Court judges? Or I suppose because they provide funding through . . . or no.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We don't provide any funding, but they provide the funding and then the institute provides the training. And the Provincial Court judges are able to attend that training as part of that.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. I understand there has been an increase to 911 fees. Could you provide some background on that?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I think that's . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — Is that Corrections?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I think that's probably a question that you

should ask the Minister Responsible for Corrections.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, I will save it. I'm amazed that's the only one I've hit so far, frankly.

I have a question about access to sexual assault kits in hospitals. I understand this would be an issue that pertains to both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice.

But from what I understand, 40 per cent of hospitals in Canada do not have these kits available. And from what I've understood in past conversations with officials in the ministry, they are not available in most rural locations in the province. Has the ministry looked into addressing this barrier in helping survivors of sexual assault get justice?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Just in answer to your question, that's a Health initiative. I know that there are officials within the Ministry of Corrections and Policing and Justice that are working with our partners in Health around expanding availability, but primarily that's a Health initiative.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you provide some information on the family law dispute resolution project? Now P.A. [Prince Albert] was running the pilot project in 2020. I know that's been expanded of course because of the rules, I believe. Could you provide some more information, an update on that project: how it went, how many files went through that project, and then about its expansion?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That was the pilot in Prince Albert, right?

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well I can give you a little bit of an update here. They had reported in terms of how the pilot has gone. The P.A. judicial centre has reported a reduction in the number of new contested family law applications. They thought that that was a fairly good indicator. COVID and a change to the court database, it's made some data unavailable at this time, but it's anticipated that we're going to have some better data available within the year.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So you won't be able to provide any data as to how many files went through that project, then?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well I guess we could provide some information on that, but it wouldn't be very current just simply because of the circumstances we find ourselves in. But certainly the apparent success of the program up in Prince Albert was what gave us some desire to kind of expand that program to Regina.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you provide some details about the expansion of the project?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Sure.

Mr. Gardner: — It's currently in Regina. It expanded to Regina. And sort of the initial responses to it anecdotally are very positive, but we can get you more data as that develops.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Certainly I think one of the desires to expand the program to Regina was that a large judicial centre was needed to kind of further test the pilot because it's fairly small, smaller in Prince Albert. And Regina's certainly going to be able to provide us with more information about how effective the program is. And certainly if we see the effectiveness of the program, we'll certainly consider about whether we're going to expand it to other places in the province.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you provide some details — I don't know if this is for you to provide me later or if it's available now — but I'm curious to know if there's additional staffing that's hired for the Regina project and what that staff will do and how much money is being allocated for that expansion.

Mr. Gardner: — For '20-21, the budget includes 345,000 and 2.3 FTEs annualizing to 525 and 3 FTEs to manage the program. And then there'll be some cost recovery from that; because it's a fee-generating service, some of that will come back as fees. And an additional 310,000 to basically expand the ability to provide mediation services. But most of the services under that program will be provided by service providers outside of the ministry. Like there's a broad range of service providers that qualify for that program.

Ms. Sarauer: — Can you explain what those FTE allocations will do?

Mr. Gardner: — Intake in the program, in some cases providing the service where there aren't other service providers. So some it's for direct-service provision. I can get you more of a breakdown if you would like. I'm just looking to see if it's rolled up here. And resources aren't specifically to support Regina. It's a province-wide program and investment is therefore with the program as it expands as well.

Ms. Sarauer: — You mentioned, Mr. Gardner, that this would be a fee-generating program. Can you provide some background as to that statement?

Mr. Gardner: — If people access a private service provider, obviously there's a fee for that. The role of the DRO [dispute resolution office] mostly is to fill in gaps and provide services where people can't access those services for some reason or there's, you know, it's in an area of the province where it's not convenient to access services. And where people need, the fee can be waived or reduced so that everyone can access the service. There are currently 77 service providers available.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. In Regina or province-wide?

Mr. Gardner: — Across the province.

Ms. Sarauer: — Across the province. I have a few questions about interpersonal violence in particular. In the 2020 estimates the ministry provided funding for a new outreach worker in the west central area of Saskatchewan. Could you tell me what CBO [community-based organization] ended up taking the contract?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The West Central Crisis and Support Centre.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is the funding for that outreach worker, has that

been carried through for this budget as well?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — In 2020 estimates, the former minister of Justice indicated that the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women had committed to reviewing second-stage domestic violence shelters. Could you tell me what the status is of that review?

[18:30]

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I think certainly the issue of second-stage housing is one that's looked at between the office of the Status of Women and Social Services. Perhaps you could just repeat your question.

Ms. Sarauer: — Last estimates I was in, the Minister of Justice had indicated that the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women had committed to reviewing second-stage domestic violence shelters which was a question I asked in Justice estimates because, as you know, the ministry provides funding for, well first-stage domestic violence shelters. Could you provide an update on what the status of that review that the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women was doing?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes. As I understand, the review has been completed. It was a review that was done with respect to the provision of second-stage housing across the country and provisions of that. I think the question is probably better put to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in terms of where the report's at and what the outcomes of that report were.

Ms. Sarauer: — I understand that second-stage housing shelters at this time do receive some money from the Ministry of Social Services; however they don't receive operating funding. And they've long advocated for operating funding in particular from the Ministry of Justice, consistent with what we see for first-stage shelters. Has the Ministry of Justice looked into providing that sort of operating funding for second-stage shelters? And if not, would the Ministry of Justice be interested in pursuing the feasibility of that in the future?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well I'll answer it this way. Certainly the issue of second-stage housing is one which we have an active conversation around between, not just my office, but the Minister of Corrections and Policing, the Status of Women, and Social Services. So it is a topic of conversation. We continue to have that dialogue between those offices.

Ms. Sarauer: — And just to clarify, has the Ministry of Justice provided any funding in this budget for second-stage domestic violence shelters?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There's no operational dollars allocated specifically to second-stage housing. You'll know that there was an additional \$800,000 which was prioritized on a number of noted projects as a result of feedback from stakeholders and some factors that are specific to Saskatchewan. So that's where the additional funds . . . But in answer to your question, no.

Ms. Sarauer: — Has the ministry kept track or able to keep track of how many requests have been made since Clare's Law has been implemented to access that information?

Mr. Gardner: — We do have that information.

Ms. Sarauer: — Great.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Just have to find it. We'll step out and get the information for you.

We have had 10 requests so far that we know. And I can't tell you up until what date that was, but certainly I think with the recent announcement around the RCMP being able to provide some of that information to people in those communities that the RCMP serves . . . Although certainly they were able to get that information from municipal police forces, but we . . . But that's the number now.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. We are also very happy to see that the RCMP are now a part of the project. Are you able to share what centres those 10 requests were made?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We don't have that information.

Ms. Sarauer: — Minister, in your opening remarks you spoke a bit about funding for transportation for those fleeing interpersonal violence. Could you provide some more information about that?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The increase will . . . As you know, the budget allowed for additional \$800,000 for interpersonal violence initiatives so that the funds will be coming out of there. I can't tell you exactly today what that allocation is going to be because there was a number of programs that are going to be funded with that additional amount.

Ms. Sarauer: — So you don't have any further information as to the piece about providing transportation for those fleeing interpersonal violence at this time?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The program is going to be developed in consultation with some community stakeholders over the next couple of months as I understand, and aim to reduce the barriers with respect to transportation. But just give me half a sec. It's \$50,000 annualized to 95 and that's general parameters of the . . . [inaudible] . . . that are going to be used for enhancing the program.

Ms. Sarauer: — So this is going to be a program that's created province-wide that . . . is it individuals can access or shelters can access?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — It's going to be a program that's going to be in addition to the northern transportation initiative.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. And what is its goal?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well to assist individuals and their children, you know, from fleeing domestic violence.

Ms. Sarauer: — So is it something that shelter staff will be able to connect individuals with or is it going to be a number that individuals can call to access to get to shelters?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well as I mentioned, I think the program is going to be developed in consultation with our community

stakeholders to see exactly what the best use of those funds will be.

Ms. Sarauer: — Would the minister agree that this is solving a problem of his government's own making when they shut down the STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well certainly it's an ongoing issue long before that happened, that there was challenges with respect to individuals fleeing domestic violence especially in the North. And even before that happened, there was funds available within the ministry to help assist with people fleeing domestic violence. That certainly continues to be the focus of the ministry.

Ms. Sarauer: — It is a concern. And I think I've raised it in estimates many times since the shutting down of STC that we've heard from stakeholders within the shelter system that access . . . transportation is a barrier to individuals fleeing interpersonal violence.

So while we may, Minister, disagree on one of the causes of the current situation we're in, I think we can both agree that it's an important issue that needs to be addressed. So I'm looking forward to seeing how this program is implemented in, hopefully, the near future.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — And I agree with you. I mean it's certainly reassuring that people can flee domestic violence and that's one of the reasons why we had the northern transportation initiative. And that's why we're expanding the program.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you provide some information, Minister? You mentioned that this sexual assault file review project that was in Regina is now being expanded, which is great news. I've heard very positive feedback from all of the stakeholders involved in the project's initiation in Regina. But could you provide some information as to its expansion?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — So as you know, the expansion of that victim advocate case review, that was done in collaboration with senior police members to give civilian experts in sexual assault access to unfounded sexual assault. Police files did not result in charges for the purpose of investigating collaboration transparency over time and improving investigations.

And so we certainly heard some good things about the work that was being done, and that's why the expansion was taking place. Any time that we can provide more information in terms of, to investigative authorities, ways to improve their investigation techniques, I think that that's very good.

[18:45]

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you tell me where the project is being expanded to?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We haven't picked the location at this time.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you provide some information as to which stakeholders will be involved in the expanded project?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Just further to your last question, we are working with our stakeholders to determine which the best

location is to expand the program to. And I'm sorry, you . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — I'm curious to know which stakeholders, in particular which survivors' advocate stakeholders, will be involved in the expanded project?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I have met with the sexual assault centres about this and a number of other things. But those would be the groups that would be typically consulted on this, ones that have a significant interest in ensuring that those investigations are properly undertaken.

Ms. Sarauer: — And just to reiterate, both SASS [Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan] the umbrella organization, as well as the front-line sexual assault centres, are both being talked to about this further expansion. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes, that's correct. You know, they all have similar interests, right. But certainly these services, a number of other agencies are being consulted. But that's correct.

Ms. Sarauer: — Minister, in your opening remarks you had mentioned that there is going to be a second domestic violence death review panel. Could you provide a timeline for when that will be occurring?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — So we hope to start that work by the fall. It will take between 12 and 18 months to complete it. Certainly there are some lessons learned from the last review. That was a very, you know, more of a high-level report. I think what we want to do is kind of get into the nuts and bolts about some specific recommendations around this. So that's really where that work is going to be.

I'd like to get that going as quickly as possible. And I think, given the circumstances the province finds itself in around COVID, I think the fall would be an appropriate time to start.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Do you know who will be participating in that panel?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well I can't tell you . . . Certainly what we're going to be doing is engaging all our stakeholders. It's very important for us in the ministry to specifically engage the families who have lost individuals, get their perspectives, hear their stories. I think that that's pretty important and we've done a little bit of that with respect to the original report. But it would be, you know, the usual groups that we would engage in: sexual assault groups, those kinds of organizations. It would be a wide-ranging consultation.

In terms of bringing that together, I can't tell you how many people would be engaged in that actual committee work, but there will be a broad engagement with respect to people. We need to make sure that we get as much perspective on this as possible given the serious nature of domestic violence, especially ones that involve death of family members. But I think it would be fair to say that family members will be a key component of the engagement.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Can you provide an update on the recommendations made from the last domestic violence death review panel?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Certainly a number of the recommendations that are going to require a multi-year plan, you know, through a shared commitment with both stakeholders. There was a number of recommendations and responses that were provided to those recommendations. Is your specific question the number of recommendations or where we're at with them?

Ms. Sarauer: — I wanted to know where you are at with them.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Okay. So there was 32 recommendations in the report, and we've accepted and moved on them all.

You'll recall in last year's budget there was an additional \$290,000 in support of the ministry's response to the domestic violence death review, which brought the total investments in the programs and interventions and preventions of interpersonal violence and abuse that year to about \$747,000. And as you know, there's another \$800,000 in the budget to support those interpersonal violence and abuse . . . I'm certainly prepared to provide you with a summary of those recommendations and kind of where we're at with them. I won't read them into the record today, but we would certainly be inclined to provide you with a summary of that.

Ms. Sarauer: — That would be lovely. Thank you for that. You mentioned in your opening remarks as well that there's a summary offences project that's ongoing. Could you provide some details about that?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — So as you know, the ministry is committed to working with stakeholders to make Saskatchewan roads safer. The volume of provincial offences, you may know, has increased significantly over the last five years, and so modern technologies like photo speed enforcement and red-light cameras have generated quite a volume of tickets. And of course COVID and the increased volumes have caused lots of pressure on the courts.

So the provincial offences is the first project within the e-justice program that's going to implement online dispute resolution for provincial offences and certainly lay the groundwork for additional projects. The object of the project is to transform provincial offence processes to make them more efficient and effective and simpler and faster by allowing, among a number of other things, a lot of these to be dealt with online.

The large percentage of those tickets are electronically issued offences. And so there's been a lot of numbers, a lot of offences under *The Traffic Safety Act* which will be now able to be dealt with online: early resolution and ability to move forward earlier on the fine-option program, as well as giving offenders the opportunity to have a conversation with a prosecutor prior to going to court, to see if the issues can be resolved.

Because a lot of times, as you know, as a lawyer you'll know that a lot of people come to court just to get kind of information and end up pleading guilty. And that's certainly a waste of the court's resources and certainly, more importantly, the resources of the individual who will have to take time off work just to come to court either to get an adjournment or to seek some particulars of the offence.

And so they'll be able to get one adjournment without having to

go to court and get information from prosecutors about how to resolve them. So it's really an opportunity, I think. It's the first stage, the second year of a seven-year project to kind of modernize and make the courts more efficient for these kinds of offences.

Ms. Sarauer: — Forgive me if you've already mentioned this, but is the project live right now? And if not, when will it be?

Mr. Gardner: — There's several phases to e-justice. So if you recall, we had some discussion of this a while ago. So the front end, the legal information guided pathways process, is in development partly to support everything that's on the other end. So provincial offences and consumer disputes are the first two projects under that program. So that part's under way. There's a couple of other pieces that are also under way that were identified as sort of high-priority items for people just wanting that information. That will be up . . . That's kind of the first piece of it.

The second phase of it, sort of the online resolution and, if necessary, adjudication process, will be phased in. I believe the final phase of it, the provisions for the online trials, will be . . . I think it's currently scheduled for fall of 2022 if I'm right. I'm just getting an update.

[19:00]

Yes, so the second stage is targeted for the fourth quarter of '21-22, and the legal guided pathways is that third quarter of '21-22.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. And this will be province-wide?

Mr. Gardner: — Yes, province-wide and we'll keep building it, and it will be accessible. Obviously individuals can access it, but they can access it through, you know, anybody who's got a computer. So the digital divide will be easily crossed for people, but it allows people to not go to court and to tend to those things on their own time, yes.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — And for those individuals that don't have computers, of course there are a lot of publicly available terminals at public libraries and things and so, sure that information is available there.

Ms. Sarauer: — On that note, is the ministry planning on providing training to librarians province-wide on this new initiative?

Mr. Gardner: — There's currently work with the libraries around integrating this into their system. It's the SALI [Saskatchewan Access to Legal Information] project. You've probably heard of it. So that will allow kind of a second stage of access for people who aren't comfortable accessing it on their own. And we'll support that initiative as this unfolds. The goal, obviously, is to have people be able to access that in as many different ways as they can so that they will use it.

Ms. Sarauer: — What is the ministry planning for public education around this once it's implemented and active?

Mr. Gardner: — As this unfolds, I mean the goal of this to have

a single source where every citizen can . . . When this is built to the end, I guess, it will be a single source of legal information for people for a whole bunch of different issues. It'll have mediation, adjudication services, all of those, and the guided pathways for a number of different areas.

So ongoing, it's not public education, but obviously the awareness will increase as each of those things go on. The goal ultimately is to have a system where people with any problem, any legal problem in the province knows to go there first. That's the ultimate goal.

Ms. Sarauer: — Just so I understand the timelines, when you say . . . I believe you said fourth quarter '21-22. Does that mean early next year?

Mr. Gardner: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — As I mentioned before, we're really in the second year of a seven-year project. The ministry continues to investigate other opportunities to ensure not just effectiveness and efficiency of the court system by using technology, but also ensuring that the public has access to that as well. Because as I mentioned before, I think it just benefits everybody.

Ms. Sarauer: — I have some questions regarding the pandemic and the court system. Could you provide some information about how long court delays have been due to COVID? For example, trial adjournments and all of the other interruptions we've seen in the court system as a result of the pandemic.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Courts certainly have been responsive to and compliant with the public health guidelines. I can just kind of give you a summary of some of the things that are being done through the courts to ensure that the public safety . . . Whether it's the sheriffs, the screening, restrictions.

I don't have in front of me the time-to-trial reports that I typically receive from Chief Justice of the Provincial Court, but just give me half a second.

Certainly there was an increase in time to trial. It was occasioned as a result of COVID. As of March 31st, 2020 there were 11 Provincial Court points where the time to trial was between seven to nine months, and one location where the time to trial was more than nine months.

As I say, I don't have the latest time-to-trial report in front of me, but my last conversation with the Chief Judge was that they were working on ensuring that the time to trials were reduced where they could given the circumstances the court found themselves in.

Ms. Sarauer: — Have there been any charges that have had to be stayed or dismissed as a result of delay in time to trial?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Stayed?

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Not as a result of COVID delay, I

understand.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Are you able to provide a number as to how many people have been remanded into the community since March of 2020?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That would probably be a question which would be better asked to the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. What work is being done within the Provincial Courts to ensure that once we are in a situation that trials can start back up again that they are done in a timely way, understanding that there's likely a large backlog that's accumulating right now?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well public prosecutions, you know, continues to look to see how these cases can be resolved and moved forward as quickly as they can. I think that we'll need to just step out and get a little bit more information on that if you don't mind.

So it was, you know, throughout things as you can imagine, it was necessary to adjourn a number of cases and large measure close . . . There was some courthouse closures in order to prevent or reduce the transmission of COVID-19 during the spring of 2020. Public prosecutions responded by working with the courts and others to proceed with those cases that could be proceeded, reducing the backlog of cases as appropriate and get ready in advance of the return to more normal proceedings.

Public prosecutors has made efforts from the outset to identify matters which should be resolved short of trial and to work toward resolution in those cases, and those efforts continue. Certainly where appropriate, special court dates can be established for helping to deal with the backlog. The public prosecutions continues to work to identify which cases should be prioritized once the courts work, back to full operation.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Noting that rule of law, accountability, and public safety, and seeing justice done are the most important things for the work that prosecutions do and that certainly will continue.

Ms. Sarauer: — I have some questions about the ORT [Office of Residential Tenancies]. Could you tell me how many claims the ORT processed in the last year?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — You want the number of cases that were dealt with by the ORT in any particular category? Did you want the total number of inquiries? Because there's many inquiries that get made with the ORT and they have different dispositions, so just want to make sure.

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes. You'd save me . . . I have several questions, so if you want to just provide me the data you have. But inquiries, hearings, if you have it either annually or monthly . . .

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We can get you the number of the inquiries and the number of hearings. How's that?

Ms. Sarauer: — That sounds perfect.

[19:15]

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I am faced with a considerable amount of data on this particular question. So I can tell you that . . . We can certainly provide you with a summary of all the information in terms of the inquiries and the hearings whether they were under section . . . which section they were under. So there's just quite a bit of information, and I think if I was going to try to give you some of it, it might be a little bit misleading given the fact . . . But we'll provide a summary to you.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. I appreciate that. I'd also like to know how those numbers compare to the year prior. I usually ask the director, you know, if their caseload is increasing or decreasing.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We'll do that. I mean I can give you a little bit of information. Under section 57, which is the rent arrears evictions, those evictions decreased 11 per cent from September '19 to March '20 as compared to September '20 to March '21. That's down 11 per cent. And under the emergency evictions over that same period, in comparison they were down 5 per cent.

Ms. Sarauer: — But just to be clear, you're going to provide that full information?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes, we'll provide a summary of that. We just thought that that would be of some interest to you.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Are all hearings at the ORT office still being conducted over telephone?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes. There is additional money for client services and resolution services because the idea of course is that we want to see as much of this done online as possible, right. And that's further work that the ministry is doing with the ORT.

Ms. Sarauer: — My office has heard of some accessibility barriers with the ORT since the pandemic. For example, the barrier that's enabled because some people are not able to file documents in person and having hearings only by telephone can provide a barrier to some individuals to be able to appear because not everybody has access to a telephone.

And apparently we've been told that the ORT has a policy where they'll only call — for the hearing — the number once, and if it's a missed call you don't get another opportunity to have your matter heard. I'm not sure if this is true, but this is what our office has heard so I'm relaying it. Could you provide some information as to what is the current COVID procedure with processing claims and holding hearings?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I'm not sure this will satisfy your answer, but we're certainly willing to inquire of the ORT with respect to some of the accessibility issues that you've raised today. We're certainly willing to do that. I'm not sure if that's satisfactory for your . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — No, I appreciate that if your officials would be willing to look into that concern that we've heard.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes. You bet.

Ms. Sarauer: — Are there any ministry programs that have received a reduction in funding in the 2021 budget?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I can't think of any. Certainly there would be some reductions in programming when programs had expired. Or when work had been completed, there may be some fall-off of there. But I can't recall that there's any reduction in funding of any particular ongoing program.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you commit to if there is a reduction in funding in any programs, to provide that information to the committee?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I think you'll find that the answer is there isn't any reductions.

Ms. Sarauer: — Happy to hear that. We have a few minutes left, and we'll spend that time talking about Legal Aid, probably. Was there an increase in funding to Legal Aid in this budget? And if so, how much?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The budget includes an increase of 2.183 million for the grant paid to SLAC [Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission], and that increase includes funding for the collective bargaining agreement and increase to the federal government's contribution to that as well. There was also an increase in funds to transfer the court-appointed-counsel process from the ministry to the commission, so that money had transferred over when they picked up that work.

You should know that this continues to be a topic of conversation at the federal-provincial table with respect to federal contributions to funding Legal Aid. If it's not the first issue that we bring up as ministers, it is certainly close to the top because we do think that there is . . . The federal government I think needs to be a continuous supporter of it. And as a jointly funded program we would very much appreciate some more equity in the funding for Legal Aid because we don't really think that there is a whole bunch of equity in the way that this is funded. So we continue to lobby the federal government to reach their proportion of that 50/50 contribution numbers with respect to criminal Legal Aid at least anyway.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. In the past, the ministry has been able to provide me with numbers around time to . . . the wait times, in terms of time to get to speak with a lawyer. I think it was in written questions last time that I received this information and it was broken down by the location. Assuming you don't have that information in front of you right now, could you provide that information, some updated information about those wait times?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I think we can provide that information to you, yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — In the past we've heard a lot of concerns from Legal Aid staff around the long wait times, the high caseload,

burnout, stress, lack of . . . inadequate number of staff support. I understand that there has been a new CEO [chief executive officer] hired recently at Legal Aid. Could the ministry provide some information as to what is being done to ensure that these very legitimate and worrying concerns are being addressed?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thanks for the question. Before I begin, I just want to make one quick comment and thank Craig Goebel for his leadership at Legal Aid Commission over the last number of years. As you know, he's retired.

We've recently hired a new CEO who has some extensive experience coming out of Ontario. I think I'd mentioned that to you just before we made that public announcement. We're very much expecting her to have a look at the operations of the Legal Aid office, so I won't comment on what courses of action she may or may not take with respect to how she plans on operating the office. I think we have some confidence in her to be able to properly run the Legal Aid office to make sure that we can continue to provide the high level of service that people of Saskatchewan who use that service request. She certainly expressed a commitment to improving access to justice, which is a priority for our ministry. So we're really looking forward to what she can bring to her new role. So we'll give her an opportunity to kind of get her feet wet, right? But as you know, this is an arms-length organization from the Ministry of Justice, and so we'll leave it to the new CEO to bring her best game.

We can give you the caseload numbers for Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission now. So in '19-20 . . . There's a comparison here over the last four years, and I won't give you the comparative numbers, but for criminal adult cases there was in '19-20 — that's the last year that we have accurate statistics for this — there was 1,763 cases; for criminal youth cases there was 1,326; and for family law cases there was 3,461, for a total of 12,650. Those were full-service applications that were assigned to staff members.

For the ones that were the full-service applications that were assigned to private bar lawyers in that same period of time: for adult criminal there was 1,547; 180 criminal youth; 587 family law cases, for a total of 2,314. So that was in the '19-20 fiscal year.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you for that, Minister. I'm being cognizant of the time. I just want to raise an additional concern our office has heard particularly about the new central system for determining eligibility for individuals at Legal Aid, the toll-free number, and some of the barriers. That has been . . . It's felt by many individuals who feel that they were inadequately disqualified from Legal Aid services. So I know we're not going to be able to have a more in-depth discussion about that concern this evening, but perhaps we can have a conversation about that at a later time.

But being cognizant of the time, before I pass the microphone on to the Chair I just want to take the opportunity to thank you, Minister, for your answers this evening as well as you, Mr. Gardner. It's always a pleasure to see you. Please pass along my thanks to your officials. I know they work very hard and are very passionate about the work that they do. And like I said at the beginning, I'm very disappointed I don't get the opportunity to see them and thank them personally this evening. But hopefully

next year I will have the opportunity to do that. But please do that in my absence.

[19:30]

And I'd like to thank the committee members as well as yourself, Mr. Chair, and staff, as well as Hansard for everything tonight. And I'm going to thank her later in my next estimates, but thank my mom, Donna Sarauer, for watching my baby this evening and doing a very effective job of it because I haven't heard a cry once.

The Chair: — All right. Thanks. Having reached our agreed-upon time for the consideration of the estimates for the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, we'll now adjourn consideration of the estimates and the supplementary estimates no. 2 for the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General and Integrated Justice Services. Thank you, Minister, and your officials. We've got closing comments already from Ms. Sarauer. Minister, do you have any quick closing comments?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Well first of all let me just thank you for chairing the meeting tonight and members of the committee for being here. Specific thanks to my deputy minister, Glen Gardner, for being here; legislative staff; Ms. Sarauer for her very respectful questioning — I appreciate that very much — and for Ronan's brief appearance in the Assembly; and for those in Hansard; the officials that are in the other rooms and in other buildings around the city who have been providing some advice; my office staff for being here. So those are my thanks, Mr. Chair. Again, thank you very much to you for the time that you have given us this evening.

The Chair: — Oh, it's our pleasure. And we'll take a five-minute recess. Thank you, Minister, and your officials. And we'll be right back. Thank you.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

General Revenue Fund Corrections, Policing and Public Safety Vote 73

Subvote (CP01)

The Chair: — Okay, everyone. Welcome back. We'll now begin our consideration of vote 73, Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, central management and services, subvote (CP01). Minister Tell, please introduce yourself and your officials, and welcome.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Beside me I have Drew Wilby, who is my acting deputy minister for tonight. And I have Brayden Fox, my chief of staff, in the stands with all the other fans. Anyway, okay. Good evening. Are you ready for my opening comments? Okay.

[19:45]

I'm pleased to be here tonight to discuss the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety's 2021-22 financial plan and to answer any questions. We are also joined virtually by a number of officials from the ministry and Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency: Deputy Minister Larsen; assistant deputy

ministers Heather Scriver and Rob Cameron; executive directors Mark McFadyen, Doris Schnell, Rae Gallivan, Cory Lerat, Jill Zimmer, Monica Field, Grant Hilsenteger — I better wear my glasses — Mindy Gudmundson, and director Robert Freberg. From the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency we have president Marlo Pritchard; vice-presidents Teresa Florizone and Steve Roberts. I want to thank all the officials for joining us virtually here this evening.

The ministries and the agencies work in diverse . . . The work they do is diverse and complex. We are responsible for the care of nearly 2,000 offenders and 8,500 individuals on probation in any given year. This means we must see to their daily needs as well as their medical and rehabilitative requirements. We are also responsible for administering the role of the RCMP as our provincial police service. We ensure the priorities of the province are implemented through police programs like safer communities and neighbourhoods, the police and crisis teams, the internet child exploitation unit, crisis response teams, combined traffic safety services, and community safety officers.

We oversee the Police college and Police Commission, licensing of security guards and private investigators, and manage the civil forfeiture program. Through the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, we are responsible for keeping people and property safe, supporting local authorities through emergent events, and coordinating large-scale provincial responses to emergency situations such as flooding, wildfires, and of course the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our goals of providing safe communities, safe facilities, a safe province, and safe and engaged employees takes a team far greater than what can be represented in this room. I want to recognize and thank all of the front-line staff who have endured likely the most difficult and stressful year in their lives. They have served Saskatchewan citizens through their expertise, integrity, and dedication to what they do, and we are very, very grateful for their service.

This budget aligns with our government's goals of investing in Saskatchewan people to protect, build, and grow our province. This year the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety's budget has increased to 531 million, an increase of 24 million or approximately 4.7 per cent.

Custody, supervision, and rehabilitation services has increased by approximately 7 million from last year to nearly 194 million this year. Policing and community safety services has increased by over \$9 million to nearly \$240 million this year. Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency's budget has increased by 7 million to over \$95 million.

I will now highlight some of the areas of importance in this year's budget. Corrections infrastructure investments will increase by over 56 million this year, bringing us to a total of nearly 76 million. This funding will be used to make improvements in our custody facilities. One of the most significant projects we are undertaking is the 427-bed unit expansion at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre. This expansion will allow us to reclaim programming space at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre, improving our ability to provide rehabilitative programming to offenders. It will also provide us with much needed flexibility to manage the inmate population across the provincial correctional

system.

The budget also contains funding for the temporary 44-bed housing units that have been set up at Saskatoon and Regina correctional centres. We'll continue to operate these units as part of our efforts to manage the corrections population during the pandemic. Saskatoon Correctional Centre will proceed with its replacement of urban camp and will also be moving forward with major renovations to its admitting area. Additionally, we will be repairing and upgrading our existing infrastructure across our facilities to ensure they remain secure. This will include 13.7 million for the replacement of locks, cameras, and the installation of contraband-reduction equipment in all of our facilities.

To ensure we are providing offenders with the programming they need, we will complete our expansion of the cultural lodge program to four additional facilities. This will allow First Nations culture programming at these facilities to take place year-round. In partnership with our colleagues in the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, we will continue to implement the gang violence reduction strategy. We've seen considerable success with the dedicated substance abuse treatment units and the community intervention models under this strategy.

We are hopeful that our investments in this type of programming will ultimately prevent or reduce offending and keep people out of our correctional system. In 2021-22 a total of 3.2 million in federal funding will be devoted to this work. This will include the opening of two more dedicated substance abuse treatment units in our adult secure custody facilities. We will continue to make significant investment in our policing services.

In partnership with our colleagues in Health, the police and crisis team model will be expanded to the Estevan and Weyburn region. This program has proven to be an effective way of ensuring individuals experiencing mental health crises — often complex — ensuring that they receive more appropriate services and supports. It has been well received by our partner policing services and communities, and we are excited about the potential this work has to the shift in conversation around policing and mental health.

The Saskatchewan firearms program will be resourced with a budget of over \$2 million. Once established, the Saskatchewan firearms program will enforce firearms legislation across the province. It will also ensure Saskatchewan's perspective on firearms is taken into account at the national level.

This year we will provide \$6.7 million in additional funding to the RCMP to support important initiatives such as the First Nations policing program. Through this funding, the First Nations policing program will add an additional six officers to First Nations communities across Saskatchewan. This funding will also provide for contractual increases to the RCMP.

We are investing more resources into the internet child exploitation unit to support the crucial work that they do. Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in the number of child exploitation cases over the last two years, making this work more necessary than ever.

Our government continues to support growth and expansion of the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency. The SPSA has been

instrumental in supporting the Ministry of Health, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, municipalities, and First Nations in responding to COVID-19. The provincial operations centre has been activated since March of 2020, and it continues to monitor the situation, share information with other ministries, agencies, and Crown corporations.

The SPSA has participated and facilitated information-sharing calls with key stakeholders and partners like municipalities, First Nations, first responders to ensure inclusion, co-operation, and coordination. It has also assisted with provincial business continuity planning, established a toll-free line to aid in educating the public, assisted businesses to understand health order impacts, and coordinated the enforcement of health order restrictions. In November of 2020, the business response line was amalgamated within the SPSA toll-free line to streamline service to the public. The toll-free line has answered 45,062 calls from residents and businesses as of March 31st, 2021.

Last year's emergency response efforts also included helping communities prepare for and respond to flooding across northern Saskatchewan, fighting wildfires and grass fires, and participating in search and rescue operations. Flooding remains a concern in northern communities, while grass fires are a concern due to dry conditions in the southern areas of the province. The SPSA is ready to mitigate the risk and support communities that may be impacted.

The agency structure has delivered on its 2019 promise of facilitating greater internal coordination and co-operation while providing a more streamlined provincial response when emergencies do occur. In April of 2021 the emergency social services program was transferred to the agency, which builds on that promise.

Significant investments include 12.8 million to modernize the province's aerial wildfire suppression fleet and to replace obsolete aircraft, including adding a Turbo Commander bird dog and a CL-215T air tanker that will be delivered in 2022. 1.3 million for avionics displays in SPSA aircraft will also be upgraded to ensure the aircraft fleet is at capacity to suppress wildfires when needed.

And 304,000 to transfer the emergency social services expense from the Ministry of Social Services.

The Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety plays a vital role in our province. We have accomplished much in the last year and will continue to work with our partners and the wider community to create positive outcomes for the people of Saskatchewan. Now I would be pleased to answer any questions about the 2021-22 plan and budget for the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister. Ms. Sarauer, the floor is yours.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Minister, for your opening remarks. I have a couple of questions to start off with that I asked of Justice and then was informed that it's actually appropriately directed toward you, if that's all right. So the first one was with respect to 911 fees. I understand there's been an increase in the 911 fees. Could you provide some information about that?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency is responsible for providing the critical Sask911 system emergency communication services. New federally mandated 911 standards require SPSA to update the Sask911 system technology. The Sask911 fee increases will fund updates and upgrades to the 30-year-old Sask911 technology to address current and future system changes.

Ms. Sarauer: — How much is the fee increase?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The Sask911 fee from 94 cents per phone line per month increased to \$1.88 to generate an additional \$15.6 million in revenue. The SPSA . . . Okay. We talked about being responsible. And as I said earlier, the Sask911 fee increase will fund the updates and the upgrades to the 30-year-old system.

[20:00]

Ms. Sarauer: — Just to confirm, is 100 per cent of that fee increase going toward the update that you had just described?

Mr. Wilby: — We'll step out and grab the answer for you and be right back.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sure.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I just want to make sure I recall your question properly. Is 100 per cent of the funds generated through the fee increase going to be going into the actual 911 system?

Ms. Sarauer: — Correct.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Is that right?

Ms. Sarauer: — Right.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Okay. Yes it will be, and it will be funding provincial, Regina, and Saskatoon 911 public safety answering points; next generation 911 system; PPSTN [provincial public safety telecommunications network] and Sask911 program costs; capital infrastructure; SaskAlert; civic addressing; public education; and 700 broadband project.

Ms. Sarauer: — What does PPSTN stand for?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Provincial public safety television network.

Ms. Sarauer: — And the last one you mentioned, the broadband project?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — 700 broadband project.

Ms. Sarauer: — Can you provide some information as to what that is?

Mr. Wilby: — I'm Drew Wilby. I'm not an IT [information technology] wizard by any means. Anyone that works with me would tell you that. But what I understand is that it's a radio band that's controlled by the federal government. It's utilized around enhanced public safety communications and interconnectedness to make sure agencies are connected on the same lines. It's sort of the next generation of radio waves. What it also does is it allows for penetration of buildings, so if emergency personnel

are in a building it will allow them to receive signal inside the building. They're in the planning stages right now of sort of moving towards what this might look like.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Wilby. And I was remiss at the beginning to not thank you for being here as well. It's great to see you. And like I said with the other ministry, it's too bad . . . I do enjoy getting to see all of the officials of the ministry every year in estimates and speaking with them because they are well versed in their areas, and it's always a pleasure. It's a shame that we don't have the opportunity to have that sort of interaction this evening. But please pass along my thanks to them for their answers this evening.

Mr. Wilby: — Okay.

Ms. Sarauer: — I have some very specific questions about correctional workers. In particular from what I understand, correctional officers would like to be officially recognized as first responders and to have of course the corresponding compensation for that distinction. Could the ministry provide some information as to whether that's being considered at this time?

[20:15]

Hon. Ms. Tell: — A committee was struck with officials and the appropriate union, and discussions have been ongoing. You know, and as I said at the beginning when this committee was struck that I'm very supportive of looking at this particular aspect of their work and I . . . Yes, sorry, I'm reading this and there's spelling issues. Anyway, all I can say at this point in time is that the discussions are ongoing at the committee level.

Ms. Sarauer: — Can the ministry commit to a timeline for when that decision will be made?

Mr. Wilby: — It's a good question, and you know, as the minister said, obviously something that we're looking at fairly closely, working with the SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] partners as well as the Public Service Commission which, of course, guides the human resource component of government as you well know.

In terms of the timeline, I don't think we can put a hard timeline on it at this point, and part of the reason is that it's not 100 per cent our decision to make, so to speak. We would have to work that through at the committee stage with again our SGEU partners and others, so it would be difficult to put a firm timeline on that at this point in time. But definitely something, as it moves along, we would commit to updating you on as we go forward.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you provide us with some information as to whether . . . You say conversations are ongoing. When is the next meeting of that committee?

Mr. Wilby: — I would have to step out and take a look at that answer for you.

So I understand the ball's in the union's court right now, that the last meeting they took it away to do a little bit of more work on it. We're able to meet, you know, at their request to have the discussion about it.

And I think what's important with this one is a lot of it is around the public image of corrections officers. And oftentimes we find that they get a very bad rap out in the public for whatever reason that is, you know, whether that it be media criticism of what happens in facilities or other pieces. And so we're looking at means; this is one of them. Other things are our correctional officer appreciation that we do, and the minister actually hands out an award for that. It's a ways of providing some significance to the job that our corrections officers do each and every day.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. I think what would also go along with that public image issue in increasing morale would be more adequate compensation, which is also what they're looking for and what the first responder recognition would be able to provide them with.

I understand there has recently been a clean-shave policy put into effect. Could you provide some information as to what the purpose of this policy is?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — This clean-shave policy was recently adopted within our facilities across the province. It was at the request of the union that this policy be put into place. It's for N95 masks and other breathing apparatuses because if a person is not clean-shaven, it affects and interferes with the actual feel of the device. Other jurisdictions do have a clean-shave policy, however we do have exemption ability for religious, cultural, and health reasons.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. And further to that, are N95s now available for correction workers?

[20:30]

Mr. Wilby: — N95s are available in facility where required and where mandated by the Saskatchewan Health Authority and OH & S [occupational health and safety] guidelines as well.

In terms of the general environment within the correctional facilities, we fall to the medical grade masks for the protocols that are there in conjunction again with the legislation regulation from the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] and also from OH & S for aerosol-generating procedures. And so if that's in our health services areas, some of our nurses or if a corrections officer's there and there is something that's generating that aerosol, we do have the N95s in that situation.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. My understanding is that N95 masks are available in the facilities, but are only being made available to nursing staff. If that is the case, I guess my question is, is that going to be expanded to allow for correction officers to also have access to N95 masks? And if that is not the case, why then is the clean-shave policy being put into effect?

Mr. Wilby: — So there's a couple parts to that. Let's tackle the fit test first and the clean-shave policy. So that deals with both the N95 but also with other pieces — fire suppression is a prime example. If we're in an environment where there happens to be a fire on a unit and a individual has to put on a mask, of course they need to be clean shaven in order to do that, to put on that breathing apparatus that's there.

In terms of are N95s available for staff, in certain circumstances

again we would follow our guidelines from the SHA as well as occupational health and safety and what they're providing, and make our determinations from there accordingly. We follow their policy, and then that becomes our policy within the facilities as well.

So for right now you are correct. Nurses do have that available for those aerosol-generating procedures. If a corrections officer happened to be in the close vicinity of that for one reason or another, they would be given an N95 in that case too. But it's important that the clean-shaven policy isn't just for the N95s, it's for those other pieces where one may have to wear some type of mask that requires that close-fit test.

And again, I'd just highlight that that was brought forward to us by the union, and an important piece for them that they raised with our officials.

Ms. Sarauer: — Just to clarify, if it was brought forward to the ministry by the union, if the union brought forward to the ministry that they no longer wanted the clean-shave policy, would the ministry then cancel, I suppose, the clean-shave policy?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I mean, the affected union brings something forward to the ministry, it's always under active consideration. As in this particular case, you know, dealing with occupational health and safety, Saskatchewan public health would have to be consulted also during, you know, before anything would actually change. I mean I don't know, I think all of us here can understand the reasons for why it's in place and I understand the reasons why the union would bring it forward. And I guess I would have difficulty understanding the reasons why they would not want it.

Ms. Sarauer: — I understand that due to the outbreaks we've seen in many of our correctional centres, there have been a lot of instances where staff have had to self-isolate because they've been deemed close contacts or they have tested COVID-positive. Many of these workers have had to then use their sick time, of course because they have been close-contacted and are unable to work shifts. And as a result there are many who have already run out of their entitlements. Has the ministry considered providing any sort of additional entitlements for correctional officers in terms of extra sick time in light of the fact that we have seen so many outbreaks in our correctional centres?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I think because of the impact across government proper in its entirety, that question would best be relayed to or asked of the Public Service Commission.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could the ministry provide information as to how many correctional officers have been close-contacted or deemed a close contact since March of 2020?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — If someone was in close contact with a person who was affected or infected with COVID, that person isn't required to tell anybody. Obviously that's private health information. So sometimes they choose to tell us, tell the ministry, and there maybe obviously times where they would choose not to.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could the ministry provide information then with how much sick time has been utilized since March of 2020

by correctional officers?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I think we're going to need to do some checking. We have sick time as the ministry as a whole, but I don't believe that it's accessible to us immediately for corrections officers.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is that something the ministry could obtain and then provide to the committee at a later time?

Mr. Wilby: — We'll take a look and see how we can break that information down. Some of that's actually tracked by Labour Relations and Workplace Safety and the rest by the Public Service Commission as well. But we'll definitely take a look and see if we can break that down a little bit on where we are.

Ms. Sarauer: — I'm also curious to know how that has changed, how that number compares over the last couple of years.

Mr. Wilby: — Sure.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. How many inmates to date have used the temporary 44-bed units in Regina and Saskatoon that were created as a result of the pandemic?

Mr. Wilby: — Can I just seek a little clarification? Are you wanting like the total aggregate individuals that have gone through those units? Or are you looking for sort of an average daily count of those?

Ms. Sarauer: — I'm looking for an average daily count, yes. Thanks for the clarification.

Mr. Wilby: — Okay, I just want to make sure I get you what you're looking for.

[20:45]

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Each, Regina and Saskatoon, have a unit, an extra unit, 44 beds in each one. We do not track separately for those particular additional units that have been brought in. They're part of the overall count.

Ms. Sarauer: — So what you're telling me is you can't provide me that information? Okay. Could you tell me, in total since March of 2020, how many staff have tested positive for COVID?

Mr. Wilby: — So in terms of staff affected by COVID since our first staff was diagnosed, we've had 190 staff across the province that have recovered and we currently have 33 that are active. Now my math is horrible, but I believe that's 223 total.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you say what centres the currently positive staff are located?

Mr. Wilby: — So we currently have 32 at the Regina Correctional Centre and one at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre for a total of 33.

Ms. Sarauer: — Do you know how many staff have been hospitalized due to COVID since the pandemic?

Mr. Wilby: — I can tell you how many are currently in hospital,

and that's three. I don't have the number of how many total. That's something we could look at. Again, there's personal health information there and, you know, depending what someone is hospitalized for . . . But currently we have three with this afternoon's updated numbers.

Ms. Sarauer: — And they're from in Regina?

Mr. Wilby: — Correct . . . I'm sorry, not staff; that's offenders in hospital. I don't have numbers for staff because that's personal staff health information. I'm sorry.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So you don't know the answer for staff hospitalized.

Mr. Wilby: — That's correct.

Ms. Sarauer: — But the 33 number is still the . . .

Mr. Wilby: — That's correct.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So let's go to inmates then. Can you tell me the total number of inmates that have tested positive since March of 2020?

Mr. Wilby: — So for inmates we have 60 active COVID cases, active inmates that have COVID actively. And we have 690 inmates that have recovered from COVID. So that's over the course of March of last year to present. And so it's important with those numbers . . . We read a recent media report that I think maybe got it a little bit wrong. It said that's a total of 770.

But over the course of the year we have anywhere from 12,000 to 13,000 aggregate admissions through our facility. So just to put that in context of what the course of the last year has actually looked like.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you provide some information as to in what centres those active COVID cases are located?

Mr. Wilby: — Yes, I can. I don't think it will be a surprise that 59 are at Regina Correctional Centre and one is at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre.

Ms. Sarauer: — And then hospitalizations. You say there are currently three inmates hospitalized?

Mr. Wilby: — There are currently three inmates from the Regina Correctional Centre hospitalized. I apologize for the mistake earlier.

Ms. Sarauer: — What about total since March of 2020 that have been hospitalized?

Mr. Wilby: — I could look to see if we have that. I don't have that on me this evening, but I could definitely look on that if you'd like.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you tell me how many inmates that were tested positive for COVID-19 since March of 2020 were inmates that were on remand? And then how many were inmates that were sentenced?

Mr. Wilby: — We didn't split that information that way, and unfortunately we won't be able to provide it as all of our work is with public health. So we won't be able to provide that information.

Ms. Sarauer: — If inmates are released that are active COVID cases, are they being released back to their home communities, or are they being provided accommodations in a hotel?

Mr. Wilby: — So when a COVID-positive inmate is released, whether it be, you know, the remand warrant expires or whether their release comes up from a sentence, we work with public health — we may work with Social Services, potentially the First Nation if that may be in play as well — to try to figure out an appropriate isolation release plan so that they're not being released into the community without those supports and pieces in place.

So in terms of, you know, numbers of how many have and haven't, I'm not able to dive too deep into that. Part of that involves some personal health information as such as well. But we do try to make sure that we have those discharge plans appropriately with those individuals.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Sorry, just to clarify, why can't you provide me the numbers of how many have been provided isolation plans?

Mr. Wilby: — Yes, I don't have it right now and I'd want to make sure that . . . As you can imagine with each of these things there's a concern about releasing someone's potential personal health information if a release happened yesterday and we identified the timeline on that. I just want to be very cautious on that so that we don't get ourselves into any sort of problems.

So I'll go back and check if we can provide that. If we can provide the information, most certainly we will. I just want to be 100 per cent clear on that for my own . . . for the ministry's sake if that's okay.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sure, yes. Just to clarify, I'm looking for a total number of inmates since March of 2020 who've been provided with . . . who have been released that are COVID-positive with isolation plans. So hopefully that will be broad enough that that won't run in to any privacy concerns.

I would also like to know how much money the Ministry of Corrections has had to spend unless . . . And if this is another ministry who picks up the tab for, for example, hotel accommodations and food, then just let us know which ministry is picking up that tab please.

What types of initiatives has the ministry taken to further protect staff and inmates from future outbreaks in correctional facilities?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — We, as a ministry, consult with public health every week seeking how we can or should be managing the situation in our facilities across the province. And we do this check-in with public health every day.

Further to that, we also, in our efforts to reducing staff and contracted personnel footprint in facilities: work from home; suspending projects; limiting, restricting access. Social visiting

within our facilities is suspended. Professional visiting is permitted with precautions in place to minimize risk. Establish COVID committees in facilities. Restricting the movement and placement of offenders in the facilities. Creation of designated units, cell areas. Fourteen-day assessments. Isolation, quarantine, clean. Staff entering custody facilities are assessed for symptoms, including temperature check. And of course, right now they're available to get the rapid test. Must complete hand sanitization prior to continuing onto their post.

[21:00]

Any other individuals entering correctional facilities or a secure perimeter are also required to follow continuous masking principles and must complete an assessment, including temperature checks or rapid testing, depending on the situation, prior to being granted access to the facility. Screening and checklists in conjunction with deputy sheriffs and police services for all new admissions. Updated medical screening for all new admissions. Increased communication to staff and offenders about contagious disease protocols.

Increased access to soap and water for all offenders. Controlled access of hand sanitizers for offenders. Video capability for contracted physicians. Telephone communication set up for offenders to contact elders and chaplains. Social distancing practices when able, challenging obviously in an institutional setting. Eating in bedrooms. Spacing tables. Keeping like offender groups living together, recreation together, program together, work details together. Treat each unit like a family pod, not to cross-interact with other family pods. Significant emphasis placed on extra cleaning details. Contracted cleaning services brought into facilities: fogging, spraying, and deep cleaning.

Each facility also conducts their own fogging to supplement already stringent cleaning processes. Ongoing communication with public health staff and other correctional facilities. Increased use of video court. Addition of video visiting in all facilities to enable contact with family and friends. Regular updates to staff, the union, and offenders by the director. Periodic updates to stakeholders EFry [Elizabeth Fry Society], John Howard, Ombudsman, etc.

Continuous masking protocols for staff have been implemented in all custody facilities. Masking protocols for offenders have been implemented in all adult and youth custody facilities. Other personal protective equipment protocols have been put into place. At times offender access to off-property activities — community participation, employment — was limited or restricted due to changes in public health orders. Both localized and central continual consult with public health and infection control.

All these measures have been put into place to ensure as best we can that the safety and security of the offenders and the staff is paramount.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Could you provide us with what percentage of staff have contracted COVID since March of 2020?

Mr. Wilby: — We can take a look at that for you. In terms of providing a number tonight, we don't have that available. Part of

the reason is sometimes our staffing complement moves up and down depending on circumstances and what's happening. Of course it was in the facility and other pieces. So at this point I can't provide it, but we'll definitely take that one away. And if we can offer up a percentage there, we'll provide that back to you.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is the ministry still having newly admitted inmates quarantine for the 14 days?

Mr. Wilby: — Yes, 14 days still, for sure.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you provide some information as to a point-in-time count right now of how many inmates are currently going through that 14-day quarantine?

Mr. Wilby: — How many currently are on a 14-day quarantine period?

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — We have 237 currently in isolation across our adult facilities.

Ms. Sarauer: — And they're in isolation because they are newly admitted inmates? Or are they in isolation because of close contact?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Yes, that's correct.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Is there still transporting of COVID-positive inmates from one centre to another?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Yes, the transferring of offenders between facilities does not occur.

Ms. Sarauer: — Since at what point in time?

Mr. Wilby: — Just seek a little clarity. I think we need to step out on this one. But you're looking for when did transferring inmates between facilities stop?

Ms. Sarauer: — The minister just told me that there is no transferring of inmates between facilities. And if that is the case, when did the transferring of inmates between facilities stop?

Mr. Wilby: — Perfect. Thank you. We'll be right back.

[21:15]

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The last answer I gave you was wrong. And we continue to transfer offenders. I mean, there's a variety of reasons why we would do that. We would not knowingly transfer a COVID-positive offender to another institution.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you for the clarification. Just to be very clear, you are saying that there has not been an individual who the ministry knew had COVID get transferred to another facility since March of 2020.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — For that clarity, the ministry would not knowingly transport an offender that is COVID-positive.

Ms. Sarauer: — Back when Saskatoon Correctional had their outbreak, at one point the facility stopped taking new inmates, and anyone new went to another facility. We now have been experiencing an outbreak at the Regina Correctional Centre. My question to you is, why hasn't a similar policy been put into place at the Regina Correctional Centre?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The Regina Correctional Centre has space to accommodate the offender population. It is not at capacity. We have the ability at RCC [Regina Correctional Centre] to isolate offenders when required to do so. Saskatoon Correctional Centre did not have space in December when their outbreak occurred.

Ms. Sarauer: — What is the current point-in-time count at Regina Correctional as well as the percentage capacity, please?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The capacity rate at Regina Correctional Centre is 84.3 for a total of 659 prisoners.

Ms. Sarauer: — How many knowingly COVID-positive inmates have been transferred from a provincial facility to the Saskatchewan Penitentiary?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Just to clarify, you're asking if knowingly, if a person was knowingly transferred from a correctional centre in Saskatchewan to the penitentiary?

Ms. Sarauer: — If someone was diagnosed with COVID-19 and had been transferred from a provincial facility to the Saskatchewan Penitentiary.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — As per the protocol, what we are doing is holding the offenders. They're not being transferred.

Ms. Sarauer: — So what you're telling me is that if an inmate is COVID-positive and is supposed to be transferred to the Saskatchewan Penitentiary, they are held at the provincial facility until what time?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — That decision is made in consultation with Saskatchewan public health. And obviously when the person is testing negative, then they can be on their way to the federal institution.

Ms. Sarauer: — I understand that the Saskatchewan Penitentiary is a federal institution. But considering how many inmates move from the provincial facility to the federal facility, is the ministry able to provide any information as to how many inmates at the Saskatchewan Penitentiary are currently COVID-positive?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — No, we don't have access to that information.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is programming still being offered to inmates at the Regina Correctional Centre?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The programming has been amended to individual based and/or limited to smaller groups of offenders to ensure adequate social distancing. Elder and chaplaincy contact for offenders is being provided by telephone contact to ensure the continuity of spiritual and cultural services.

Ms. Sarauer: — Has the ministry been keeping track of whether or not sentencing levels have decreased since March of 2020?

And if so, what are those numbers?

Mr. Wilby: — We have been. We've actually undertaken a fairly comprehensive study of the impact of COVID-19 across the custody counts and what it's done. Specific to sentence numbers, we did see a drop of sentence numbers initially in the fall, and that of course as summer went on and as courts reopened and as things started to move and those that were on . . . Well what you may be aware of is that, of course prosecutions and others made decisions pertaining to individual inmates in particular on the remand file.

You know, police increased their risk threshold as well as prosecutions and so we didn't see as many remands coming in, which then created a bit of a bubble, and that bubble started to be dealt with through the fall. So we saw sentencing numbers come up and then we've seen them sort of level off again. So compared to, say 2019, sentencing numbers are significantly lower than where they were, as of course are remand numbers too.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Are any of the correctional facilities housing positive COVID-19 inmates with negative . . . or inmates who haven't tested positive for COVID-19?

Mr. Wilby: — Can you repeat that question? Sorry.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sure. Often inmates are double-bunked in cells. Are there any instances in any of the facilities in the province where inmates are being housed who have COVID-19 with a fellow inmate who has not tested positive for COVID-19?

[21:30]

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Public health guides our decisions with respect to accommodation of offenders within our institutions. If a COVID-positive person can be placed in isolation, we will do that if the infrastructure allows. If it doesn't, we go to public health and ask for their guidance and recommendations on how to handle the situation within any particular cell.

Ms. Sarauer: — So would the short answer be, yes, COVID-positive inmates have been housed with negative inmates?

Mr. Wilby: — Specific to Saskatoon that would have been the case where, when the outbreak occurred, there may have been negatives that were housed with positives. In Regina it still is possible although we wouldn't have a negative bunked with a positive. If there are two COVID-positives, they could be bunked together. But again the infrastructure in Regina allows us to do more because there are more cells and more bed space available there.

Ms. Sarauer: — So just to clarify, it has happened in Saskatoon; it has not happened in Regina at this point?

Mr. Wilby: — In Regina would a positive and a negative be housed on the same unit? That's possible, but they wouldn't be bunked together. If one was positive, they wouldn't be bunked with a negative. We would look to move that apart. In Saskatoon it did occur in December where we took public health's guidance and asked them what the best practice was in terms of our accommodation and our living units and what that looked like,

and the recommendation at times was to leave the offenders as they were, which meant leaving negatives with positives because of the close-contact exposure that had happened and the inability to move them apart.

Ms. Sarauer: — About specifically in Regina in the remand unit, unit 1 D, were no COVID-positive inmates housed with negative inmates?

Mr. Wilby: — That's a very specific question that would require a specific answer. I can step out if you'd like. Okay.

So unit 1 D at Regina — if you're familiar with it? — okay, so obviously a tiered unit that's pod-style. So we have cells within each of those ranges in that unit. And so if there is a COVID-positive on the unit, we can continue to isolate them within the cell and isolate the rest of the unit away from that individual. If there was two individuals that were double-bunked and one was positive and the other came back negative, we would remove that negative from that cell.

So speaking in generalities, as I can't speak to specifics, you know, of an individual offender's circumstance, that's the way that that population would likely be handled. But again, that would be in conjunction with public health and their overarching guidance. So because of the celled unit, we would be able to isolate that cell from the rest of the units. We may not have to move the individual off until such time that, of course, they're again tested for COVID, negative, and allowed to be released into the unit.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Just to clarify, what you're saying is that even in unit 1 D at Regina, there were no COVID-positive inmates living in cells with individuals who tested negative.

Mr. Wilby: — The information I have would suggest that no, there would not be a COVID-positive and a COVID-negative in the same cell. There may be a COVID-positive on that unit, and there'd be others that are COVID-negative on the unit. But unlike, say, you know, Saskatoon where it would be the honour dorm, Echo unit, or in Regina at some of our other, say, housing units 5, 6, and 7. Unit 1 D has different infrastructure. They could potentially accommodate that style of living.

Again, you know, we would take public health guidance there in terms of how best to manage that and how to manage a certain specific situation. But that would be the information I'd have at this time. If you did have more specific information, obviously we can't provide it in a public realm. But if you wanted to provide it to the ministry, we'd definitely look into a concern that someone maybe raised.

Ms. Sarauer: — Were there any instances where COVID-positive inmates were exercising with inmates who had not tested positive?

Mr. Wilby: — The answer would be no. Knowingly we wouldn't allow that to happen. I mean, is there a possibility that somebody who hadn't yet tested positive? We can't really speak to that. But knowingly, no, we wouldn't allow those individuals to exercise together.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Being cognizant of the time, I want to

quickly move on to a different issue.

Mr. Wilby: — Sure.

Ms. Sarauer: — As you know, there have been many instances of anti-mask protests around the province as well as anti-mask protesters entering businesses while refusing to wear masks, for example. Has the ministry been hearing concerns from stakeholders about whether there are any reluctance from police to enforce public health orders, in particular toward anti-mask protesters?

[21:45]

Hon. Ms. Tell: — We haven't heard any concerns from stakeholders with respect to enforcement of the public health orders. But I think it's important to delve into it a little bit more, and that is that the government does not direct the policing agencies in this province or anywhere else. The public health orders are there and we do expect that they're going to be enforced. What that enforcement actually looks like, we do not direct it.

The Chair: — All right. Thank you everyone. So having reached our agreed upon time for the consideration of the estimates for the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, we will now adjourn consideration of the estimates and supplementary estimates no. 2 for the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. Thank you, Minister. And if we could very, very quickly say your final remarks because we still have another opportunity at the end of the bill, which is next. So if you could . . .

Hon. Ms. Tell: — At the end of the next bill?

The Chair: — It's up to you. Do you want to say . . .

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Okay. Yes, of course I just want to thank everybody but I'll keep it very brief. You know, some of the conversations that have gone on here tonight and the questioning is about space and ensuring that we have the room necessary to house the offenders in the province of Saskatchewan. We're adding a significant project in the city of Saskatoon — not one question, of course — that will provide hundreds of jobs and will provide over, I think it's 427 extra bed spaces for offenders in the province of Saskatchewan. And of course that wasn't an issue that was discussed here tonight. And so I just want to highlight that. And I'll thank my officials more heartily at the end of the next bill. Thank you.

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes, I'd like to . . . Well I guess first I'll thank the officials for being here tonight, in particular Mr. Wilby for being here. It's always a pleasure to see you as well as the staff on Corrections side and committee. And I know I'll have the opportunity to thank you all later.

I understand the nature of estimates as it is in times of COVID are a little bit more difficult, with larger gaps in between questions. In particular to your remark, Minister, I do have several pages of questions that I did not get the opportunity to ask this evening. And I will be providing them to your office in the form of likely a letter, some of them, including the questions about the remand centre that you had mentioned. So I'm hoping,

based on your response or your comment, that your ministry will be able to provide me with some answers in the near future with those questions that I was not able to ask this afternoon because of the nature of the estimates as they are at this point in time.

So thank you, Minister, for your answers to my questions this evening. As well, Mr. Wilby, please send my best to your officials that I did not have the opportunity to see this evening.

The Chair: — Thank you.

Bill No. 21 — *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2020*

Clause 1

The Chair: — So we'll now be considering Bill No. 21, *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2020*. We will begin our consideration of clause 1, short title. Minister Tell, if you've got some opening comments.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Yes, I do of course. Mr. Chair, *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*, or SCAN as it's commonly known, deals with residential and commercial buildings and lands that are the source of chronic community problems such as drug use, trafficking, gang activity, prostitution, or child abuse, sexual or otherwise.

Under the Act, the director of SCAN investigates complaints received from the public regarding activities at a particular property and may take appropriate steps, including resolution of complaints by agreement or informal action, seeking a community safety order from the Court of Queen's Bench. The Act was originally passed in 2004 and has not undergone any significant review since that time, Mr. Chair. This bill will implement changes to the Act arising from an internal review.

Amendments include: clarifying the director's authority to appoint investigators and more clearly defining the powers and the duties of investigators, allowing police, government agencies, landlords, and other persons who are not residents of the community or neighbourhood to submit a complaint about a residence in that neighbourhood; clarifying the actions the director can make after receiving a complaint, including representing landlords at the Office of Residential Tenancies; and clarifying the director's authority to notify the director of child and family services in instances where the health or safety of a child are at risk.

Mr. Chair, these changes will ensure that the SCAN program continues to provide an effective means to addressing criminal activity in our neighbourhoods and help ensure the safety of its residents. Mr. Chair, with those opening remarks, I welcome any further questioning regarding *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act*. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister. I now open the floor to questions from the committee. Ms. Sarauer.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Minister, for your opening remarks. Now I know your office as well as the Minister of Justice have received several feedback letters from stakeholders. I've been cc'd to probably most of them. I'm going

to focus most of my questions on those stakeholder letters.

The first one is from the Office of the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner which raised some concerns about the privacy issues with respect to section 12 of subsection 31(5). Does the minister have a response to his concerns? And why is the ministry not making the change that Mr. Kruzeniski has requested?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — We are aware of the concerns identified by the Privacy Commissioner. The purpose of this amendment is to enable SCAN investigators to report to law enforcement agencies or, if applicable, other government agencies where there is a potential breach of law that requires the attention of those agencies.

For example, if a SCAN investigator witnesses a home invasion, assault, or other potential criminal offence, this change ensures that they can report that offence to the police. Similarly, if a SCAN investigator witnessed a potential serious risk to the environment or public safety, such as dumping of a toxic chemical, they could notify a government agency that is responsible for that particular issue. Any investigations or charges that would result from these reports by SCAN investigators would be subject to all the applicable rules of law and evidence for the investigation and prosecution of the offences.

Ms. Sarauer: — I guess my question based on that response is, is this provision really necessary? Can't SCAN investigators report . . . What's preventing SCAN investigators from reporting anything to the police right now?

[22:00]

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I don't think that the way it was written before actually . . . it doesn't prohibit it. This clarifies their ability to do so.

Ms. Sarauer: — There are several other stakeholders who have written to the minister regarding this bill with concerns. I want to highlight a few of them in particular and read them into the record.

The first one is a letter from CLASSIC [Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City Inc.] and Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan dated March 22nd, 2021. With respect to Bill 21 and their concerns, they've stated:

In our agency's experience, the SCAN legislation generally has negative collateral impact on predominantly single Indigenous mothers or grandmothers. It permits evictions under the umbrella of community safety where there is not enough evidence to charge someone criminally. The regrettable reality is that the entire household gets evicted, not the suspected individual. Further, there is little procedural fairness granted to the tenant subject to the eviction or community safety order.

SCAN should be reviewed for whether the legislation is meeting its goal of creating safety communities and neighbourhoods. Anecdotally we see tenants who are living in precarious rental situations be subjected to harassment

and eventual eviction by SCAN. We would question whether the resources that are currently allocated to SCAN could not be used to promote wellness, safety, and housing for the tenants who are subject to SCAN complaints and evictions.

They've specifically recommended that this bill be withdrawn, as well as some very specific recommendations for amending the legislation. That's listed in their letter that I won't go into detail this evening.

There's also a letter from Central Urban Métis Federation dated April 15th where they have requested that Bill 21, this bill be withdrawn because of lack of consultation about the proposed changes, as they had indicated that they only recently learned about this legislation and were not specifically consulted with respect to the changes.

There's also a letter from the Renters of Saskatoon and Area dated March 29th, 2021 where they list several concerns about Bill 21. I won't go into it in detail. It's very similar to the concerns that we saw that CLASSIC and Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan have addressed. In particular they say:

The government amendments do not address the overarching need to access more suitable housing programs for recovery, stability, and shelter from the market. Renters are in danger because SCAN's legislation directly interferes with the right to housing, the right to quiet enjoyment of the home, and the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

It's a longer letter, but I won't go into it any more than that for the purposes of this evening. But they've also requested that the bill be withdrawn.

There is another letter from Safe Community Action Alliance. It is not dated, but it speaks specifically again to a request that this bill be withdrawn because they do not feel that there has been proper consultation from the community with respect to these changes.

I have another letter from the Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership, dated April 12th, 2021 that speaks again to expressed concerns about Bill 21, in particular the impact that it could have on poverty and homelessness in the community.

And finally I have a letter from the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership, dated April 8th, 2021 where they say specifically they're speaking to both . . . Some of these are speaking to both Bill 15 and Bill 21, but this one states that:

The changes recommended in both of these bills have the capacity to exponentially increase the number of homeless in our province. In the 2018 point-in-time count, Saskatoon alone had close to 500 individuals who identified as being homeless and/or precariously housed.

And they're very concerned about the amendments in this legislation and that it will be a step backwards in the goal to functional zero homelessness, which is the goal of this organization.

Minister, I know I went through those letters rather quickly, but they all, broadly speaking, have voiced concerns about the legislation. Do you have any response to these stakeholders and their letters?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — This Act provides a number of processes and protection for tenants. A tenant who faces eviction under a community safety order has a 14-day period to apply to the court to vary the order under sections 12 and 13. The court may also extend this timeline if it's satisfied the extension is in the interests of justice.

Where a demand to vacate is provided on behalf of the landlord and the tenant chooses not to vacate, the matter must proceed through the Office of Residential Tenancies. In those cases, the tenant will receive a hearing to attend at Residential Tenancies, where they can contest the eviction. The majority of evictions that occur within the SCAN legislation are not through community safety orders but rather through demands to vacate on behalf of the landlord. Tenants have all the same rights for contesting an eviction as they do when they receive an eviction notice directly from the landlord.

Under new subsection 22(3.1), a demand to vacate must be served on the tenant by personal service or by posting the demand in a conspicuous place on the property and by serving the demand through registered mail. Under subsection 22(1), all community safety orders are required to be posted in conspicuous places on the property.

New section 30.1 establishes clear authority for the director to work with governments, agencies, and neighbourhood organizations to promote and encourage the development of safe and peaceful communities.

And I'm going to turn it over to Drew Wilby to talk about what we're actually doing in the community.

Mr. Wilby: — So the SCAN legislation of course I don't think can be viewed as an island unto itself. There's significant other work that's going on within especially Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, and our other communities as well, including the partnerships we have with groups like the community safety and well-being table in Saskatoon to look at a lot of those issues that you've raised and particular areas around homelessness, areas around crystal meth, and those pieces. And we're happy to support them through our integrated justice services area to make sure that, you know, we are part of the conversations that are going on.

A lot of the groups that you've brought forward, we work closely with them. I would know CLASSIC of course. We provide funding to them each and every year to provide some of the services that they provide as well. With Regina, we've struck a new partnership with their community safety well-being table to help support some of that work that's going on and look at a lot of those systemic issues that have been addressed in a lot of those letters. So it's a bit of a, you know, one half and the other.

The other piece is that there's a lot of individuals that live in these communities too that are protected by the SCAN legislation, or that there may be things that are going on in their community that they're not happy with and they're looking for a confidential

place to go and raise that concern. As we all know, when you go to raise a criminal complaint, you go down to a police desk, and you have to go and you have to file that there, put your name to it, and there's potential for challenges and issues that are there. And so that's, you know, some of the benefit of what SCAN does there. So there are obviously . . . you know, we're aware of the concerns that are there, but there is also the other half to that whole in addition to that as well.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. From what I understand in my experience, tenants do not always have knowledge of SCAN applications and therefore do not always have the opportunity to respond to them and don't know that they've happened until a SCAN order has been made.

Has the ministry made any considerations toward ensuring that the legislation be amended in the future to allow for a requirement that all tenants be given aware of any SCAN application, not necessarily at the end stage when an order has been made but at the initial application stage.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Pieces of legislation are often reviewed, as they should be, to ensure that they're actually relevant to today's world. And we'll take all of what you had to say in relation to the eviction notices and that type of thing, if you want to put it in writing, we'll consider everything when it's time to review the legislation.

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

The Chair: — All right, thank you all. It's time to move on. All right. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 18 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2020*.

I would ask a member that we report Bill No. 21, *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2020* without amendment.

Mr. McLeod: — I do so move.

The Chair: — Mr. McLeod moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. That concludes our business today. Minister Tell, do you have any final closing remarks?

A Member: — No.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — No. My colleagues have spoken for me. And I mean, I think we're all tired and we had a long day, so I just

want to thank everyone. Thank you to Hansard. Thank you to the staff that have prepared everything for us, and of course, my colleagues. And thank you to Nicole and all of the ones behind the scenes. Okay, I'm done. They know. I've said it a million times to them. Thank you.

The Chair: — Ms. Sarauer, if you've any final comments.

Ms. Sarauer: — I'll just echo what the minister said and say thank you so much, everybody, this evening.

The Chair: — Excellent. I'd also like to reiterate and thank everyone for your efforts and for being here tonight. And I'd also like to thank our Procedural Clerk — I don't think she gets thanked too often — but Stacey Ursulescu, you're awesome and thanks so much. Thank you, Hansard, for staying with us tonight.

All right. I'm going to ask a member to move a motion of adjournment.

Mr. Grewal: — I move the motion.

The Chair: — Mr. Grewal has moved. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. This committee stands adjourned to tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3 p.m. All right, folks. Thank you, all.

[The committee adjourned at 22:14.]