



# **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 14:59.]

**The Chair:** — Welcome, everyone. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. I'm Mark Docherty, the Chair, and with us this afternoon are Betty Nippi-Albright, the Deputy Chair. We've got Gary Grewal, Travis Keisig, Lisa Lambert, Tim McLeod, and Greg Ottenbreit. Today the committee will be considering the estimates for Government Relations, and then four bills.

**General Revenue Fund  
Government Relations  
Vote 30**

**Subvote (GR01)**

**The Chair:** — We will now begin our consideration of vote 30, Government Relations, central management and services, subvote (GR01). Minister McMorris, please introduce your officials and make some opening comments.

[15:00]

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is a privilege to be back in front of a committee defending estimates, defending a budget of our government. Before I start, there are a number of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, thanks to the committee members for being here. It wouldn't happen without you being here to, if there ever was a vote, to carry the budget if that was your choice. So thank you for being here.

To the critic of course, we have four hours to spend together on a number of different issues, so I want to welcome her. I want to also welcome Max Waldman who is my chief of staff here today and thank him for his good work, as well as all the staff back in my office who do an amazing job.

I also just want to briefly, I have comments on the budget but I just want to talk a little bit about, you know, kind of where we are today in the pandemic. And you know, I'm very pleased to have my deputy minister, Greg Miller, here and all the officials back at Government Relations.

You know, I really enjoyed in my past time as minister where you really got to know the officials because when they would brief you, they would come into your office and you would get to know them all and you would see their faces and you would almost get to know their personalities. And we do a briefing every week and it's all by phone and it's just really, really different. In six months or five months, however long I've had the privilege of being a minister, I've met maybe three or four of the officials, and my deputy minister in person only a couple of times. And so it's really for me unconventional. I really enjoy that personal contact, but of course that just hasn't been the case.

But I do say that, again, just amazing work by the officials to, number one, get the budget ready to vend it through treasury board and then through the budget process, and now this afternoon and into this evening defending it in the committee at the committee stage. It takes a lot of work and a lot of work by all the officials even though, as I said, we don't get to see each other in person. And it makes quite a difference, I find. But I want

to thank them all, and I will be thanking them at the end of our four hours, should we make it through four hours.

As I said, it's going to be a privilege this afternoon and this evening to talk about the spending priorities outlined by the Ministry of Government Relations budget for '21-22. I would like to begin by providing a few comments, general comments, on the ministry's budget as well as a few highlights and priorities of Government Relations for the year ahead. Following these remarks I'll be very happy to answer questions, should the committee have any.

The 2021-22 provincial budget aims to protect Saskatchewan people through the rest of this pandemic as more people are vaccinated and life begins to return to normal through the road map introduced by the Premier yesterday. As we emerge from the pandemic, this budget will grow Saskatchewan by helping to ensure a strong economic recovery.

Specifically for the Government Relations budget, we will be investing \$35 million in emergency support for First Nations and Métis organizations, which I will go into a bit more detail shortly. Over 26 million has been made available for the COVID-19 resilience infrastructure stream to accelerate the Investing In Canada Infrastructure Program, better known as ICIP, which I'll be referring to as well. As well, 741,000 has been identified to support the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts. This funding will support Saskatchewan communities in a time of economic uncertainty.

The Ministry of Government Relations' '21-22 expense budget is 613.3 million. Let's compare that to '20-21; the restated estimate of the ministry was 695.3. This is a decrease of \$82 million or 11.8 per cent over last year. I would like to point out that this decrease is primarily the result of the nature and success of the conclusion of the municipal economic enhancement program, better known as MEEP, 2020 infrastructure program.

This — important to know — one-time funding which was announced last year saw 150 million provided directly to all municipalities across this province with very little strings attached. These funds were used to support quick-turnaround infrastructure programs that not only helped Saskatchewan residents get back to work but also supported the province's economic recovery from the effects of the pandemic. At this point I am pleased to report that all communities in the province that applied have received their funds and that hundreds of projects across Saskatchewan are already under way or have been completed. Just a note for the committee: excluding the one-year program, the year-over-year change in municipal investment from the province would be a \$48.1 million increase, or 11.5 per cent.

Regarding infrastructure, providing funding to Saskatchewan communities for infrastructure projects continues to be one of the main priorities within Government Relations. This year the '21-22 provincial budget includes \$140.1 million in provincial support for municipal infrastructure. This is a decrease of 101.6 million or 42 per cent from the '20-21 budget but, as noted earlier in my remarks, the decrease is a result of the completion of the one-time-only MEEP or municipal economic enhancement program, offset particularly by increasing the New Building

Canada Fund.

The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, or ICIP, and the strategic partnership program continues to be one of the main avenues the government delivers infrastructure funding to municipalities. In 2021 we will see 56.3 million for the provincial portion of the Investing In Canada Infrastructure Program. The total amount, including the federal portion, is \$123.9 million. 46.9 million will be provided through Government Relations for the province's portion of the New Building Canada Fund. That total amount includes the federal portion of 49 ... is \$49.7 million.

Regarding municipal revenue sharing, Saskatchewan flagship municipal revenue-sharing program continues to be the envy of provinces and especially municipalities across Canada. This year's municipalities will be receiving \$275.7 million from the municipal revenue-sharing program, the second-highest amount on record. This is a slight decrease of \$2.4 million from the previous year.

The Government of Saskatchewan remains committed to providing municipalities with consistent and stable funding. As such, the MRS or municipal revenue sharing represents revenue from three-quarters of 1 per cent of the PST [provincial sales tax] from two years prior. This provides municipalities a level of consistency and predictability and the ability to adjust their local budgets when there is a decline. This no-strings-attached revenue program has delivered more than \$3.4 billion directly to all municipalities across the province since 2007. These dollars can be invested into priorities at the discretion of the local councils. It continues to be this government's belief that the locally elected are in the best position to invest these funds and knowing the needs of their specific communities.

Emergency gaming pandemic support. As mentioned this year, the Government of Saskatchewan will be providing \$35 million of emergency pandemic support to First Nations and Métis organizations through the Ministry of Government Relations. These grants will support organizations that typically receive payments calculated on the forecast of casino revenues. For this year the profit distribution formulas of the gaming framework agreement and *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Act* will be suspended and replaced with transfer funds to the First Nations Trust, community development corporations, and the Clarence Campeau Development Fund, and will be used to continue supporting First Nations and Métis communities and individuals.

While not ideal, all casinos in the province have been forced to close to comply with current public health orders and advice of the chief medical health officer in order to stop the spread of COVID-19 and its variants in the province. This is the reality of the situation we are currently facing. The \$35 million set aside from Government Relations will help ensure that the good work done by organizations that typically receive funds from gaming profits continue. These dollars will help protect the province's economy as it recovers from the pandemic, but more importantly this investment will support First Nations and Métis communities, families, and entrepreneurs.

Treaty land entitlement. Saskatchewan also continues to lead the nation in the transfer of treaty lands to First Nations. The

Government of Saskatchewan has been committed to the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement through its partnership with Canada and the entitlement First Nations for 28 years now. This partnership has succeeded in transferring more than 881,000 acres across the province to reserve status. As mentioned, no other jurisdiction in Canada has transferred as many acres under this type of agreement.

Success is not only measured by reserve creation alone but by the other benefits, including new partnerships that are forged between First Nations business and neighbouring communities and municipalities. The government is currently involved in negotiations with Canada and five First Nations to settle new claims, and we are aware of three more claims that have been validated and are eligible for negotiations. Saskatchewan remains committed to this process and to the ongoing co-operation with our partners as part of our continued effort towards reconciliation.

First Nation and Métis community grant program. For many years the Government Relations has provided additional support to Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan by offering a variety of grants aimed at supporting local Indigenous events and initiatives. These grants have been open to all Indigenous people and organizations in the province. Last year 300,000 in funding was announced for projects that addressed interpersonal violence, in recognition of the one-year anniversary of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the final report it submitted.

An additional \$100,000 was made available as a result of the Indigenous sponsorship program was not used due to COVID-19. The report raises considerable awareness about the tragedy that has affected multiple generations of Indigenous women, girls, and those of diverse gender and sexual orientation. I am pleased to say that the overall total funding for this important grant program will remain at 300,000 in the 2021 and the sponsorship program will also remain at \$100,000. This fund will continue to support projects that draw attention and awareness to interpersonal violence and to support projects and events related to safe communities, strong families, student achievement, and economic growth.

Finally I would be remiss if I didn't mention a very important announcement made earlier this year, one that while it has a small financial footprint carries tremendous weight and importance socially. In January I was proud to be part of the announcement with His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan Russ Mirasty and Premier Scott Moe that will see a permanent public memorial established on the grounds of Government House here in Regina. This site will serve as healing, educational, and a sharing site for all survivors of the federal residential school program along with their families and anyone who may be personally impacted by this dark chapter in our nation's history. This site reflects the special relationship Canada's First Nations people have with the Crown, the federal government.

Now I'd like to describe our budget by taking a closer look at the expense type. Nearly 97 per cent of Government Relations budget reflects third-party transfer payments. The majority, 93 per cent of the total transfer funding is provided to municipalities or municipal stakeholders, primarily through revenue sharing and infrastructure grants; 6 per cent is provided to First Nations

and Métis organizations; and 1 per cent is provided to the Provincial Capital Commission.

This leaves 3 per cent of our ministry's total budget for delivering ministerial programs. This includes community planning and support; ongoing programs, services, and reconciliation efforts in relationships to the First Nation and Métis and northern portfolios; as well as building and technical standards.

[15:15]

This concludes my overview of the Ministry of Government Relations '21-22 budget. It is a budget that responds to today's challenges and delivers on our commitment to the communities and the people of Saskatchewan. I'd be happy to field any questions should there be any. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. I'll now turn the questions over to Ms. Nippi-Albright. The floor is yours.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — miigwech. Thank you for providing an overview of what your ministry has been doing. I only have a couple of hours with you, so my colleague will come in for the other two hours. But I do not want to waste your time nor do I want to waste mine, so I will quickly ask my questions. And also if you need further time to answer them, they could be tabled. Okay?

So my first question would be regarding the . . . I guess around the TLEs, treaty land entitlement. So how many lawsuits does the government have regarding the treaty land entitlement from First Nations?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I will just kind of do kind of a brief comment and then we'll endeavour to get more information. But that really would kind of fit under the Ministry of Justice, under the Attorney General, as they are through the justice system not through First Nations and Métis relations. But having said that, we can get that information and get it back to you once we have it. We won't kind of hold up questions here right now. We'll endeavour to get the information. In another answer, I may tack that on.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay, thank you so much. Thank you. So I guess another question just to follow up on that is, while you're getting that information, is to find out how much the government is spending to defend their position with the treaty land entitlement. So that would be good going forward.

I just want to talk a little bit about the duty to consult. Duty to consult, as you all know, is . . . Like, in 2010 the government created the framework for duty to consult, and in 2013 they created the engagement document that complements the duty to consult. So my question is, have you . . . The process, that process, it created the process in 2013 that is followed by the government today. And I guess what I want to say is that First Nations and Métis people, that process doesn't work for them. And I just wonder, and I'm asking, has this ministry ever asked First Nations and Métis governments or leaders how they want to be consulted?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just regarding duty to consult, and you know, I'll just kind of go through what

we have laid out, and then if there are further questions on it, you know, we'll try and get more into the detail if that is the case.

But the Government of Saskatchewan is committed to fulfilling the Crown's legal duty to consult. Government encourages both public and private sector to engage First Nations and Métis communities early on in the process, in the development process. The goal of this policy is to facilitate mutual beneficial relationships among the Government of Saskatchewan, First Nations, Métis, and industry that contribute to the growing province's economy.

Our policy provides clarity on the steps, timelines, roles, and responsibilities of key parties. The First Nations and Métis consultation policy framework guides our objectives to protect treaty and Aboriginal rights, advance reconciliation between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal society, and promotes certainty for investments in our province to benefit all Saskatchewan residents.

The Government of Saskatchewan has a duty to consult with First Nations and Métis communities when contemplating decisions or actions that have potential impact on treaty and Aboriginal rights, such as the rights to hunt, fish, and trap for food on unoccupied Crown land and other lands to which the First Nations and Métis have the right of access for these purposes, and the traditional use of land and resources, such as the gathering of plants and other foods and for medicine purposes and/or the carrying out of ceremonial and spiritual observances and practices on unoccupied Crown land and other lands to which First Nations and Métis have the right of access for these purposes.

The government offers the First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund to ensure that First Nations and Métis have necessary resources in situations where duty to consult has been triggered. For example, in '20-21 we approved over \$450,000 in funds to both First Nations and Métis communities to carry out the duty-to-consult process.

Since '07-08 the Government of Saskatchewan has provided over 480 grants, totalling over \$7 million to First Nations and Métis communities when the duty to consult was put in place. You know, and again that is through industry . . . to First Nation industry, to Métis community, as well as through the provincial government.

So money is provided for First Nations and Métis organizations to carry out this process. It can be long at times, and it can be difficult at times. But we want to make sure that those communities are properly funded to carry out their side of the duty to consult.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. I've read both your documents, or all your documents. I've read the 2010 document for the framework, the 2013 document for voluntary engagement on duty to consult, and I've also read your plans for the last two years, as well as your reports for the last two years. So you've covered a lot of that.

But I just want to go back to asking the question: have you ever asked the First Nations and Métis peoples themselves how they want to be consulted?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So, Mr. Chair, I would say that, you know, have First Nations and Métis communities ever been consulted on how they would like to be consulted? Not to use the word “consulted” too much, but to be consulted. And starting in 2010, kind of, this framework that we have set up, there was broad-based consultation with First Nations and Métis communities as to how this should look. They had input into what the consultation process should look like, you know.

And so that was 10, 11 years ago. We started again a review about a year ago, roughly a year ago, to again get input from First Nations and Métis communities as to whether the framework was working for all parties.

Unfortunately of course — and we are all part of this with the pandemic that started — we really backed away from any of those consultations. And you know, early on with COVID and the impact that it was having in some of the northern communities and travel restrictions, we have put that on hold. Having said that, you know, we really look forward to this being behind us, this pandemic, and carrying on those consultations. Because just because you sat and consulted with a group 11 years ago, things change.

And so we want to, to your question, continue on that consultation on how best to consult with First Nations and Métis communities and certainly look forward to any input that they will have so that their voices are properly heard through this process because it’s extremely important.

It hasn’t always been done that way, and we know that. And that’s why it’s so important, number one, to have the framework set up 11 years ago, but more importantly to revisit it. And you know, we could be criticized that maybe it should have been revisited sooner. We were hoping that it would be done by now and then kind of set up, you know, make changes as needed. But this has put everything on pause for at least a year to a year and a half, but that will resume once we can properly engage, hopefully on a personal, on a one-on-one level.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you for that. I’m pleased to hear that you are reviewing and going back to the First Nations and Métis communities to get their input on this because it is something that has been a contentious issue within the First Nations communities. And so I’m pleased to hear that, and I would also be very, very delighted to know when that day happens and be happy to work with you on that.

And speaking kind of about that, and it just ties into this next question around the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] Calls to Action. The TRC commission’s 94 Calls to Action was finalized in 2015, and the duty-to-consult framework and the voluntary engagement, of course you said it was 11 years old or however long it was. I’m just wondering if . . . Like, I’m hoping that the duty to consult and that framework will be updated to reflect the 2015 Calls to Action. Is that something that will be in conjunction with what you are doing going forward?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I will let my deputy minister get more into detail on this.

**Mr. Miller:** — Thanks. Greg Miller, deputy minister. So with

respect to sort of the relationship between truth and reconciliation and duty to consult, while on the surface they’re, you know, they’re different things, there is certainly an overlap between them.

So we anticipate that — as the minister described, we began an internal process to look at the consultation framework sort of machinery that was providing consultation on a broad variety of topics — that the newer conversation I guess on truth and reconciliation will certainly be brought into the conversation about duty to consult, as it is certainly a focus of government, of First Nations communities, Métis communities, as well as industry is engaged in that too. So I anticipate that there’ll be a reflection of that. Can’t predict what that’s going to be but it will certainly be at the table, we anticipate.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you for that. And I also failed to add to that question, would UNDRIP [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples] also be a part of that probable discussion when you have that engagement process?

[15:30]

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So kind of a couple of questions in, you know, how does it all kind of meld into one, or does it meld into one, you know, the duty to consult and the UNDRIP legislation which is federal, that is going through parliament right now, that I believe has gone past second reading and into the committee stage. And you know, it’s a very good question because, you know . . . And this is a file that has been led more through Justice, I would say, than ourselves, again because it’s legislation. And to your question on the lawsuits, those tend to fall into Justice’s purview more. But we’re directly involved and representative.

And why I say it’s a good question is because, again talking to a number of First Nation leaders here in Saskatchewan and talking to a number of other provinces, there is just — just looking for the right words — so much uncertainty as to exactly what UNDRIP means. I mean I think everybody would agree with the intent of the UNDRIP bill, and so the intent is one thing. But it’s how it’s interpreted on the ground and how it melds, just as you asked, into the other issues such as duty to consult and everything else.

And you know, I would say that after having great conversations with probably I would say two dozen First Nations leaders in this province, I would say that the, you know, not to use . . . the jury is split even with so many First Nations communities. They’re not quite sure of the interpretation and how this will affect. Some will be interpreting it one direction and others interpret it another way.

And you know, I think that’s kind of what has caused some consternation for a number of provinces that aren’t sure how this will affect things moving forward — how does it dovetail into what we have already in place?

So a great question. I wish I could answer it more clearly, but the reason I can’t answer it clearly is because we don’t have a clearer definition on how it’s going to impact. You know, there are some that will say it is the ability for First Nations to veto a project. But then there will be other First Nations saying, no we don’t



interpret it that way at all.

So it's trying to, you know . . . The wording has been vague. And one of the reasons why we have been reluctant all the way through this is, I mean if it's passed and it affects us — we have our treaty rights; we have duty to consult; all of those things — how does that affect? And we just haven't been sure on how that would affect. So we've been saying, is there any need to fast-track that? Let's figure this out before we put in legislation that would be very difficult then to unwind.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Well thank you for answering that. I just wanted to say that, like I'm not sure if you're familiar at all with my background, but I have a master's degree in political studies. And I did study UNDRIP and the TRC Calls to Action, so I have a wealth of lived experience as well as academic training in these areas. So it's great and it is complex; it truly is.

One of the areas that is I know of concern to many, in particular Indigenous leaders, is around the intergovernmental decision-making tables. And often they feel because of the — I'll say this, if I can be frank — the offloading from the federal governments onto the province, often Indigenous leaders feel their interests aren't representative at the table. So my question is, is there or is there a desire with the government or even the ministry to have meaningful dialogue and discussion with Indigenous leaders to see how they can be brought into those different paths of decision-making tables that we have?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So if I . . . and I might ask you for some clarity as to some examples of decision-making tables that, you know, may not have proper representation.

What I would say is just, you know, in my short time in the ministry — and there have been a number of other ministers that have had this file in the past — that we, you know, we work hard to try and develop a relationship between First Nations leaders that, depending on whatever issue it is, that they have my cell phone. I mean I have given it out a number of times. And if you hear something that's going on . . . I'm saying this directly to, you know, a First Nations leader. In fact, last week we were on a phone call with a couple and I said, you know, if there's some concern after this call, here's my phone ; just give me a call.

So you know, we try and engage and build as strong a relationship as we can. We know we're not always going to agree on every subject; that's just not realistic. But to be able to have some open lines of communication other than sitting at a formal table, you know, to make sure that we know kind of the input that many, you know . . .

And it's First Nations, Métis, and many other stakeholders that have, in any of the decisions that we as a provincial government or decisions that the federal government is making, which has such — you said it earlier — has such an impact on overarching all of this that, you know, I think we could say that there's a lot of times we as a provincial government are not in on decision-making tables that we would kind of like to be in on.

But having said that, I think it's really important again to develop those relationships. So it's not necessarily a formal . . . at a table, but it's more the communication that happens before we get to those tables so that we have a better understanding from, you

know, First Nations and Métis communities as to how this will impact, i.e., again I will just say UNDRIP is a classic example.

So when we as ministers meet, you know, we can kind of try and bring in the voice of the people that we have just recently talked to. And you know, there are other issues moving forward that would be the same.

But I'm going to turn it over to Deputy Minister Miller to kind of talk a little bit more as kind of on the ground, what he's experienced.

**Mr. Miller:** — Thank you, Minister. So with respect to decision-making tables, I think the minister has sort of given the example that there's different authorities vested at different tables. And those authorities are, as we know, often vested in legislation, right. So there's a federal tier of authority, a provincial, and so on.

One of the things that Government Relations does across this government is work with our colleague ministries. And so there's broad policy decisions that get made typically by elected folks and then there's the, almost the operational and tactical decisions that are very much closer to people's lives.

And there's, I think, many good examples across government ministries where, you know, in the day-to-day program delivery sense, where there's a ministry that has a program, a delivery, and expertise within that ministry to engage as you've talked about, where this is all overlapping space where it's not fragmented; it's holistic. There's a requirement to bring together many different things.

So we see in Government Relations our role supporting centrally as well as working with our colleague ministries at a variety of different tables where different levels of decisions are being made.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. You wanted some clarification what I was meaning about that. There's a couple things that are, off the top of my head, and again in my studies I was really . . . During my master's program I really was very intrigued with the intergovernmental relations piece and studied why aren't Indigenous leaders at the Council of Federation, for example. And we all know that's a fairly — is it 2003 that it came out? — and was an evolving one. And in all my research in university, my experience, I thought, well they're not at the table. Why?

And the other piece is around duty to consult. Anytime the feds make a decision that impacts the provinces, Indigenous leaders, Indigenous leadership is not at that table. So when I think about the duty to consult that was brought down that we are mandated to do something about it, that I guess for me as an Indigenous person with an Indigenous world view, I would automatically think, who's going to be impacted by that? They need to be at that table.

So there's two examples, the duty-to-consult piece, as well as the Council of Federation. And is there a willingness to advocate for Indigenous leaders to be at that high-level, intergovernmental relations table where decisions are being made that impact Indigenous folks?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — We're just going to chat with our person that would probably know a little bit more about that and give you a more fulsome answer.

[15:45]

So I'll just first kind of take a little bit of a run at the Council of the Federation, COF. And this will just be kind of very high because it really doesn't have anything pertaining to us in our ministry, and you know, we're here to defend the ministry's budget.

But I will say that talking to the premiers that I've had the opportunity to serve under, you know, that first day is a very important day. It's a formal invitation now for First Nations' leaders to be part of it. Not at the table because they're going to be talking about premier stuff, but as far as overall where First Nations, you know, having their input prior to meeting as a Council of the Federation of the Premiers. So that has been ongoing and is very, very important, even though it's not necessarily our level.

What I would say from our level, from a provincial level, it depends on the file so often. But you know, the good example with Cowessess First Nations and the agreement that was just recently signed through the Ministry of Social Services. And really, when you're saying, you know, about are they involved at the table, they were the leader in this example at the table. And you know, it's a really good example — first in Canada — and hopefully we'll be mimicked through strong leadership, be mimicked not only here in Saskatchewan but across Canada. And I'll just turn it over to my deputy minister if you had anything to add. That's good? We're good. Okay.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you for that. Yes, the Council of Federation. Yes, it's something that was very, very interesting for me when I studied and was in university. Anyway you have to excuse me; I have to put on my glasses. Young people have . . . They print such small print, and there's a question here around the budget. There's a decrease here in the First Nation, Métis, Northern Affairs. Can you explain that variance there?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So I will take again a first swing at this, and if I'm not in the right direction and you can get your glasses tuned in there, ask again. Because the only decrease that we're kind of familiar with as caucus here is around the emergency funding due to the casinos not operating. And it was at 45 million because we knew at that point in March, April that they're probably going to be affected for a year. And so there was more money put towards the 45 million which was a straight-up grant, no revenue coming in but a straight-up grant to the First Nations and Métis to support the programs, the very worthy programs that they put on.

This year it's a bit of a decrease as you've identified, if I'm talking about the right numbers, down to 35 million because we really do believe, you know, we're into the early on, the first quarter of this budget. We're certainly hoping that with the vaccination uptake that we're seeing in the province, with the road map that the Premier set out that, you know, casinos can be up and running and generating profits. Because that whole model was set up on the, you know, the generation of profit and then the different . . . And I'm not going to get into the proportions. If you

want me to, I'll ask Greg to get into the proportions of the different agreements and how that money is funded.

But it is, you know, it was a huge revenue generator that, you know, was shared through many different levels. But most importantly it, you know, funded education and social programs and community programs and so much in the communities that you just can't back away. It couldn't be a cliff that they, you know, that there was no funding. So last year, 45 million; this year down to 35. Ten million dollars less, but with the strong feeling that casinos will be up and running at least half the year. I mean we wanted to go back to the revenue that was allotted in the past. That would be our goal eventually of course. But that is all generated through casino revenue.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — And just to follow up on that question there, I did read both, like I've read . . . Like I'm a geek when it comes to reading so I am on top of things, right. You know, I talk to my constituents and one of the First Nations . . . I was really surprised with one of the First Nations that has an urban office, right. And they were closing after I don't know how many years. And I asked, I said, how come you're closing? You have such a valuable service here that you provide to your urban members. And they said, well we get our money from the casinos, you know, the community development fund, and they're not generating the money, right. And I'm like, but people still need services. They still . . . that's a valuable service.

So when I started delving into the actual pot of money for this — casinos — I was wondering, and I would ask the ministry, if there's any . . . Like, I know they're set for COVID-related emergencies, but is there anything outside that helps to keep the sustainability of these urban offices that have been existing? Is there a clause in there that allows them to grant, however they're going to grant, based on previous years where they've given dollars to keep urban offices open?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So, you know, I'll give a little bit of a history, not too far back. But of course, the gaming agreement was struck through a lot of negotiation, and you know, a lot of conversation, a lot of meetings that I think was serving everybody very well for the most part.

I know that from my experience with SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] when I was minister, that there is always an interest to kind of open up the agreements and tweak them, you know. I think, you know, from First Nations perspective, maybe a little more benefit for them; and maybe, if we did, more benefit to us. You know, that's just the way the negotiations go. But it has served the province very well I think and the First Nations very well.

Unfortunately it was like, you know, I said, falling off a cliff. It was like falling off a cliff. All of a sudden there was no revenue coming in. And if we would have stuck with the agreements, there would be zero going out. And we just knew that was not possible so, you know, a number was negotiated and agreed upon last year and because, you know, the revenue that would be generated and distributed, revenue that would be generated through casinos and distributed through the different agreements is a lot more than \$45 million. So we know compared to where we were, there's a decrease, and that is going to affect on the ground. It always gets back to the ground, and it's going to affect

different organizations on the ground.

And you know, we knew that there was going to be some impacts. You've identified, you know of some personally that have been affected and, you know, it's not what we want to see. But it's a little bit difficult when there is absolutely no revenue coming in. We're hoping that this year we can get back up, and the services that were offered by so many of these community-based organizations continue on into the future.

But you know, we knew that there would be an impact, like COVID has had an impact on so many different things. And we hope it's short-lived and short-term and that we can get back to where we were before, because it was beneficial to all. And so we know that there is an impact, and you know, we've all heard stories and you know of examples. And it's not what we want to see, but it's kind of the reality that we're facing with, you know, the dollars that are available.

And I would kind of just quickly note that, you know, when the dollars go out, you know, the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] and a few others have a very large say as to where that then gets . . . how it and where it gets distributed through the province and through the CDCs, [community development corporation] which of course there are, I believe, five casinos through those CDCs. But they have, you know, more or less a say as to how that is going to be distributed.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Well thank you for that. Thank you for answering that. Just talking a little bit about COVID now and the response. I'm not sure, hopefully you've all paid attention. But First Nations, you know that First Nations community have been very, very effective in keeping their COVID cases down, and also they've been really great at managing the cases and ensuring that there's minimal impact on their nations.

When we think about COVID and how the cases are, has the ministry or has the government actually asked the First Nations for advice and guidance on how they were successful in containing the cases in their communities?

[16:00]

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thanks for that. And yes, that is, you know, it's such a timely piece, and it's something that none of us have ever been through. And you know, I just want to compliment so many of the First Nations leaders in the North. For example, early on with the road blockade, that was not easy. That is just not easy stuff to do. And I just know from our perspective here in Regina as legislators, where we're not supposed to be able to travel in or out of Regina, and that's not easy. But they have their whole community, and you know, that was very, very tough.

So I want to compliment, you know, those especially on the northern . . . and it's not just the northern communities but where it was really hard hit early on, you know, the stoppage of traffic through that, and compliment . . . because it had an impact. We know it had a huge impact because had that not been the case, the spread would have been even that much greater.

I've had just an absolute, you know — I wish it was under different circumstances — but a privilege and a pleasure to be on

weekly phone calls with a number of organizations. Every week we do a city mayors' call where all the mayors, SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and the New North are on that call.

And every week I think since I've been minister, almost every week since I've been minister, we have done a northern mayors' call where there is about 17, 18 — I'm just not . . . I don't have the list in front of me — communities throughout the North from Creighton to Ile-a-la-Crosse and La Loche, and you know, all the communities where we've invited all the mayors to be on a weekly call.

We have Ministry of Health staff. We have public safety staff. We have the business response team. All those resources are all on that call so that if there are questions, that we can help them if there are concerns. So it really is, honestly, a two-way dialogue. First of all if, you know, if they have questions as to what Sask Health is doing, we have officials on the line that can answer it. If they have input as to what they would like to see, we can then take that back to, you know, the powers that be in the Ministry of Health.

For example, you know, the vaccination rollout was for individuals 50 and over in the northern communities, and it started at 80 and over in other communities. And that was very effective and rolled out, and I think had a big part as to why maybe there wasn't more spread. I mean, it was very, very well run. And there are, you know, certain leaders . . . I can think of La Ronge and the great work that was done there by the First Nation and the community, probably the most efficient of all the communities as far as vaccinating.

It was early on, as that community had been vaccinated 50 and over, where there was calls for 35 and over. And we knew that. And they were really wanting, you know, to spread it down to a lower age group. And like every age group in the rest of the province, it was all reliant on the number of vaccines that we were getting into the province. That would have happened, you know, right away if we could have followed through with vaccinations, but we weren't getting the number of vaccinations into the province.

I'm glad to say that it went down to 30. When I think it was probably in the 50s in the rest of the province, it was down to 30 in First Nations . . . in the North, but a number of First Nations communities — they're not all — and Métis communities. And you know, the last announcement that it's 18 above for all northern communities.

And you know, I'm not going to say that it's all, you know, the phone calls that we have with all the northern leaders is all roses. It's not. You know, there's some frustration, but there's been a lot of input back and forth, a little bit as far as education from what's happening from our government through Health and Public Safety Agency and the business response team to getting input and bringing it back to the tables.

And you know, I can tell you that as the minister, you know, this is . . . If when I was asked, what is the issues that they would like to see for a COVID response in the North, I would say, drop the age. And it was always, you know, we will as soon as we get

enough vaccine. So then it went down to 30, and now it's at 18. And that's absolutely wonderful.

And I think it's been reflective of the limited spread that we've seen, you know. Early on there was some concern, but for the most part in the last month or less it's been under control for the most part. You know, I hesitate to say that word because you never know with COVID if we ever have it under control. But it's much better off, and it's been because of the leadership through so many of the northern leaders as well as, I think, the communication that we've been able to have.

You know, some reluctance on vaccinations, for example, on whether you know . . . a certain area or group, there's some reluctance on whether they should be vaccinated. And I can tell you so many of the people on those calls as mayors would be saying, "I'm going on our local radio station to say that I received the vaccination." And they would get other leaders to communicate that to the rest of their community.

So that the vaccination rate uptake, I think, is greater now because of the leadership of so many of those and the communication that they had. I'm not so sure if those leaders hadn't stepped up that we would be to the numbers that we are. And so I think you're asking have we been in touch, you know, about the leadership and what has been done. And you know again, I just compliment them because . . . And it wasn't necessarily our idea.

I remember the one call where one of the mayors said, "well this is what I've done" and about three mayors down the list said, "well, you know, that's something that I'm going to do in my community." And it was not only information back to us but communication between, you know, the mayors that were on that call and taking, you know, for lack of a better term, best practices. And I think that's a part of why — and again, we're not out of the woods — but part of the reason why if we've had success, it's been through the leadership of the community leaders in the North.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. It's fantastic to see the engagement of municipalities in responding to COVID. I think one of the things that with First Nations is . . . In January of last year when the first cases came out, many First Nations, many First Nation leaders, chief and councils gathered their staff and said, what are we doing now? This was a year ago. This was well over a year ago, back in January. And they started their pandemic response teams and coordination. And what was very impressive is how they mobilized very early in April.

And I was doing consultation with First Nation communities a year ago, and we were doing COVID response planning. And it was very impressive how First Nation leaders were, in April, talking about return to school and talking about ventilation in the schools, online learning, getting PPEs [personal protective equipment], and having a strategy in place.

And one of the things that was repeated over and over again with different First Nations that I've been working with is how we cannot wait for anyone to take care of us. We have to take care of our own. And the measures they had in place, and still today they still have their lockdowns; they still have security. They have security that goes to the homes. They have colour-coded

cards that identify whether they need supplies, whether they need food or prescriptions, or a need. Very impressive.

And I asked them when I was doing consultations, how is this happening? And they were sharing with their First Nation counterparts. They had online dashboards in their community for daily cases; how many people are in isolation? They prepared homes that were empty for isolation, for all of that. They were very proactive. So for me . . . And what I said to them is, that's great you're sharing amongst yourselves.

And then I asked, has the province, has anyone asked you? Nobody's asked them. So it would have been really good, and perhaps maybe going forward I wonder if that's something that different ministries can do going forward and help and take the leadership from the First Nations in containing COVID and responding the way they have to . . . Because they have very good practices, best practices, that they would be more than happy to share with our provincial government, our provincial ministry departments.

Is that something that, as the First Nations and Métis relations minister, is that something that you could bring forward as a suggestion, as an encouragement to different ministries to seek advice from the First Nation leaders, not just in the North but also in the South? Because there's a lot of them.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — One thing that I did forget to mention as you were mentioning that is that . . . So I just talked about the northern mayors that we had talked to. But we were also on a weekly call with the P.A. [Prince Albert] Grand Council as well as the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. So there would be, you know, a wide range of people joining in on those. And once again there would be the Ministry of Health, Public Safety.

I was on a number of the calls. Not on all of them but on a number of them. I know my deputy minister was on many. But we had somebody on every call again listening to the input. And I think sometimes the dialogue isn't necessarily what the government can do for you but what we're doing for each other, what we've done for each other, and learning, you know, from that. And that certainly seemed to be the case on many of those calls. Also then the federal government was on all those calls as well, as well as the chief medical officer for that area but for the federal government.

So can always do better, absolutely can always do better. And we'll take that back, and you know, I hope this isn't a practice run for something that's coming in the future. I hope this is, you know, a learn-as-we-go but can still learn from it. And you know, if something ever happens in the future, I think we're better prepared for it than we ever were. This has kind of caught us all . . . and so we're all kind of, you know, learning as we go and communication is by far the most important.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. I'm kind of going back and forth. I have questions here, questions there, so I'm all over. So bear with me. So the casinos, and going back to the casinos and also the VLTs [video lottery terminal], I was kind of intrigued with the investment from the province for the increased VLT locations. And I thought, okay, why? Like, does the government want to be the only game in town when it comes to gambling by investing the 5.6, I don't know, million into VLTs?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I wish I could answer that question better because I know it has an impact. I mean, again that revenue has an impact because of the agreements, not only through casinos but through VLTs. But that really is . . . that would be SLGA that would have kind of all the detail on that. We would not have any detail on that. I'm sorry about that, but you know, we can . . . If you ever wanted to do some sort of a written question on that, we would then get to SLGA and try and get that information for you. But we don't have it with us. It would be none of our officials that would deal with that directly.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. Yes, I will have a written question for that. Now just going back here around . . . So how many senior staff do you have within the ministry that are First Nation or Métis?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Again when it gets to human resources, I'm going to turn it over to my deputy minister, and of course he'll have a better idea. And if you need to consult, we can also do that as well. Yes, we're just going to just make sure we've got that accurate.

[16:15]

**Mr. Miller:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. So with respect to the ministry's sort of composition, about 9.9 per cent of the ministry's employees overall self-identify as Indigenous. And in terms of senior management, we have nine folks who have self-identified. Those levels would be director, executive director, ADM [assistant deputy minister] levels.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. So with the staff component that you have, so what do they do? How do they go out and engage First Nation communities and Métis communities? How do they go about doing that?

**Mr. Miller:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. So with respect to the work of Government Relations staff across the ministry and in the area that deals with First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs, really the work is driven . . . It's a lot of relationship building. So we have, you know, our funds that we control directly.

As well, our staff is out — well, less so in the last year, but I guess digitally out there now — with other ministries. So we'll work with all ministries in government and a number of Crown agencies that are out engaging, whether it's on duty to consult, whether it's on other economic development files.

Pretty proud of the work that our folks do in terms of . . . we have a lot of capacity internally within the ministry, and expertise. So one of the things in this last year just prior to COVID, as I said earlier, I was able to go to all the ministries and Crowns to talk about their work. So a lot of the work is driven from other ministries and agencies, so we're alongside to support. So that would include agencies such as FSIN directly, the Métis Nation, and then certainly individual nations and tribal councils, working with tribal councils on projects. File Hills Qu'Appelle would be one of those examples.

There's sort of a cadre of expertise within Government Relations, and we try and leverage that across all government in terms of the work that's under way.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I would just maybe add to that too is that . . . and Deputy Minister Miller is exactly right. It isn't necessarily us consulting, but it's allowing other ministries and being with them when they're consulting. You know, you can think of Advanced Education, and you know, the SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], or whatever. You know, the meetings would be more between that ministry and the First Nation that's impacted. But we do, you know, try and support in whatever way we can through our ministry.

So it's not . . . And you know, on any of the direct programs of course we're directly communicating. But Environment or Advanced Education, or you know, the minister for SLGA and all of those, so a lot of the consultation and meetings with First Nations groups are driven from other ministries, and we try and assist where we can.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So just with the nine folks that are self-identified and — I thought I heard you right — in kind of senior positions. So my question with that is, have those nine folks, I guess within your ministry department, have they, over the last I'll say five years, seen an uptake in concerns regarding the process when duty to consult occurs? Or lack of duty to consult?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So it does kind of go back to the question that we had earlier this afternoon still regarding, you know, the duty to consult, and have we consulted with First Nations on how to properly consult? And that's, you know, have we been hearing concerns? And I don't know if it is any one concern that has come up to lead us towards, you know, reviewing that as much as it is things have changed. In 10 years or 11 years since the framework was put in place, things have definitely changed and expectations have changed. And is the framework meeting those expectations?

I guess we'd have to maybe do a deeper dive to hear if we've had just individual concerns from, you know, the process. But I would say that, more importantly, from a government's perspective it needs to be reviewed if it's been in place that long. It needs to be reviewed and that's what we've committed to do.

And again, the timeline is delayed due to COVID. And you know, these processes are better when you can meet in person I think and engage that way to get input, you know. And we'll hopefully be able to do that as we move forward. But I would say that it's probably driven as much if not mostly by the fact that it's time.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — I know the current practice . . . In talking with stakeholders in my critic role as First Nations and Métis relations critic, been asking and speaking with First Nations, in particular First Nations communities, where I ask: tell me more about how duty to consult happens, occurs for your nation. And many of them have said, well we get a registered letter; we get a registered letter that this is what's going to be happening. And I said, well how does that work for you? And they're like, that's not consultation for us. And they said if we have any concerns or issues we're invited to go to a website and ask questions or present our issues.

So having said that, is that something that the ministry has heard as a concern? And I go back to the nine Indigenous folks. Have

they heard any of that from First Nations people about that process of sending registered letters as a notification?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I'm just going to consult.

[16:30]

Thanks, Mr. Chair, for the question. So what I would say is that, you know, the duty to consult . . . You mentioned the example where a community received a registered letter, and yes, it would be a registered letter just to ensure that it got to the community, as opposed to getting lost in the mail or misplaced or whatever. So that's why it's a registered letter. And I think it's very important, you know, when we talk about duty to consult, that the registered letter is the very start of the duty to consult, not the end. It's not, here's a registered letter and we've consulted or told you that we're going to consult, and then walk away. That's not the way the process works. And we could, you know, if you want, get further into kind of the process.

But it isn't necessarily GR [Government Relations] that would handle that. I mean the letter would go out that there needs to be duty to consult, and then often it's, you know, if it's a First Nation working with the Ministry of Agriculture if it was an agriculture issue, the Ministry of Environment if it was an Environment issue. And we have also, you know, again talking to the staff, they will say that we're a resource for that First Nations community. In other words, if you're not understanding what the registered letter is or what duty to consult entails, we'll certainly help you — we're a resource — and get back to us.

It's felt that through GR it's a very good working relationship with many of the First Nations. And if they're feeling that they're not getting the information they need to make, you know, informed decisions through this process, get in touch with us because we do have resources. That's what we want to do, is to help them out — not First Nations or a band going through this process by themselves, but being supported. And that's, you know, what we see as a role of our ministry, and take that very seriously. And if there are problems, again as I said, get in touch with us and we can help you out. But the registered letter is just the start to identify that there is an obligation for a duty to consult. And then the process kicks in after that. Deputy Minister, did you have anything to add?

**Mr. Miller:** — I guess I would just add that, yes, there's a variety of supports and all the staff in the division sort of work in this space from time to time so there's capacity across the division and in various playbooks.

The other piece I would point to is that there is also a budget allocation for the First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund. I certainly have heard from participants in this that there is a requirement for support to get communities some capacity to, you know, tacitly engage in a true consultative process to achieve the outcomes that are mutually beneficial from the perspective of the rights holder, the folks that are initiating the particular project, and government. So that's a big piece of it as well, working through that.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. Just to follow up on your answer there. So those dollars you're just talking about and the work that's being done, so there's a couple of questions. What is

the impact? How do you measure that besides the number of people that participated in that? Because the dollar figure doesn't include or . . . Like, we have 74 First Nations and we have over 70,000 Métis right in this province. So that dollar amount, what's the impact that is generated? And how is that measured in terms of outcomes, measurable outcomes, and not in number of attendees?

**Mr. Miller:** — Thank you. So in this budget allocation there's, as I said, \$200,000. There are 78 grant agreements that have been signed with First Nations and Métis communities. And in terms of the outcome, I guess the purpose of the fund itself is to facilitate the actual . . . the engagement so that the recipients of the funds have the capacity to do the engagement. With respect to the impact, I think I'll have to consult further with some of my officials to talk about what are some of sort of the metrics that we use.

Ultimately I think the ultimate outcome would be the successful conclusion of an engagement where folks felt like they had, you know, a really good process, that they were all understood because there's a number of interests at any table like this, as you well know. So I think that I'll get some more information from my officials with respect to how we go about sort of measurement of the impact.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I would just add to that too, the duty to consult can go either way. It can be successful, it cannot be successful, and I don't think we measure our outcomes on whether it's successful or not. What we want to have happen is that consultation took place. And you know, in an event where they don't feel that consultation was broad enough or whatever, then maybe that's a failure. I don't know if we can measure it on success or not success of the actual project moving forward, but that the fact that consultation took place.

And that's where our funding goes, is to help make sure that, you know, whether . . . And I know a couple of, you know, orders in council recently that I have been kind of in charge of went through. It was for a Métis development, but that they had the proper resources so that they could conduct consultation. I don't know whether it was successful or not successful, but we wanted to make sure that the resources are there so that they can conduct the consultation.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. And this is a question for the minister. So what are you doing to ensure that your colleagues consult with First Nation and Métis elected officials in their ridings and within their ministry responsibilities?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Since that was directed at me, I can't get my deputy minister to answer it? It's a good question. First of all, I'll talk, you know, a little bit about the ministry. You know, what as a minister do we do — responsible for Government Relations, First Nations and Métis relations — what do we do to ensure that there is communication. And then I'll touch on the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] piece because they are two totally different pieces.

You know, again, we work on a regular basis, whether it's through cabinet or through different committees. And depending on the issue, we're always, you know, there to support and suggest, I guess. Did you consult, did you talk to, did you

communicate with this group? I think most ministries are pretty attuned to it now. But if we can see a spot where, you know, this is going to impact in some way, we can suggest to the minister, or I can suggest to the minister, have you been in touch with . . . ?

And you know, a good example is most recently, the Minister of Justice and I have been working quite closely on a number of files. And you know, we'll conduct those phone calls together often. You know, I've mentioned UNDRIP, but there's other files that we've worked on. And you know, there'll be other ministries; you know, Environment is very directly involved, and Agriculture. And so again, making sure that, as they're looking at kind of where they, you know, not need to get to, but where this project is going to go, we can look at it from another perspective.

And I will say that, you know, just most recently we've been talking as a government about the irrigation project moving forward. And it is very, very early on, but I've heard from many First Nations, you know, we haven't been consulted with and we haven't talked about this. And I've talked to the ministers responsible and they are very aware of it. So that's how the communication could work between ministries and ministers.

On the other front, when it comes to MLAs, you know, that's a little bit different. We're all, as you are and as your members are, all elected to represent an area. And you know, we encourage, I know we do as our caucus, and as our leader, I'll say the Premier encourages all of us not only to communicate with the people that may agree with you but to communicate with everyone that's in your constituency, and to do that to the best of our ability.

[16:45]

And I will tell you that from my perspective, there's nobody better than the Chair of this committee that has done that extremely well, not only on the First Nations front but on so many other fronts here in the city of Regina. You know, we're all fortunate to be elected and seek the support of our constituencies. But you know, sometimes it's through party but sometimes it's through individuals and what they've done, and he would be a classic example of an individual consulting with all. And I think it's reflective that he keeps coming back here because it isn't an easy constituency to win. And you know, so that would be a classic example of . . . you know, if we could all model that one, we would be here for a very long time. So that would be just a general comment.

But to say that, you know . . . I often think that constituencies and representing a constituency for a particular party is — we've used the term before — is a franchise. And you know, you have the franchise for the Sask Party in this area, and we expect, you know, a party will expect certain things. Not all franchise owners are the same. And you know, there will be some that are better than others, and some will be stronger in other aspects of their constituency. But I can tell you that it's a strong message from the Premier is, you're not elected by the people that voted for you; you're elected to support and represent all voters in that constituency not just the ones that happened to vote for you.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Well thank you for that. Yes, I'm well aware of that. Just a question on the . . . Well we all know that today is murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls,

recognition of today. You had talked about in your budget that there is 300,000 and then another 100,000, so about 400,000 to keep Indigenous women safe or create awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and diverse peoples.

So I'm just doing a calculation here, and I just did a quick calculation. So you have \$400,000. We have 74 First Nation bands. We have over 70,000 Métis people. So if you divvied up that \$400,000 between the 74 First Nations, excluding Métis people, that would come out to about \$5,405 per nation to address missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

And that number's excluding the Métis. So how do you envision a good impact with those dollars? How do you envision that women like myself, a visible Indigenous woman, or my grandchildren, my granddaughters, or my nieces and aunties, how do you envision them to be safe with, if it was just divvied up between the 74 First Nations of \$5,405? What do you envision that . . . what's the impact of that?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thanks for the question. Mr. Chair, I know this question was asked to the Justice minister. It was also asked in the House today. Wished I was there to be able to answer it but because of COVID regulations . . . And I'm not sure if I would have anyway because it really falls into the Ministry of Justice's file quite deeply.

But what I would say is that that \$400,000 that you're identifying is one very, very small part of the overall money that is put towards First Nations and Métis relations. The budget this year is 193.7 million when you look at all money that would be targeted. So \$193.7 million, that's an increase of \$5.7 million or 3 per cent from last year's budget.

This money that you're talking about — this specific issue that you're talking about money — is just money targeted towards the murdered and missing Indigenous women file. That money then will leverage other money. So you know, there's projects or initiatives that come in that are funded through these dollars which then also leverage other community dollars. So you know, it was over \$700,000 worth of value that would go into just that one part. And when I say small, I don't mean small as far as importance — extremely important. But I don't think it's fair to categorize the work that's done through this whole file as only being \$400,000 because it's much more than that. There is certainly crossover.

You identified the gaming proceeds and how important those are. You know, those gaming proceeds would cover some of the programs that, you know, that I know that you would like to identify, you know. So this, as I said, is just one portion of the overall funding that would go to that.

And you know, I think it would be important. I know the minister of, I believe it was Social Services started to identify a few of those programs. But I'm going to just turn it over to my deputy minister to talk a little bit about what that 400,000 with leverage has done in one year. And again looking for, you know, that support again in this budget year, and that's why we're here to defend it.

**Mr. Miller:** — Thank you. So I guess I'll just outline, with respect to our First Nations and Métis community partnership

project — that's the budget that we're talking about here — there's sort of a list of different projects. And I wanted to just maybe outline a few to characterize some of the work that's being done.

One project engaging youth and leaders of today was an initiative with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yorkton, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner that this ministry works with often, and Good Spirit School Division, and Yorkton Tribal Council. So I think that that probably points to the minister's observations on the fund itself, leveraging resources on a number of different fronts.

The purpose of this project in particular was to help the participants to develop leadership skills, including social inclusion, mental health and wellness, school achievement, technical skills to assist with vulnerable youth making choices to keep them safe and on a path of healthy growth and development. The participants, the target audience for that particular project, would have been young adults 18 to 21 and youth 14 to 21 in that Yorkton area and some of the surrounding communities, including members of communities associated with Yorkton Tribal Council.

The Treaty Land Sharing Network was a project in the past year with this support. That was a partnership between the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and the Nature Conservancy. Its purpose was to build opportunities for cross-cultural learning, which we know is so important in terms of people coming together to enhance safety, security of Indigenous women and girls through the strengthening of connections to culture and identity, and to provide some opportunities to access traditional medicines, supply food, and get in to an understanding of ceremonial spaces. The beneficiaries of that particular project, it was directed towards Indigenous women, girls, farmers, ranchers, and rural people.

Another example here would be the Men of the North pilot in the North. This was a partnership between men and boys in northern Saskatchewan. And basically the purpose of this particular project that was supported was to have men and boys engaged in healing from their past traumas, from intergenerational abuse, and to see a decrease in interpersonal and domestic violence, and through building safety, healthy communities. And the community members were basically men and boys in this project from northern Saskatchewan.

The last one I'll identify here is Montreal Lake Cree Nation domestic violence crisis and transition support project. Again a partnership between Montreal Lake Cree Nation urban services and the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association]. The purpose of this particular initiative was to support women and their families fleeing domestic violence across Montreal Lake Cree Nation urban centres in two ways — the first being crisis response and support, and then the second, transitional support. These were families who were most at risk of failing to leave a violent home or slipping through the net of service provision.

So those are just a couple of examples, Mr. Chair, of some of the support that this is intended to drive.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. Thank you so much. I just wanted to underscore the importance of keeping our Indigenous women safe and why I referred to that \$400,000 and a part of that

193 million that you're referring to. I just wanted to underscore the importance and the \$400,000 that's specifically targeted to the missing and murdered Indigenous women. So I thank you for that.

Another question is the . . . and I know we've had this in question period and it's been a little contentious. The issue is the monument that's going to be installed at the Government House and beside a church. And like I've said previously that many of my fellow residential school survivors, in particular the males, have been violated and raped inside the chapels in those schools. And I know that many residential school survivors have been very traumatized by church-run residential schools. So when I brought this up in the House, I talked about that this could very well trigger and create further damage by having a monument right beside a church.

I'm wondering if the minister, if you would be open to having more dialogue and with, in conjunction with, the Governor General to say, hey, this is something that's been brought up, and how do we minimize and mitigate further trauma to residential school survivors when we're erecting a monument beside a church? And I've heard all the reasoning. I just want to ask if there's an openness to having meaningful dialogue so that we don't further traumatize residential school survivors.

[17:00]

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you for that question. I would have been surprised if it didn't come up through two hours of estimates, because I've heard your comments in the House here on it. And I've had the privilege in the short time that I've been the minister to have been briefed on this possible location and monument a couple of times. As I said in my reply to the budget speech, I've also had the opportunity to be at the location, see the location.

I would hesitate to say that the monument is beside a church. The monument is placed on Government House grounds which happens to be located on Dewdney Avenue. And if you drive down Dewdney Avenue there's a church. But you have to drive down. It's not connected to Government House. And I'm not going to doubt that, you know, that brings back some bad memories for many.

But we really take our lead, as I said, from this, from the Lieutenant Governor Russ Mirasty, who I don't think there's anybody in this . . . I don't think there should be anybody in this province that would challenge his qualifications. I mean he has, you know, he was born in La Ronge. He went to a residential school. He eventually ended up in the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. He was only one of only two Indigenous cadet troop leaders. I mean I could go on, on his credentials. I mean, during his 36 years he served in various roles. He was the commanding officer of "F" Division. He retired as the RCMP's assistant commissioner in 2013. His credentials are long and strong.

When he first approached . . . And I'm not sure because of the change of ministers. I'm not sure how much the previous minister and he had talked. But when he approached us through Government Relations, and me as a minister, he was hesitant. He said, I am just putting this out there; this is what I think, and not



only what I think but I have floated a trial balloon in many different venues of people that he associates with in the First Nations community. And he said, I have not heard one person say that it's a bad idea. He wasn't sure it was a good idea but he said to me that he hasn't heard any negative on it.

If someone comes to me as a minister but as a person that has no experience in that file at all and would never pretend to be able to understand, if he comes to me and says, this is a good place; this is the reasons why it's a good place; this is the people that we've talked to; here is what we have. He said, I don't even have it envisioned exactly what it will look like because we need all First Nations, anybody that was affected, to have input on that location.

I can certainly raise the fact that there is a church on Dewdney Avenue, which there are a few, depending on where you are on Dewdney Avenue. I can raise that but I will be the last person that would say, this is not where it should go. I am nowhere close to being qualified or having any credibility to say where that monument should go.

I will take the advice of one of the most respected First Nation leaders in this province. And yes, he is more than willing to hear all sides. That's been his career. His career has been building consensus. I mean you don't get to retire as the assistant commissioner of the RCMP without hearing all sides. I'll be the last one that's going to tell him where it should or shouldn't go. I am going to take his advice, and I think this province will be well served to listen to what he has to say.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you for that. And I do also agree that, yes, there's nothing wrong with him. No, I just for myself as a residential school survivor that has that lived experience, that's worked in the community, and also many others that have gone to residential school need to have more input. So I just was asking that if there was an openness. And it sounds like there isn't. And that's fine. That is fine.

What I do want to say is, I want to say thank you for taking my questions, both of you, and the chairperson. It's a privilege to be here to ask these questions that are near and dear to me. And for showing respect in answering them and not wasting our time. So I thank you for that and I look forward to continuing to work with you. miigwech.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. I'm going to let my colleague in now.

**The Chair:** — Yes, that's fine. I'd just also like to thank you for the respectful dialogue back and forth and look forward to the next substitution for you.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you so much, guys.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

[17:15]

**The Chair:** — All right, we're back and our recess is over. Substituting for Ms. Betty Nippi-Albright is Matt Love.

Welcome, sir. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Love:** — Great. Thank you for welcoming me here, and thanks for the time that you spent with my colleague before. I was able to listen in to some of the exchange, and you know, good to hear the willingness to engage in this session. And yes, I appreciate a lot of the content that I heard there.

I'm going to jump around with, you know, comments mostly focusing on municipal relations, but you know, I'll kind of move around to a few different areas from there. So I think just to get us started, I am going to just start with just a couple questions about the PCC [Provincial Capital Commission]. And then I'll move on kind of to other topics from there as we move through the estimates before us today.

Just with regards to the PCC, I just want to read a statement here: that the PCC, the purpose is "To enhance quality of life by creating community partnerships, promoting visitor experiences and providing stewardship of the land and assets within the Provincial Capital Commission." So obviously in the last year with the impact of COVID, and you know, the pandemic which is still very much a reality here in Saskatchewan, you know, this has made the goals of the commission challenging, as many other aspects, I think, all other aspects of life in Saskatchewan.

So my first question is, how has the PCC shifted or pivoted to ensure that the mission can be maintained and provided that enhancement of quality of life without risking or dismissing . . . you know, to engage appropriately with public health orders and to still maintain its mission here?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thanks for that question. I'm kind of thinking there may be more on the PCC in the future, but I don't know if you're covering off all the questions for the PCC. But we'll start with this one. I was kind of told that we'd have an hour just on that, but we'll see how it all shakes out.

COVID has had, you know, an impact on so many aspects of life here in Regina — around the province, but certainly here in Regina — and the impact that it has had on the Provincial Capital Commission.

You know, and so often people think of the Provincial Capital Commission as just kind of Wascana Park. But it's much bigger than that. And you know, out to Government House for example, the impact that it's had on the museum through the Christmas season, which is such an attraction for people to go to, it was open kind of with a number of restrictions in place. And then it was just felt that we cannot keep that open with the numbers increasing, so that has been closed until further notice. But it's certainly an asset through the Christmas season. I've been to it a number of times, whether it's the New Year's levee or whatever, and of course that all had to be curtailed, unfortunately.

But what I would say that I have noticed, and this is anecdotal, if you're looking at the lake and that path around the lake, I would say it's probably being used more now than it ever has. And again I don't have statistics to back me, but just by watching. And you know, again dealing with the public safety, everybody's walking around in the same direction. Or most, 99 per cent are walking in the proper direction. I know I went around there the other day and saw a few people coming at us and it just looks so different

now that people would be going against the arrow. But you know, and what an asset it is to have in the city and how much it has been utilized.

And then you can go on out to Conexus Arts Centre. And unfortunately, like any entertainment venue, it's been hugely impacted, not being able to be utilized the way it wants to be, you know, the board and staff want it to be utilized. Of course, concerts not being allowed, and you know, the catering that it was doing, so many other aspects that have been impacted.

And you know, our government has put money towards that to keep the lights on because with no revenue coming in at all. They had set up a great model there. They'd done a lot of work on that board to make that facility, you know, breaking even and a bit of a profit margin in years previous, and this just kind of caught them because they had big plans into the future. So that's caught them as well. You know, and then on to the university and the impact that it's had on the university. I mean it's huge.

But I would say again the shining light would be the issues . . . And I will say that we've been lobbied at times to shut down the roads around here because some more people could walk. And you know, maybe not all people realize that this is a place of work for a number of staff. But to shut some of the streets down so that they could utilize them for walking as well because the numbers . . . you know, where we can get some recreation and some fresh air, it's outside. We can't be gathering inside because of the restrictions. And the park has become just such a jewel and just an asset.

And I through the day look out my window of this building that I'm so fortunate to be in, but I look out that window and I'm amazed at the young kids. It could be a Monday afternoon, and of course because school was closed here in the city, the amount of young kids in the park playing, I've never seen it like that before. And you know, I mean I know we've put some money into the walkway out towards the lake. It used to be all gravel and there's been a lot of work done over the last number of years, paving stone. And man does that ever pay, has it ever paid off. I'm sure I'd like to know how many kids have learned how to ride a bike just in between here and the lake in the last month or so because this is where people are gathering. And so thank heavens for this place.

And I just want to, again, thank the staff, the executive director and staff for making this place as beautiful as it is, keeping it that way, but also making it safe for people because that has been a huge thing moving forward. I just can't imagine, if this place wasn't here, what people would be doing.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, you know, coming from the Saskatoon context to here, it's remarkable, like the beauty around this place. And I think you're right, Minister. You know, and I'm not looking for stats in this area, but I have seen stats related to the usage of the Meewasin Valley Authority trail system in Saskatoon, which is also stunning. And they have tracked some of this, and the usage in the pandemic just shot through the roof.

Obviously more people are staying here, but also recreation, you know, we want to do things outside. And you know, of all the negative that comes with the global pandemic and the challenges and the sadness, you know, we see things like appreciating some

of the beauty that we have here but also all the thoughtfulness that goes into that in terms of, it's not just a trail system by any means, but what it provides for mental health, fitness, recreation, community, all these things. I think we knew it before, but we certainly know it now, how valuable all these things are to community well-being. So I just wanted to start off kind of on that line and just get some perspective on, you know, how that work is continuing during this challenging time.

Just one more question about the PCC, and this is about the Brandt Centre. Just reviewing comments from the previous minister and just looking for an update on this, the minister said last June that public consultation meetings required to move forward with the Brandt project had yet to be held, citing COVID. She also said that the meeting schedule and the nature of the meetings are ultimately up to the proponent, CNIB. So I'm just wondering if there's an update on this. Is that still the case in terms of the status of those consultation meetings? And if it is, if you have any timeline for when those meetings might take place.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I would just, if I could, just get some clarification. You had mentioned the Brandt Centre. Are you meaning in Exhibition Park? Because that's the Brandt Centre.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, I'm asking about public consultation related to the project and wondering if the client of CNIB, the comment was that those . . . I can go back and find the comment, perhaps later in this meeting, if you want to refer to that. I don't have the direct quote in front of me, but I can look it up here. Yes, I don't know if that helps you at all to answer the question.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Yes sorry, I just needed that clarification. So you're asking about the Canadian National Institute for the Blind? Because there has been, I mean, the Brandt Centre is the hockey rink in town. And they've been talking about building a new one, which probably would be the Brandt Centre, and there'll probably have to be some public consultation on that as well. But that's not our file.

But you're meaning the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and their building and the proponents that they have partnered with to make that hopefully a reality sometime. But there is a process around that, and I'm just going to consult a little bit more on kind of where it is. I'm pretty sure I know which step it's at, but as far as public consultation moving forward by the CNIB.

So what I would say to that, and you know, again it's like so many answers are now, it tends to be related a little bit to COVID. So the CNIB had entered into an agreement with the Brandt Group of Companies to have them build them a building. There is a 38-step process for any proponent to go through before there can be construction within Wascana . . . or the Provincial Capital Commission, I should say. The CNIB or Canadian National Institute for the Blind building is on step 23, which is called the detailed design step, out of 38.

[17:30]

When COVID came around it was put on hold, and it is still on hold at this time. We have not been instructed by the CNIB that they were moving ahead with any other further public consultation. We do know that there needs to be further communication and engagement moving forward, but as of to

date there has been no notification to us when the CNIB, or the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, would be moving forward with that engagement or communications. And so as it sits, it's on step 23 of the detailed design of 38 steps.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay, thanks for that. Moving back towards kind of the focus for this evening's questions about municipal relations, and I think I'm just curious to start with a question just about some of the numbers in the budget and the estimates. I'm wondering, instead of, like, I could ask about each individual . . . but if you could just identify the areas of expenditures related to municipal affairs where federal dollars are being deployed, and if you could just highlight those lines in the budget where it's federal dollars being distributed by the province, and detail exactly how many dollars we're talking about in each area, that would be appreciated.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I think, if you don't mind, we're just going to get a couple of our people to give us the exact numbers, because you want to know the specific number. You know, I can kind of give you a broad answer. In ICIP, you know, the federal government puts money in, and the New Building Canada Fund. But I don't have those exact numbers but we do in the back, so we'll just be right back to get them.

**Mr. Miller:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. So with respect to federal dollars in this year's Government Relations budget, the two substantive pieces would be the money associated with the federal gas tax, so that's anticipated to be \$69.48 million. That's money that comes in from the federal government and flows through Government Relations back to municipalities.

The second piece is a proportional contribution that the federal government will be making to the ICIP investment. And as projects proceed over time — there'll be some time lag here because it takes some time to actually build a project — \$69 million in federal dollars would be associated with those ICIP projects.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — If I could just, I'll just add — and I said it in my opening remarks — I find these numbers quite striking in that 97 per cent of the Government Relations budget goes to third-party transfers, which is quite an astounding number. Six per cent . . . That's not quite right; 93 per cent of the total transfer funds is provided to municipalities, municipal stakeholders, primarily through revenue sharing and infrastructure grants. You know, so I've said 97. The other 3 per cent goes to the ministry to operate all the programs that we have. So we really are kind of a flow-through with some of the federal dollars that you've identified, or that we've identified, and then a lot of the provincial dollars that go straight to municipalities for infrastructure.

**Mr. Love:** — The pie chart says it all.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Yes.

**Mr. Love:** — So I'm familiar with what you're talking about as far as how the money flows and I'm just trying to get a sense of, you know, where it originates and where it goes to. So thanks for that, Minister.

You know, another thing that obviously strikes me from this

budget — I'm just wondering if you can give some comments on it — it has to do with COVID support. So my question is, what is the ministry doing to support the extra costs and pressures for municipalities associated with the pandemic?

But obviously in asking this, I'm mostly just asking if you can share some insight into, you know, removing the public safety amount that used to be included here that's obviously moved out. So obviously with that gone, I'm both asking kind of, you know, the discussions around that which I'm sure, you know . . . I understand that's kind of moved to have that all under the same umbrella under a different ministry. But also with what remains, how are you supporting municipalities, who obviously have increased costs making sure that citizens in their communities are safe?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Yes, thanks for that question. And as we had said earlier, everything seems to kind of relate back somehow to COVID and what have we done through the ministry, post and moving forward. So what I would say is that, you know, the Government of Saskatchewan supported municipalities with over 220 million of new funding like through this past year: 70.8 million was the safe restart funding which was federal money that came to help the province start up; 150 million was for the municipal economic enhancement program or better known as MEEP, which was all provincial money.

And that really went to municipalities with very little strings attached, allowing them to put it towards whatever infrastructure project they wanted. So it was very, very well received. And you know, I won't lie; pretty much every municipal leader wanted us to do it again. Of course that was bang, just right to their doors, and they all loved it. We did say at the time it was one-time funding. It's only been allotted twice since our government has been elected so . . . and pretty extraordinary times. We're really hoping as we move forward that the economy, you know, with the road map to recovery laid out in front of us that within the next few months . . . And you know, there are certain sectors of the economy that have done very, very well through this past year, year and a half. I don't know if you're much into boats or SkiDoo's or any of those things, but you'd have a hard time finding one in this province right now. I mean there's money being spent out in the province on certain areas.

Now you know, the entertainment and, you know, restaurants and all of that are hurting big time. And municipalities, you know, they have some challenges as well, but you know, between the ICIP money and the MEEP money there is going to be a lot of construction under way already and a lot of construction moving forward. I would just say that tomorrow there'll be an announcement of more projects moving forward in conjunction with the federal government, and ask the people to stay tuned for that. I'm not going to scoop the announcement.

But again, I think just from the municipal sector there is going to be a lot of spending within their jurisdictions and I think for the most part they're very, very appreciative. Speaking at both SUMA and SARM this year, it was verbally appreciated for sure. And you know, I've been to many a bear-pit and they certainly weren't bear-pits this year, maybe haven't been for a while. And I think that's reflective of the money that has gone out in trying to support them as best they can.

Now the direct input, you know, as far as plastic shields and that type of thing for public safety within their own offices, you know, there's some of that responsibility that was borne by the municipality. But for the most part, you know, in the early days, you know, they were having . . . for a lot of the RMs [rural municipality] this would be very tough for them. They were having virtual council meetings and, you know, conducting business that way. And they adapted like so many others. Overall I think, you know, not that COVID hasn't impacted the municipal sector — it certainly has — but maybe not as much as we've seen in other sectors.

**Mr. Love:** — So we can kind of go there with some follow-up questions, Minister. I have a number of questions related to some of the MEEP money and the ICIP grants and, you know, some of the other things as you mentioned. I did take part in both of those conventions, SUMA and SARM, and you know, paid attention to the questions that were coming in just to get the sense of the pulse that's out there in our communities and, you know, appreciated those conventions greatly as I'm sure you did too.

[17:45]

And I hear what you're saying about some sectors of our economy. Our province did very well financially in the last year. You know, we've commented in this committee with other folks sitting where you are, the struggle for folks to buy a pair of cross-country skis because they're flying out the door. People want to stay and take part in things here so there's certainly some bright spots there.

And we could probably go back and forth about, you know, other retail operations that did well, but let's focus on MEEP just for a minute. I'm curious. Did your ministry keep track of the number of jobs that were created? Like, the focus was on kind of an economic restart and some government support to get people back to work. Did you keep track of how many jobs were created in 2020 as a result of the MEEP program? And do you have any sense of like how many of those jobs were permanent full-time? How many of those were, you know, Saskatchewan residents? You know, in creating this program to stimulate the economy, what type of data did you track to justify what was a very well-received program?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I think I'll start and if you want to . . . We have a note that talks a little bit more specific on the COVID investment within municipalities that you had asked, and I didn't touch on it. So maybe I'll start with some of the MEEP funding and some of your questions, and then maybe I'll turn it over to the deputy minister to fill in all the blanks that I miss because there's usually quite a few blanks.

So what I would say is, you know, the \$150 million was very well received. It went directly to municipalities to support projects with very few strings attached. MEEP was a key component of the Government of Saskatchewan's \$7.5 billion capital plan that was laid out. Many infrastructure investments are a big step in the right direction for continuing Saskatchewan's momentum towards coming back.

What I would say — this is probably more to what you're asking — is that to date 760 municipalities have received approval and payments for over 1,430 projects, so 1,430 projects representing

a total investment of about 149 to 150 million by the Government of Saskatchewan. In other words 99 per cent of that 150 million has flowed.

As far as the employment piece, that's a little bit more difficult to track because you can imagine on 1,430 projects across the province, varying from pretty small projects to some bigger ones, that the municipality would then probably augment with funding that had, you know, the responsibility of tendering and contracting, not us through GR. You know, I guess we could work to extrapolate how many people were employed, but that's a very tough one to come up with because we don't have, you know. . . That was not one of the reporting matrix that we had asked municipalities . . . like, how many people are you going to employ with this money? It was, you know, what projects. So we made sure that it was going to infrastructure.

And then again, the second part of your question, how many were Saskatchewan companies? And again, you know, we'd have to canvass SARM and SUMA, and they would have to canvass their delegates to try and get a true number. So I'm sorry, it's not that we're trying to avoid that question. We just wouldn't have that information, that in-depth detailed information on the projects that the municipalities have taken on themselves. I mean, I know that there are some municipalities that use their own staff to fix up whatever it might be within their municipalities; others tendered for bigger projects. So you know, it really runs the gamut on that.

So with that, I'll just maybe turn it over to the deputy minister to talk a little bit more about the specific COVID funding.

**Mr. Miller:** — Thanks, Minister. Yes, absolutely, the MEEP money, part of the intention there was to get the money flowing out quickly, so the metrics . . . We didn't drill down to that level. Those projects will be ongoing, and we'll get some reporting on that this year, you know, following the completion.

I wanted to back up, as the minister said, to your question earlier about the specific COVID-related expenditures in the Ministry of Government Relations. So of our appropriation of 613.3 million ICIP program, there is specifically 26.2 million investment in this year's budget for the COVID-19 resilience infrastructure stream. So again, that's work with the federal government as well as the proponents themselves for a partnership investment to battle COVID. That money was sort of fast-tracked through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program over the course of the year.

The other substantive investment in this year's budget would be \$35 million in emergency pandemic support for First Nations and Métis communities. So this would be related to the gaming transfers agreement, Government Relations working with our colleagues to provide this pandemic support because of the impact of COVID on the operation of gaming in the province.

And then finally, specific to COVID is \$741,000 that has gone to the Conexus Arts Centre for funding to continue, help them survive, and make it through the COVID-19, which has of course an impact on the venues where large gatherings occur.

**Mr. Love:** — I'm just curious. I just note as you brought up the \$35 million in emergency pandemic support for First Nations

that that's a reduction of \$10 million from last year. Can you just help me to understand the justification for that?

**Mr. Miller:** — Absolutely. So in this year's budget, the \$35 million as you identified is a reduction of 10 million from last year and reflects the prediction of reopening of casinos and the re-establishment of, you know, gaming in the province. It's been deeply affected by the pandemic. Last year it was sort of earlier on that that negotiation landed where it did. And this year we hope — and important signs are pointing towards that — there will be some degree of recovery, and recovery in the gaming space will reflect the smaller amount.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay, so just back to the question about the MEEP program. And I understand that, you know, tracking jobs that you weren't . . . I understand your ministry is getting the money out the door. Municipalities are making those decisions, and you know, and these are not all separate projects employing different people. There's probably lots of overlap there, and I understand the trouble with that.

I guess I'm just curious, like, as a program that was intended as kind of an economic kick-starter for the province, what did you track other than jobs and money spent? You know, what did you track? Was it more like anecdotally you're hearing good feedback coming back from municipalities that they're thankful for the money and the projects? You know, was it anecdotal evidence? Do you have any other markers that you used to measure the success of the program?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — And so it's always an interesting, it's an interesting line to strike when you want to get money out quick, but then you want to know where it went. And so if you start having them apply for projects, which is ICIP for example, that's a longer drawn-out process. This money went out quite quick and it was on a per-capita basis, you know, with the instructions around it that it needed to be spent on infrastructure. It couldn't be operational or anything, paying the power bill for example. It needed to be put towards infrastructure.

Having said that then, how do we know that's where it went and what are the tracking . . . So the tracking is through their audited financial statements. And you know, just a little bit further on that, just so that we know that we're going to get audited financial statements back from all municipalities which, you know, we would expect them all to but maybe wasn't the case in the past.

And that was kind of legislation that came in just a year or two ago to say that municipalities, in order to get municipal revenue sharing, have to be compliant. And compliance means financial audited statements as well as making sure that they're . . . I'm just trying to think of the word. That they don't have any . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, yes, that they're not . . . the word's not "delinquent." But they're following along. They don't have any outstanding issues.

So that way we know we'll get all the audited financial statements because they want the municipal revenue sharing. That's very, very big for them. So I mean, it's a learning process for them right now because this is the first year that they've had to do it. And we're working through it with municipalities.

But this is all circling back to your question is, how do we know

what is happening with that MEEP money, the 150 million? And we will see it through their audited financial statements then.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, I do appreciate that answer. I guess I wasn't so much asking about accountability from your municipal partners but more just success of the program as far as, you know, initiating economic activity. And I suppose it's a bit of a foregone conclusion that they have to spend on infrastructure. Naturally people are getting back to work.

You know, we're just obviously very concerned about the number of folks out of work. You know, we're down 23,000 jobs in the province, and we're just trying to pay very close attention on what are we doing to get people back to work, and to make sure those are good jobs, they're good-paying jobs, and it's Saskatchewan people. You know, these are questions, I think, on everybody's mind right now. And so I'm just wondering what role this program plays in achieving those goals that benefit our province.

But we can move on if that's not something that was tracked as part of the program. I'm understanding that getting money out the door, getting people back to work is the goal. I was just wondering if you had anything to report on as far as the success of people working. But again, I understand the challenges in reporting on the hard data here.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — If you would like, we could just go back. I know our officials will have a number of projects. I mean, we can identify projects. You know, we'll have an idea, albeit anecdotal, of the projects. We may not know the exact dollar value or how many people are employed, but if you would like that, we could go and get some of those examples if that's what you would like.

**Mr. Love:** — You know, I'm looking at the numbers of like 1,430 projects. Like, I'm sure that they ranged, and I am kind of curious, like, if there's something you'd like to discuss if you can be brief.

I'll maybe just add to my question. If you could also let me know maybe just a couple things I'm curious on, like how many applicants were there? So we see 760 municipalities that engaged in the program. You know, with 1,430 projects, how many applicants were there? It wasn't application. This was a per capita and then they decided what to do with this. So maybe I shouldn't be asking about applicants.

Maybe a better question is, like, if you could give me a sense of how do those projects . . . [inaudible] . . . like, what was the biggest project that a municipality engaged in? What was the smallest? What was kind of a median or average of, you know, the types of infrastructure investments that resulted from the program?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Yes, let's just consult and give you a better grasp of what those projects actually looked like. And I think our officials — again, we didn't necessarily track it because it was a per capita — but let us see if they know of some examples that we can give you.

**Mr. Love:** — Sure.

[18:00]

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So there is a real wide range. We said there was 760 municipalities that received funding. There's something like 776. All 776 were invited to take part of this program, but only . . . So there was 16 that didn't follow through. And it could've been a very small amount of money maybe that they had decided not to move forward on.

It ranges from, you know, thousands like . . . First of all, there is on our website, has a list of all the projects that have been . . . So you can get a full list of that, plus a couple news releases, as well as a news release coming out in a week or so to update where we are with so many of those projects. But they range just anywhere from \$7,000 for some street repairs in — I don't know if it was Major, I forget the community — up to \$30 million for Saskatoon that went into sidewalks and street repairs.

So when you're asking on the employment piece, that probably is handled by the city crews. So it wouldn't be the . . . You know, it would be tough to extrapolate how many employees that has employed. But save it to say that, you know, it's a wide range of projects from 30 million, which wouldn't be just put into one project, but streets and sidewalks. It looked like a lot of them were streets because there's always a need for that. But if you want to refer to our website, there is a list there as well as another news release coming out for an updated status of the MEEP funding.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. That's interesting. You know, the sidewalks in my neighbourhood were being worked on last summer, so you never know. Maybe I'll just ask a few questions about the ICIP grants. Again I think these are like great to see, investment in these types of things that make a difference in our communities — lots of positives.

Just one question about some of the criteria for the ICIP grants. I understand that there's kind of a timeline for the project this time around, that I believe the approved projects have to start before September 30th and be completed no later than December 31st. Am I correct about that?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I just need to check because I think it's been lengthened.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay, I guess my question, just if you want to check on it, is you know, because of the pandemic and other things — you know, a ship gets stuck in the Suez Canal and the flow of goods around the planet is disrupted — have you heard from any folks that they're struggling to meet these deadlines to take part fully in the program for the projects to get completed on time? Is there any flexibility? As we've seen some raw material shortages and things like that, are you aware as minister of any concerns in getting these projects done on time?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So a good point because everything is disrupted right now, it seems like, and you know, so many that are out of our control. This is a program, though, that we've entered into an agreement with the federal government, so a lot of the parameters that are put in place are kind of dictated to by the federal government. Having said that, though, I think this is not Saskatchewan-specific. This is across the country. And as a result, the federal government on the COVID stream, which had

a deadline of this fiscal year to get things done, has been extended from the 2022 calendar year to be finished by the 2023 calendar year. So that is just really relatively recent in the last couple of weeks.

The other reason why I think it's important that it needed to be extended is because as much as we work really hard, government isn't really quick on turning these things over, and there's a number of checks and balances that they need to go through. So some of it is us, as far as the provincial government, but once we agree to it, it still doesn't mean it's done. It's got to go to the federal government and it's got to be agreed on there. And you can imagine, you know, the funding coming in from across Canada, the applications. Then there needs to be agreements between the federal government and the proponent to make sure everything is in place.

You know, there are conditions put on so many of these projects. And some of the conditions are pretty straightforward but some of the conditions are pretty complex, and so that takes time. So because of all of these delays, I'm really glad that the federal government as well saw that. I mean we heard from communities that this is going to be . . . They're not passing up the dollars but they're going to have a hard time getting it completed in the time.

And now with the extension because of, you know again . . . And I will say that I think at times if any of these communities are thinking about contracting out some of this work, they're going to have a hard time finding contractors. We're doing a bit of a home renovation and it is tough to find contractors because they're busy. There's a lot of work being done. So municipalities were saying that they needed more time. We agreed with them and so did the federal government, so it has been extended for another year.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. Thanks for that, Minister. So a few questions about the municipal revenue sharing. And I know that there's, you know, a lot of uncertainty now. And I know that you've heard from municipal leaders with questions on this, you know, and I heard your comments at SUMA and SARM related to this.

But I'll ask again, and I know you've been posed this question many times, but obviously with PST revenues going down, you know, projected to go down about \$225 million, I'm wondering if you could just give an estimate of the total number. If this is something that you have already published, I'm not aware of this. I can do the math too, but if you could just estimate the total amount of municipal revenue sharing that will be available in two years' time based on these projections.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thanks for the question and thanks for bringing up municipal revenue sharing. It's a program that our government's very, very proud of. I sat on that side for many years, on your side, and just remember the budgeting process for municipal revenue sharing and how it was difficult because it really wasn't based on anything except what the government at the time felt was needed. And I know when we brought this in, it was all about having some consistent, reliable funding moving forward, and it's been very well received.

I also do know at the time, and I'll just throw this out there, so many of the municipal leaders at the time — I'm probably

thinking they maybe wish they hadn't said this — they all agreed that, you know, if the PST goes up, we're all going to benefit. And the PST had been going up every year. And I've got a number of quotes from mayors that say, and we realize that if the PST drops, we all share in that drop. So that was a consistent part, and they all agreed on it. I mean everybody was quite happy thinking that it's just going to go up, and we wouldn't face a pandemic, and it may not . . . whether it's going to drop or not.

Just regarding municipal revenue sharing, this year we're at \$275 million. That's a 117 per cent increase from 2007 and 8, and that money of course goes directly to municipalities for them to spend where they see fit. Again very little strings attached. And it's based on, you know, it's based on 75 per cent or three-quarters of 1 per cent of the provincial sales tax from two years prior. And that's your question, what does this look like two years from now.

I do want to just say a little bit more though that, you know, \$275 million is a big number. It's not the biggest. The biggest was the year before, a couple million dollars more, \$277 million last fiscal year. So you know, two years ago maybe it was not quite as much spending PST, and there was a bit of a decrease from the year previous, but a small one. Actually I think it's 2.4 million, putting it down to 274 million, and it's a great number.

You had thrown out a number that the PST is going to be down. I'm not sure where you got that number, because I know Finance is not exactly sure where the PST is going to be landing. There's a lot of examples where we know the PST is down in certain areas, but as you and I have both commented, there's areas that we know it's going to be up because you know there is spending being done.

And it'll be interesting to see after this, in this next fiscal year, where the PST is for three years from now, because I think there's going to be a lot of spending in the province once people are out and about, not only through construction and renovations and spending for, you know, boats and everything else, but also when entertainment opens up, I think there's going to be a lot of people looking to get out and get entertained.

So what I would say is I really think it's too early to determine yet — we will as soon as we can — what that PST is for this past fiscal year. So that municipalities can do exactly what we had said at the outset, is it's predictable and so they'll be able to see what it is and know what they will be getting.

[18:15]

And as a result, you know, municipalities, like all other forms of government, have to work towards balance — balance — the municipalities do, so they'll know what they are getting and then have to budget accordingly, which is again, you know, it may not be quite to the level that it is this year. I don't know. But they'll know in advance and be able to adjust their budgets accordingly. There was something else I was going to say to that. But you know, and who's to say that the year following this fiscal year, that doesn't bounce up, because I think there's probably going to be again a lot of spending, and so PST could be up for three years from now.

So you know, it was a program that was set up that when a lot of PST comes in, municipalities benefit. If there's not quite as much revenue comes in, municipalities share with the provincial government. That's the way the program was set up and that's the way it was agreed upon. And as I say, I've got a number of news clips that would, much to the chagrin of some of the mayors, would have them citing how good the program is and fully acknowledging the up or down that that revenue sharing could be.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay, so just in response to your comments there, Minister, the number that I quoted was from the government website and so that was the estimate that I was referring to, and the decline in PST. I can forward that to you or share that with you if you would like to see it.

I'm curious, like has there been any consideration to, you know, develop like a multi-year approach to maybe mitigate the ups and downs? And I understand the concept, fully understand the concept of, when times are good we share; when times are tough we share. But obviously, and I know I don't need to tell you this but municipal governments are not able to run deficits, and they don't have the freedom that a provincial government has to deal with those extreme ups and downs. So you know, my question stands. Has there been any consideration for a multi-year model of maybe a two- or three-year rolling average in terms of providing even more certainty for those amounts in the municipal revenue sharing? And is this something, to your knowledge, that municipal leaders have asked for?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I'll just answer generally in that, you bet. I mean, and you would have heard it if you listened to SUMA. SARM a little bit but SUMA more, worried about the municipal revenue sharing and the drop that they could be seeing in a couple years. And nobody wants to see that, you know. And you're right; they need to balance. But also, you know, they control their spending, and if you know that you're down 500,000 two years from now, you've got two years to factor that in and make it up. So you know, I'm not going to say that it's easy by any stretch of the imagination, but it's better than finding out on budget day — which it used to be — where your municipal revenue sharing was going to be.

And I would just also . . . And I've heard it from municipalities about, what about making this a longer kind of process to draw it out. And that would be okay unless all of a sudden the revenue was going up and they weren't going to be getting as much, because that's what's happened. You know, the revenue has gone up and they've been very happy because it can happen like that. I mean in two years they get that extra revenue.

But all we're doing, we're putting maybe a little bit more of a shock absorber in. But when it goes up, they're not going to benefit nearly like they are right now. This is one year that it may go down in a couple years and then bounce up. So you know, I guess you've got to watch what you ask for because they won't increase as quickly as they have. They may not decrease for the one year like this may be, but the flip side is they may not increase if they put more of a shock absorber in by multi-year calculation.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, I guess it just comes back to that reality, that of course when those amounts go up . . . Yes, it just comes back

to that reality. When those amounts go up, of course municipal governments are allowed to spend more money. But when they go down, they're not allowed to run deficits. So that's the reality that those, you know, municipal governments are having to face.

And I understand that they can predict two years in the future once these numbers are confirmed, what they can expect, and they can plan for that. But you know, there's still the problem of when their budget year aligns differently than when the provincial budget comes out, which leaves them in somewhat of a limbo to plan for what will likely be at least a couple tough years of lower PST revenues.

I guess my next question is just to go back into history a little bit. Like when was the last time that the municipal revenue-sharing formula was adjusted? And is that something that this government is considering in any way in the future, or changing it again?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So we'll endeavour to answer this one too. In 2019 revenue sharing was looked at by the municipalities, and they talked about a rolling average and rejected it in 2019, so a year and a half ago. So it was their own associations and membership that rejected that moving forward.

That doesn't mean it can't be revisited. And you know, in 2022-23 we've committed to looking at how the formula is put together in light of the fact that it's been in place for a number of years and we may need to look at changing it. The last time it was changed from when we implemented it in 2007 and '08 was in 2017, I believe. And when it was first implemented, it was 1 per cent of the PST. And we changed it in 2017 and made it three-quarters of a per cent because we broadened the base of the PST, so that municipalities stayed revenue-neutral or even gained a little bit through that change.

Some people would say . . . There'd be some critics that would say, you went from 1 per cent down to three-quarters of a per cent. And we would say, well of course but we've broadened the base. Then some other critics would say, you shouldn't have broadened the base; PST shouldn't be charged on this and this and this. But the municipalities didn't lose anything from it. The municipalities were kept whole because the base was broadened and three-quarters of a per cent gave them what they were getting at the 1 per cent base.

**Mr. Love:** — So by broadening the base, you know, you talk about adding PST to things like construction labour, used vehicles, restaurant meals. Obviously there's a huge spike in the PST revenue, and so the formula was adjusted to provide hopefully consistent numbers but just, you know, going down from 1 to 0.75 of a larger amount.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Right.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. I guess just to follow up on that, you know, something else that I know you've heard from our side and here a little bit, and I heard this at SUMA as well . . . This is actually in your remarks that I have down in my notes, just talking about, you know, visiting the idea of one level of government taxing another level of government as it comes to PST on construction labour, in particular when it comes to provincial funding for infrastructure projects. So my question is, has the ministry done

any investigations into what the cost would be in terms of decreased PST revenue if municipalities were not charged PST for construction labour when they're building projects with grants provided by the provincial government?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I would just say, and not to deflect from that, but that would be a really good question to the Minister of Finance because that isn't something that we would track per se. You know, the money that we go out goes to projects, and there's PST charged on it but that would be, you know, allowable. But it would be the Ministry of Finance that would be tracking that a little bit more. And you know, I'm not trying to dodge the question. We just wouldn't have that, that I know of, unless we wanted to go back and ask. But I just don't know whether we would have that type of information. We'll check and, you know, if we get a note that, yes, come back and we've got some information for you, we'll certainly do that.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. Is this something that you've received questions about from municipal leaders? Like as far as this kind of conundrum of, you know, charging PST on projects that they got grants for, that we see well sometimes the funding for these goes up, the cost goes up as PST is introduced on a really big chunk of the project. So you know, in essence, the benefit left for the folks on the ground is maybe not what it could be.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — We're just going to go check. I have the answer in my head that I want to say, but I guess I better check and make sure it's accurate.

Thanks for that question. And so just to I guess reiterate my one answer earlier is that we do not track, you know. There hasn't been a municipality that has come to us and said, oh, we cannot do this project because of the PST. There'll be some grumbling, and you heard it at SUMA and I heard it at SUMA and we hear it. There's some grumbling. Nobody wants to have to pay extra, especially a tax. But I think if you were listening to . . . and I think it was in the bear pit where the Minister of Finance said:

But the other side of the coin for this PST discussion where municipalities have to pay, municipalities get three-quarters of 1 per cent of all the PST spent in the province.

So what they're paying extra . . . I guess you could get somebody to do the numbers on this. What they're paying extra, they're also getting extra, because the PST has been broadened now on what some of their projects are, but on all projects across the province, which they get three-quarters of 1 per cent through municipal revenue. So you know, are they kept whole? I guess it depends on how many projects they're doing and how much PST they spent. But because of municipal revenue sharing, they're getting three-quarters of all the PST spent in the province, which isn't just municipalities.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. So as far as the question is, have you done any calculations as far as like what would it look like if we didn't charge municipalities PST on projects that they got funding for? Like that's something that has not been calculated. I know you said maybe the Minister of Finance has done something like that, but that's just something that your ministry isn't concerned with.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Yes, you know it's an allowable expense for municipalities. But when it comes down to, you



know, the exact costs, again that — you know, and I don't want to have to defer to Finance — but that really is a Finance question. That would be something that they would deal with. I guess what I would say is that there's some grumbling, but I'm not sure that projects have been cancelled because of the addition to the PST.

[18:30]

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. Just a couple of questions about northern municipalities, starting off with kind of a broad one. I just have a couple questions in this area. What is the ministry doing to promote autonomy and fairness for northern municipalities? I understand this is kind of a separate revenue-sharing line in the budget, and so I'm just wondering if you could provide some initial comments on those two concepts of autonomy and fairness for funding for northern communities.

**Mr. Miller:** — So the Ministry of Government Relations has an articulation in the North and the northern administrative service district. Just looking here across this year's provincial government's budget, we have an increase across the ministries — I'll talk about the ministries and then the GR — of about \$36.1 million or 10 per cent in spending specifically related to northern Saskatchewan. So that's, as I said, across ministries.

For Government Relations, some of the expenditures that relate are: \$1.179 million to the New Building Canada Fund, to support infrastructure across the North in a variety of projects; an increase of 250,000 in the northern municipal services branch of the ministry. Again that broadly supports the administration and operation of government in the North. The Gas Tax Fund will direct \$54,000 to the North. And that sort of captures it for Government Relations.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. A question about the NMTA [Northern Municipal Trust Account]. If you could just update the committee on how much is in that fund and just the status of the board. Like if you could, you know, just provide some comments on how much is in that fund. And how are those funds administered? What's the status of the board? And how are decisions made in how those funds are used by the board?

**Mr. Miller:** — All right. Thanks for the question. So the Northern Municipal Trust Account is a trust account. With respect to the board, it's an advisory board, the function of the board being to advise the minister based on their sort of contextual understanding of what's happening in the North. So the board itself is made up of a variety of representatives. What we try and achieve is a balance of regions across the North, so there's certainly some regional differentiation, some balance between elected officials and administrative officials with, you know, specific knowledge relating to the primary function of the board, which is a lot of big capital-type operation to keep communities in the North moving forward with an appropriate level of infrastructure.

The board itself has decision-making processes. Those decisions then are brought through . . . The ministry has a function articulating with the board itself, and those decisions are brought through the ministry to the minister with their advice, particularly on capital projects. The board itself has a budget this year of \$59 million. And the representatives, I guess, the work of the

representatives of the board as well as staff from the Ministry of Government Relations sort of oversee the functioning of actualizing those infrastructure projects — waste water, water, clean water, those kinds of things.

**Mr. Love:** — And is that board operational at this time? Like, are all the positions on the board filled?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So regarding the board, they're not. And it's mainly again due to the pandemic. They come up on a term and the terms have passed, and we haven't repopulated it just simply because of the pandemic and what's been going on across the province. So that is work that we're going to be doing to repopulate the board, because it's a very, very important board that advises us what needs to be done because it's a representative board of region, gender, and a number of things up there. So we haven't got those appointments made yet, and that's something we need to be working on in the near future.

[18:45]

And just one last thing on the dollars, as it is the Northern Trust, \$59 million allocated this year. It goes into infrastructure, and you can imagine some years it doesn't get spent. So it's not clawed back; it stays in the trust. And I just asked that, you know, the last time the audited financial came back was in '19, 2019, and there was \$49 million in that trust. You know, so it's not clawed back, like I say. It gets used and sometimes the construction season is shorter than what needs to be to complete the projects, so that money stays there.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. I was just wanting to make sure my understanding is correct here. If you can just clarify a couple of things. So how much money was contributed to that fund in these estimates? So if there's 59 million in there right now, how much of that is in this year's budget? And how much of that maybe was residual, left over, unspent from previous years?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So this budget year, \$59 million for that. There was 49 that the last audit was in '19. Some of that would have been spent, right, and then 59 going into it this year, this fiscal year.

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you. Can you just direct me to the line in the budget where that 59 million is represented?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So I'll start, and then the deputy minister may add where I've kind of fallen short. So the Northern Municipal Trust does not have a line item. Because it's a trust, it doesn't show up as a line item. So when I say there's \$59 million that are going into it, it comes from many different sources through government and locally. So there's property tax that would go to that. There's northern municipal revenue sharing that would go to that, and there's . . . what was the other one?

**Mr. Miller:** — Federal transfers.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Federal transfers that is for infrastructure, that would make up that amount. It is part of any government, but our government's summary financial statement, so it is kind of rolled up in that. But it isn't a line item because it's a trust. It's not a line item under our ministry. But when the question is asked, how much is going to the trust, it's \$59 million

from a number of sources. And we just identified three of them.

**Mr. Love:** — That answers why I couldn't find it in here. Okay. So I'm just curious, Minister. Like I understand that . . . Well I guess the question, when was the last time that the board was operational in terms of providing advice to the ministry on using those funds? And I understand that members of the board are appointed by an order in council based on advice of the minister. So I'm just wondering if you can provide a timeline to the committee on when you will be making those recommendations, so that the board can get to work providing their advice on how northern communities can best use these funds.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Not that we're trying to stall, but we're going to have to get that information from the people that deal with that. I don't have that information — I don't think you do — as far as the timeline. Because you know, I mean if it's being worked on, the timeline's shorter. If we're just kind of getting into it, I don't know that detail. So we'll just ask at the back and then be back.

**Mr. Love:** — Great. I've got one more area of questioning too. So if you could be timely, that would be excellent.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — We're doing pretty good.

**Mr. Love:** — You are doing pretty good, I will say that. Not as long as other meetings. I won't name names.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Keeping some people up late, I think.

Anyway, so the last time the board was functioning, their terms came up on March 31st of 2020. We've been working to try and get a gender balance, regional balance. We're almost there. So I would say, when will it be done? As soon as possible.

We had, you know, an issue with one name that was put forward. We're trying to replace that name. We would rather put forward a full board than partial board and then kind of add and add. And so we're one name short, and we're working on that. So as soon as possible, then it's got to go through order in council.

**Mr. Love:** — My next question is about something that came up with the Minister for Trade and Export Development, who told my colleague to ask you. But I'm not quite sure where this fits in. But the question is about an Estevan coal workers program. [Inaudible] . . . it falls under the Ministry of Government Relations.

And so my question is about, you know, roughly 400 to 700 jobs that will be directly lost in coal mining with an additional, you know, several dozen jobs lost forthcoming in 2024 through Boundary 4 and 5 shutdowns. And I understand that there's a program in place that will help retrain or provide something for roughly 40 of these 400 workers who are eligible for this program.

Again the question came up from a colleague, and the Minister for Trade and Export Development steered us to this committee to find out what this program is. What is in place for retraining or supporting these 40 workers.

[19:00]

And I guess just to further the question, obviously you know we're talking about 40 out of 400, so if you could provide the committee with like what is the scope of this program and what are the plans for the remaining, you know, 360-plus workers who are looking to be out of work with the impacts on coal mining?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thanks for that. We'll go back and get the detail. I'd like to be able to tell you that you should have to ask Advanced Education just to put you all on, but I won't do that. We'll go back and get the information.

So I'll answer it relatively quickly I think. It's the coal transition fund that you're talking about. You won't find it in this budget because it was expended in previous budget years. It totalled \$10 million: \$8 million for Estevan and that would make \$2 million for the Coronach area. Those communities make the decision as to how and when that money . . . where that money is going to be expended. In Estevan, of the \$8 million, 1.6 has been expended in different areas. Who makes that decision is . . . For example in the Coronach area, it's a number of municipalities and communities, you know, roughly 13. I'm not . . . I think that was said. And in the Estevan area, it's Estevan and surrounding communities as well as others. So that money was put in those communities for them to find relief.

And so the question about 40 workers out of 400, that would have to be better answered by the community, by which programs that they wanted to do. You know, there was something about a heavy-operators course and so maybe some applied for that. But that would be the community that would decide that as to what programs that money will go towards to help the transition in that area, which again was expended in a previous budget year.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. I'll leave that one there. I wish I could ask more questions about that, because I am interested about where those dollars came from and stuff. But this last question has to do with something I hear a lot from rural and remote communities. I know it's one that's been brought up.

I'm just curious to know when it comes to rural connectivity, you know. Obviously when you look at things like cellular service and broadband, it's becoming more of a necessity than a luxury for people — families, students, seniors. I see that there were three communities that made use of MEEP grant funding to make improvements in these areas, but I'm just curious, from the minister, as a regular concern that comes up, what is the ministry doing to improve these services for rural folks?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I'll answer that fairly quickly. Again, that would be a great question for SaskTel and that committee. That wouldn't necessarily be us.

I know that some of the money that communities got through MEEP, some may have gone, you know, to better access in their community, but again that's a community issue. Have we heard it? Is that a concern in rural Saskatchewan especially? Yes. Yes, we've heard it, but that isn't necessarily, you know, a project that we have as far as rural connectivity. That would be more a corporate decision through SaskTel than necessarily through us.

**The Chair:** — All right. Thank you all. So having reached our agreed-upon time for the consideration of estimates for the Ministry of Government Relations, we will now vote on the

estimates for Government Relations.

Okay. Central management and services, subvote (GR01) in the amount of \$7,545,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Saskatchewan Municipal Board, subvote (GR06) in the amount of \$1,888,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Municipal relations, subvote (GR07) in the amount of \$556,025,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs, subvote (GR12) in the amount of \$39,173,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Provincial Capital Commission, subvote (GR14) in the amount of \$8,597,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

Government Relations, vote 30 — \$613,228,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2022, the following sums for Government Relations in the amount of \$613,228,000.

Ms. Lambert. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Minister, that concludes our consideration of your estimates. Did you have any final comments before you move on to your bill or would you like to save your comments to the end?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I'll save them till the end.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Love, would you do the same?

**Mr. Love:** — I'll wait till the end.

**The Chair:** — Yes, excellent. We are moving on, everyone; we're moving on.

#### Bill No. 4 — *The Construction Codes Act*

##### Clause 1

**The Chair:** — We will now be considering Bill No. 4, *The*

*Construction Codes Act*. We will begin our consideration of clause 1, short title. Minister McMorris, you can make your opening comments and then we'll go to questions.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and my comments will be brief. This is *The Construction Codes Act* and it replaces *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act*. This will update legislation governing construction standards in Saskatchewan.

This bill will also help fulfill commitments made under the growth plan, Prairie Resilience, and the Canadian Free Trade Agreement while maintaining provisions for important programs like accessibility and small care homes. The significant changes include applying construction standards to new residences on farms, registering orders of title, prescribing a default building bylaw for municipalities without their own, providing for alternative models of permitting and inspection of industrial buildings, and ministerial powers to bring interpretations of construction standards and for emergencies.

It's proposed this new Act will come into force on January 1st, 2022. Done.

**The Chair:** — Excellent. Thank you, Minister. Mr. Love, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just wondering if the minister could just start off by offering any comments on the process. I understand that this probably began well before you were appointed as minister in this role, but if you could just walk me through any of the process on consultations that take place.

As I understand there to be a number of different stakeholders of interest here, whether that be, you know, looking at the, you know, building trades, municipalities, accessibility for people with disabilities. You know, there's a number of different stakeholders of interest here. If you could just offer me any comments so that I don't need to go through each one, and let me know what the consultation process is like that resulted in this piece of legislation.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Great. Thanks for that question. So the consultation was quite broad and extensive, I would say. So consultations were held with 75 stakeholder groups, including 9 ministries and 66 non-government organizations. This includes 42 in-person or telephone meetings beginning in June of 2019 and most recently being November of 2020.

Stakeholders include SARM — the municipal associations SARM and SUMA — administrators' associations, cities, engineers, architects, home builders' association, construction association, firefighters, fire chiefs, disability advocate groups, building official associations, and nine ministries. I think that's . . . As I said, there's also . . . this will not . . . the CCA [*The Construction Codes Act*] will not apply to any First Nation bands or reserves within Saskatchewan, and the First Nations groups were not consulted on this because it does not apply to them.

[19:15]

**Mr. Love:** — Okay, thanks for clarifying that. I'm curious if any environmental groups . . . I know that there are some changes in

this bill as far as updating, you know, environmental codes and things like this. So I'm wondering if you could just make any comments on how environmental impacts as well as efficiencies and building codes were considered and, you know, who was consulted in regards to environmental concerns.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So the quick answer . . . and we'll get more detail if you like, but it will take a walk to do that and I know that's a sensitive topic in this room. So of course this is driven through the federal changes and we've adopted those federal changes, like in building codes, which is generally the case. We would have consulted with the Ministry of Environment and they would have had opportunity to voice any concerns or changes that they would like to see.

Of the 75 groups — and I think there is 40-some that were non-governmental, and I named a number of them, SARM and SUMA — I don't have any detail on specific environment groups, but that would take the walk to go back and see if we consulted with any environmental groups, unless we can have somebody text us. But I do know and would say for sure that the Ministry of Environment would have been consulted extensively on this bill.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. Just one more as far as the consultation goes. You know, I heard you talk about the number of non-profit or community-based organizations that were consulted. But obviously, you know, it's something that my colleagues have raised questions about or just, you know, offered comments in the Assembly, have to do with the accessibility standards for people with disabilities. So if you could walk me through who was consulted.

And I also understand that some of these standards won't be fully defined until this bill has been passed in the Assembly. So could you maybe just offer me any kind of timeline? I want to make sure my understanding is clear that, when will those standards be fully detailed and who was consulted in developing specifically accessibility for people with disabilities?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So to answer the question is that there would have been consultation no doubt with Social Services on this particular Act. And as I said, as far as consultation, I'd said earlier, disability advocacy groups have been consulted. On the broader piece, the Ministry of Social Services, I believe, is bringing forward legislation after much consultation on some accessibility, but that wouldn't be applicable necessarily to this bill.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. You know, maybe just one or two more questions, and I'm just looking for maybe an example or how you see this working out. But one of the comments that struck me from the second reading of this bill is, you know . . . and I mentioned this during adjourned debates in here too. But you indicated that the Act makes it easier for local authorities to work together, that there's some kind of design here to allow, you know, allow for, you know, administration, co-operation in administration and enforcement of construction standards. So could you maybe just give me like, kind of like in the real world, an example of how you envision this bill to facilitate that type of co-operation?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So an example in the one area that, you

know, when I went through the bill and it kind of struck me was going into the rural area with, you know, some codes for ag buildings or farm buildings, and lots of consultation with SARM, of course, and probably APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] and any of the ag groups.

But what it does allow is that it's a uniform building code now across all of those pieces, whereas before municipalities, some would adopt, some didn't. And there was a real variance from municipality to municipality. I've had calls on that very thing myself. This makes it uniform and for municipalities that didn't, brings them up to speed, so there's uniformity across the piece which makes it much easier for them to work together on it.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. Probably my last question here — and again just based on your comments — if you can again provide, like, kind of how this will play out as a positive change for Saskatchewan people. The new Act allows local authorities to register and enter some title of a building for unresolved building official orders, so essentially making purchasers aware of any deficiencies, any issues with the building. You know, obviously I see this as a positive thing — no one want to buy a lemon — and I was just wondering if you could walk me, like, through what is new and how this change in legislation was achieved through consultations.

**Mr. Miller:** — So with respect to the bill before us, part of the goal here is, through the establishment of a default building code promoting safety and the good things that come with a broader, more transparent understanding, the specific question around the registration of a concern on a building, as you've identified, really helps with the transparency piece to ensure that if there is a problem with a construction of a particular property, that that problem is understood by, as you said, folks that might come on down the road later. The overall support through this bill really will help municipal entities, local authorities to have increased transparency about that to work together.

**Mr. Love:** — Great. Thanks for that explanation. I think that concludes my questions on Bill 4.

**The Chair:** — All right. Seeing no further questions, we'll vote on the clauses. Clause no. 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 50 inclusive agreed to.]

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

I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 4, *The Construction Codes Act* without amendment.

**Mr. Grewal:** — I do so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Grewal moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you all. Very, very quickly, if you've got anything more to say, Minister, and then . . . Very quickly, yes.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Very quickly. Thank you to the opposition critics for the questions. Thank you to the Chair and Clerks for being here. Thanks to the committee. But most importantly, thank you very much to all my officials, starting with my deputy minister, my chief of staff, and all those that were in the back room on a computer screen this big. I want to thank them for putting in these four and a half hours. I really appreciate it.

But before I go, I have one more person I want to thank, and it would be Hansard. I'd like to thank Cheryl. She has been here and will be retiring in June after 30-some years of keeping track of what we say, and sometimes I wish she hadn't. But thank you very much for being here.

[19:30]

**The Chair:** — Quickly we have . . . Mr. Love, you got something you want to wrap up with?

**Mr. Love:** — I'll keep it quick. Thanks, everybody. I know it's been a long night and I came in halfway through, so thanks for engaging in discussion. And all the officials, those seen and those unseen, thanks for the work that you do. And thanks to Hansard and legislative staff for allowing us to do this work and working with us. Thanks to all committee members for another late night. And that's all I have to say.

**The Chair:** — Okay, thank you all. We're going to take a recess to bring in the officials for the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**Bill No. 12 — *The Wanuskewin Heritage Park  
Amendment Act, 2020***

**Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — All right, folks. Welcome back. We'll now be considering Bill No. 12, *The Wanuskewin Heritage Park Amendment Act, 2020*, and we'll begin our consideration of clause 1, short title. Minister Ross, please introduce your officials and make your opening comments.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to be here this evening to answer your questions related to Bills 12, 13, and 28 from the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. First I would like to start by introducing the two officials with me in person: Twyla MacDougall, our deputy minister of Parks, Culture and Sport, and Carter Zazula, my chief of staff. Virtually we have Candace Caswell, assistant deputy minister of stewardship division; Darin Banadyga, executive director of sport, culture, and recreation; and we have Ty that is manning the back room there, and he is communication in my office.

Bill 12. I'll begin with a few short remarks on Bill 12, *The*

*Wanuskewin Heritage Park Amendment Act, 2020*. It was read a second time on April 12th, 2021, and referred to this committee on April 15th, 2021. The amendments proposed in this Act will amend *The Wanuskewin Heritage Park Act* and will update the membership of the Wanuskewin board of directors, update Wanuskewin's mandate, and update outdated cultural language. These amendments were developed in consultation with Wanuskewin senior leadership and board of directors, and both groups are in favour of the amendments.

[19:45]

Prioritizing this amendment to *The Wanuskewin Heritage Park Act* is a component of our support for Wanuskewin and its designation as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site, known as UNESCO. Supporting Wanuskewin's application to become Saskatchewan's first UNESCO World Heritage Site is a priority included in the Saskatchewan's Growth Plan 2020, and is an important initiative for our province's cultural and economic future. And with that, I will turn it over to the Chair for any questions the committee may have.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. Mr. Love, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, I think that we stand in bipartisan agreement on the value of Wanuskewin, and appreciate the thorough conversation that we had earlier, in meeting over estimates for Parks, Culture and Sport. So my questions are just, you know, looking for some clarification. And I won't have a lot because again, the support that I know we share for Wanuskewin and the path forward towards a UNESCO World Heritage Site is something that we absolutely share.

I'm wondering if you'd just walk me through just a little bit of the process. I heard in your comments here tonight, Minister, that you know, consultation has taken place. That's absolutely what I'm hearing as well and what you've said. But could you just give me like a little bit of the timeline, like when did this process start for the bill? Was this initiated by Wanuskewin coming to the government? I know that part of their path forward to being declared a World Heritage Site needs to show recently updated legislation, so if you could just share with the committee a little bit. When did this process start? When did they come to the government saying these are things that we need? Kind of walk us through the timeline of the process; just a little bit of an overview would be great.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Twyla will answer those questions for you.

**Ms. MacDougall:** — I'm Twyla MacDougall, deputy minister of Parks, Culture and Sport. We've actually been working with Wanuskewin for a few years in regards to the UNESCO site, but I can refer particularly to a letter from the board Chair of Wanuskewin dated back to February 2020 to then minister Gene Makowsky supporting legislative changes. So it goes over a year back.

**Mr. Love:** — Great. And as far as the specifics of this amendment to the legislation, were these all things requested by Wanuskewin, by the board, in terms of the makeup of the board, how board members are appointed, organizations they come from? Because I understand that some of this is outdated going

back to 1997. Were these all at their behest and recommendation of specifically what they'd need to have the full support of the government? Was there anything that they requested that is not included in this piece?

**Ms. MacDougall:** — No, these would all have been requested by the board and the CEO [chief executive officer] of Wanuskewin.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, I imagined. And so I'm just trying to make sure you're saying that we are meeting all of their needs as they proceed. Are you aware of any other support requested from Wanuskewin, legislative change, that may be needed? I know this was a long process for them. They've been at it for years already and they're going to keep going. Are you aware of anything else that may be needed from this ministry or from the government to enable their hopeful, you know, their successful attainment of this World Heritage Site designation?

**Ms. MacDougall:** — Based on from a legislative change?

**Mr. Love:** — Yes.

**Ms. MacDougall:** — Yes, in fact we did some regulation changes for them — it would have been this time last year — to extend their borrowing limit.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. But I guess I'm just even thinking moving forward, there's nothing else on your plate as a ministry to look at any . . . Like does this bill succeed at giving them everything that they need in terms of updating provincial legislation to show to UNESCO that they have the full support of the government?

**Ms. MacDougall:** — Yes, it is our understanding. They certainly haven't reached out again. And opening up the Act is a big deal, so I'm sure they would have mentioned if there was more.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes.

**Ms. MacDougall:** — Yes.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. You know, I think that this is something of the . . . [inaudible] . . . thing that we support and from the standpoint of the opposition, you know, share the value of just giving everything that we can. And so the basis of my questions is just to ensure that they're getting everything that they need. And sometimes that means we in government opposition, we get involved. And sometimes it means we just give them everything that they need.

So I'm glad to hear that this is all, you know, at their recommendation, the changes that they need to have a fully operational board and also updating the language. I know I have mentioned that during adjourned debates. I think that's very important to see some of that outdated cultural language be replaced by more appropriate terms at the request of Indigenous people in Saskatchewan.

So you know, with that I'll conclude my questions here, and just provide thanks to the ministry and to the minister for pursuing the changes that were requested by Wanuskewin.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Love, and thank you, Minister,

for your comments. We will now move into the bill. So clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.]

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

I'd ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 12, *The Wanuskewin Heritage Park Amendment Act, 2020*, without amendment.

**Mr. Keisig:** — I do so move, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Keisig moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 13 — *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment and Repeal Act, 2020***

**Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — All right. We will now be considering Bill No. 13, *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment and Repeal Act, 2020*. We will begin our consideration of clause 1, short title. Minister Ross, please make your opening comments.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Bill 13, *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment and Repeal Act* was read a second time April 12th, 2021, and referred to this committee on April 15th, 2021.

The amendments will allow the trust fund board to disburse the entire trust fund and prepare the way for the Act to be repealed once all of the funds are allocated to projects that will bolster the Doukhobor communities in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. The board and the ministry collaborated on the development of the guidelines and obtained ministry approval for disbursement of all the funds over a three-year period.

The amendments will also allow the minister to reappoint current board members for more than two consecutive terms which will ensure continuity of board leadership throughout the proposed change process.

This request came from the board members who represent Doukhobor societies in the provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. The board consulted widely among the three provinces and there is strong community support for this proposal. This is an opportunity to transition out of a historic relationship that is not core business of government and is no longer cost-effective or sustainable. It is important to act now to

move this process along while there is momentum and strong community support.

And we'll be ready for the questions you may have on this bill.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Love, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. So yes, again I think this is one that we've heard through adjourned debates in the Assembly that there's wide support for from government and opposition. You know, even the fact that we moved this to committee early shows that we are hearing the same things that government is hearing.

So just a couple of questions. I heard the minister's comments there that repealing this and disbursing the fund is at the request of Doukhobor societies from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta. And you know, we heard in the debates and hear a lot of comments of appreciation for Doukhobor communities in Saskatchewan and the communities where these members come from and visit and value.

You know, my only real question is again just get a little bit of a timeline. When did this request first come to the ministry from the Doukhobor boards that, you know, who are involved with this trust fund? When did they first come to the ministry? What was the process like? Will you just give us a little bit of history there. When did they first bring this request? When did it kind of land on the government's plate saying this is something that we can repeal and something that we can disburse and give them what they need to have a board that can make decisions on this?

**Ms. MacDougall:** — I certainly can answer that. What I can tell you is they started discussing this with us prior to September 2019, but September 2019 is really when we received official word, as well as a list of their thorough consultation process that went into the decision to move forward with this.

**Mr. Love:** — So then following 2019 what actions, if any, were required for the ministry and for the Government of Saskatchewan to see that this, you know, was something that they could act swiftly on? Were there further consultations beyond that? Or was it just basically, here it is, this makes a lot of sense, and the government decided yes, we can do this, we can do it quickly?

**Ms. MacDougall:** — There were further consultations. The government decided pretty quick that we can do this. It was something that we had actually brought up a few years previous to that, so we had already done some investigative work in regards to this change.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes. I mean it seems as I read through the, you know, explanatory notes and I review the minister's comments, it's pretty straightforward, understanding that the cost of administering, you know, that the costs outweigh the benefits in many ways.

And at the request of Doukhobors across Western Canada, this obviously makes a lot of sense, and I think that we have voiced in here our vote in favour of this bill throughout. So I'm certainly ready to conclude my questions here and thank you for listening to the Doukhobors as they brought forth a request that we're able

to act on. And I appreciate the listening of the government to Doukhobor communities to repeal this and disburse the trust fund. And I conclude my comments.

**The Chair:** — All right. Thank you all. We will move into the bill itself. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment and Repeal Act, 2020*.

I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 13, *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment and Repeal Act, 2020* without amendment.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — I'll so move, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Ottenbreit moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

#### **Bill No. 28 — *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021***

##### **Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — We will now be considering Bill No. 28, *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021*. We will begin our consideration of clause 1, short title. Minister Ross, please make your opening comments.

[20:00]

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021* was read a second time April 14th, 2021 and referred to this committee on April 26th, 2021. The active families benefit program helps Saskatchewan families by offsetting registration costs for their children's participation in sport, culture, and recreational activities, therefore reducing financial barriers to participation. Assistance will be provided in the form of an annual refundable tax credit of up to \$150 per child 18 years and younger, to eligible families. Families of children with disability can claim an additional \$50, for a total tax credit of up to \$200 per child per year. The active families benefit program will be an income-tested tax credit. In order to be eligible, families must have a combined net income of \$60,000 or less.

Our ministry has worked closely with colleagues in the treasury board branch and taxation and intergovernmental affairs branch of the Ministry of Finance to ensure the federal and provincial income tax Acts are all aligned.

Participation in sport, culture, and recreation activities contributes to a better quality of life with social, emotional, and physical benefits for children and youth. These are important tools to improve academic performance, make better choices, and resist unhealthy behaviour. Our government is pleased to offer this tax credit to Saskatchewan families in the hope that more children can benefit from participating in sport, culture, and recreational activities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. Mr. Love, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just my first question here is related to the increased amount if a child is eligible for a disability tax credit. And as the bill reads, pursuant to section 118.3 of the federal Act, could you just outline, like, what would be some of the eligibility criteria included in that federal Act that this bill will provide increased funding for?

**Ms. MacDougall:** — Well we follow the federal child . . . will follow that specifically. So if they qualify for the federal child disability tax credit, then they would qualify for this credit.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, just since I don't have that federal Act in front of me, I'm just wondering if you can give some examples of things that might be included in there.

**Ms. MacDougall:** — I don't have that in front of me either. But I could get it for you.

**Mr. Love:** — It's okay. I'm just kind of curious how the \$50 of extra funding . . . you know, what different families might be facing if they have a child with a disability that qualifies them. Just looking for, kind of, some real-world examples. I guess maybe as a follow-up question: how did you land on that number of \$50 of increased funding based on the federal Act?

**Ms. MacDougall:** — Again, the actual dollar amount that we chose was not based on the federal Act. It was based on more of the fact that we knew that children facing disability, with disabilities typically have higher costs enrolling in particular events.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, and I guess I'm just wondering, like, what types of disabilities are we talking about when it comes to increasing the amount by \$50? I'm just kind of curious. Again I'm looking for how this will impact people in real life. If I had a child who had a disability that was, you know, physical in nature, maybe somebody who uses an implement or somebody who uses a wheelchair, you know, how that might be different from somebody with a different type of disability. So I'm just looking for what the process is like in considering the impact of a child with a disability in increasing the amount.

**Ms. MacDougall:** — So I guess what I could say is that if we considered each situation and assessed it based on a dollar amount, I think that would be rather a complex way to manage a tax credit. So we felt that it was in the best interests to follow the definitions within the federal tax system. And so the same dollar amount would qualify no matter what disability that individual is faced with.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, I'm not suggesting that there would be a different dollar amount for a different . . . I'm just looking for

maybe the type of considerations that the ministry put into increasing the amount as opposed to the amount available for families who don't have children with disabilities.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Well I think . . .

**Mr. Love:** — I guess I'm just looking at the process of the bill.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Exactly.

**Mr. Love:** — How you decided to go from one amount to the next amount.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Yes. Well if you look at the dollar amount of \$150 and then you realize that a \$50 added for a child with disability, that's a fairly proportional substantial amount. So you know, we're just trying to be fair and to ensure that we are able to help as many families with children as possible. And like I said, we did the income testing on it. And we also, like I said, so we're really encouraging families to be able to enrol their children in different either sports or cultural activities so that, because like I think as I said in my opening remarks, I think that children who participate in activities, it's just physically it's good for their well-being, but also mentally.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, I totally agree. That part isn't up for debate of any kind. I think kids being involved in activities is fantastic. And I made some remarks in here during adjourned debates about, you know, some of the things I looked to as a youngster from tap dancing to, you know, baseball and so on throughout sport. And there are some embarrassing tap dancing photos out there. I've got a cummerbund on. I look good; I'm about five years old. But yes, so that part isn't up for debate.

I guess I'm just inquiring, and honestly I wasn't really prepared to dig into this too much tonight, but you know, the process of increasing the amount without any real examples of how that might be used. I think it's raising further questions from me about how this number was landed on, if there are no really firm examples of where this would be of a benefit.

**Ms. MacDougall:** — I think possibly I can help you out here a little bit in the sense that we did consult with the Ministry of Social Services and the office of disability issues within the Ministry of Social Services. So it wasn't just sort of an off-the-cuff, here's what we're going to do. But we did consult with the experts in the area.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay, that's great to hear. I mean and that's, you know, that's kind of what I'm inquiring about, about what led to this \$50 increase. And I'm prepared to move on to further questions.

So you know, Minister, as you've indicated, and we agree on huge benefits for families to be active, for kids to have access. You know, I think it's fair to say that *The Active Families Benefit Act* is, you know, hoping to, in some ways, is going to level the playing field for families to be able to access activities for their loved ones. But you know, and I'm sure that you knew this would come up, but why was that not important in 2016? And I have to say I'm concerned that maybe this bill will, you know, that this benefit will also be given and taken away in a year or two, only to be brought back again when there's an election coming up. So



if we agree that these things are important, and we do, and I think everyone in the room will agree on that, why were they not important in 2016 but important again in 2021?

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Well I think we had a completely different political climate in 2016, and we had a different situation. This has nothing to do with an election or a campaign promise. But in fact we know that during COVID, kids did not have the ability to go out and participate. And we know that parents were also financially just struggling a little more. And so that's when this program was . . . Thought this is the right time to bring this program back because it really is beneficial. And that's what we want to do. We want to do the right thing for families. We want to make sure that those kids have every opportunity to do this. And like I said, COVID's been tough on families. It's been tough emotionally, physically, and financially. So this is the right thing to do. It's not oatmeal, but it's the right thing to do.

**Mr. Love:** — So can we expect that when the economy is back on its feet and the economic impacts of COVID are gone, that this program will be repealed?

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — This has nothing . . . Like I said, this didn't have anything to do with that. This is ensuring that we have active children who . . . Studies are probably going to come down the road showing that our kids really suffered extensively, not just physically but emotionally and mentally because of this. Programs like this really make a big difference to families. And so I just think this is a good program, and I support it fully.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, I guess I'm just inquiring because you said that the reason it came back now was because of COVID and the economic and, you know, the impacts of COVID on well-being and healthy communities. So when we've moved through this time, can we expect that this program will . . . Like, is it a moment-in-time program? Or is it something that would be beneficial . . . You've spoken to the benefits of it, and we agree. You know, just my concern is, if it's addressing a moment-in-time issue that it perhaps might be expendable in a few years.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — I don't think it's a moment in time. I think we have a long ripple effect for our children, so we have to do everything we can to ensure that our kids really have the ability to gain a more positive outlook on life. I don't have a crystal ball. That's not my forte of . . . You know, I'm not a psychiatrist that I deal with children's issues or concerns. However, as a grandparent, I fully believe that this is the right thing to do for our youth. As someone who had kids who participated — and I don't have any pictures like you have of tap dancing with a cummerbund — but I do realize the importance. And I think our ministry has been very proactive in bringing forward something that will really, really benefit our kids. And I know you and I are both on the same page for this, and we want to see this succeed.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes. Yes, we agree on that, Minister. And I think again I would be remiss to come in here and debate a bill if I didn't point out that we've seen this before, and it's gone away. And I think one of my concerns and maybe, you know, my next question is, because it's come and gone now and it's back, what is the ministry doing to, you know, increase awareness and uptake on this program so that families . . . You know, like a lot of people don't pay attention to what's going on in here. Right

now they're probably not listening and thinking, hey, like let's make sure we keep our receipts.

So how do we get word out to families to let them know that — you know, for families who maybe don't pay attention as much as my family who often watches what goes on in here — that they can know that this program is back, that they can take advantage of it, and especially for those low-income families?

You know, we know that one in four children in Saskatchewan are living in poverty. We are the province with the highest rates of children to access the food bank of any province in Canada. We know that there's a number of issues facing, you know, families in Saskatchewan, whether they're . . . You know, as my colleagues have pointed out, somebody who works full-time and makes the lowest minimum wage in Canada is still above the bar to receive the maximum child care benefit.

So we have a lot of programs that just don't seem to reach out to folks who are experiencing poverty. And my concern is that this could be one of those. How do we reach the families who need this the most, make sure that they're aware that this program was here, it left, it came back? What's being done by the ministry to make sure that the uptake on this is to the folks who need it the most?

**Ms. MacDougall:** — I think we both have a lot that we can add to this answer. But certainly a news release will be issued upon tabling of this legislation, if that happens. And we'll also post it on several social media sites, certainly a good way to get to young families.

Furthermore, we work very closely with Sask Sport, SaskCulture, and Sask Parks and Recreation Association and we'll encourage them to include that on their websites and ensure that families are aware of that. And we'll also engage again with the Ministry of Social Services to see if there's some kind of campaign we can't also initiate there.

[20:15]

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — As you know, social media reaches out to so many people. Now there isn't a cut-off, a boundary of the ability for us to be able to communicate, and it's a really good way of us letting individuals know of the program. And so we will be actively doing a social media campaign, but also have the opportunity to connect with organizations and leaders in communities that we think could very well benefit from this.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes. You know, one of my concerns also, as somebody who has coached youth and teenagers since I was one, is I've certainly seen a trend. And this isn't a Saskatchewan problem; this is not putting this on you. But there's certainly a bit of a trend.

It's kind of, it's probably global, but you know, I remember the days when I grew up and sports was sometimes a bit of an even playing field for kids who came from, you know, less privileged backgrounds, and you could get on the field and compete. And it's becoming, I think, less so as they're seeing the impact of . . . I'm sure that if you looked at predictors of athletic success, that a lot of it has to do with how much money your parents make and their education level, what community you live in. We certainly

see this in high school sports where I've done a lot of coaching, that those impacts are things that certainly affect, a lot of the time, engagement levels in sport.

And so I guess my question is, does this do enough to encourage those who . . . Because it's expensive. Like getting into sports, it's expensive, especially if you have lots of kids, multiple kids in the family engaged in things. And it seems though like the opportunities are there. We've got amazing opportunities in this province if you can afford it.

And so I guess just to the minister, this is probably my last question. Does *The Active Families Benefit Act*, does it do enough to level the playing field, to get kids into those productive activities where the benefits are well known . . . We don't need to go through them. We agree on that. Does this do enough to get kids on to the level playing field?

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Well that's why it is income tested because the whole point of this is to be able to help families that need just a little help from their friends. That's what this is all about. And so that's why we have the \$60,000 for the family as the threshold.

And like I said, this is the opportunity for us to help out families that want to have kids participate in sport or culture or different activities. And like I said, and then also like I said, they added \$50 for children with disabilities. So it's a good program. The uptake was good and I know it will be again. When our kids get to go out and do stuff, you bet it's going to be . . . People are going to apply. And all I can say is, good. The more the merrier.

**Mr. Love:** — This is maybe something I should be familiar with. Are the amounts in this benefit the same as they were last time, the 150 up to \$200? Are those amounts the same as they were when this was last in place?

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — We didn't have a disability. And I don't think it's relevant today; this is the program we're talking about today. So I mean this is what we're prepared to be able to offer parents of children and youth who will be able to participate. And, like Twyla said, we didn't have the \$50. So we've kind of enriched the program in that respect.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes. I just think it is relevant in terms of examining the impact of inflation on the costs. I mean, sports aren't immune to that, you know. The cost of putting your kids into activities goes up over time. And so I guess that was the point of my question, was to see if there was any discussion or, more importantly, consultation into increasing the amount to meet the needs of active families. I don't know if you want to comment on that at all, if there was consultation on the dollar amount per eligible child.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — I think Twyla already answered that in regards to the consultations that they did within the Ministry of Social Services.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes, but this is unrelated to the children with disabilities. Just overall, you know, as the cost of having kids involved in activities has increased, if there was consultations or if this is just a recycled version of the previous benefit.

**Ms. MacDougall:** — I guess the only other piece I could add to

that is that when we were preparing this legislation, we also did do a review of the other jurisdictions across Canada to see what was out there and how effective their tax credits were.

**Mr. Love:** — And you found that this was in line. Like, can you provide the committee with any indication, are we middle of the road? How do we compare to other jurisdictions?

**Ms. MacDougall:** — I don't have dollar amounts in front of me. What I have in there is that, although the amounts and age requirements vary slightly, is the reference that I've been given: the programs are similar to that what is being proposed here for Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Love:** — Okay. Similar is good enough. I didn't know if we were a leader or a lagger, but we're similar. Okay. You know, I think that that concludes my questions. You know, I don't want to . . . I want to make sure that I'm not communicating in any way . . . You know, we're very happy to see this benefit come back. I just want to make sure that in asking questions that it's meeting the needs of families who want their young ones to be active in culture and sport and activities. So with that I'll conclude my questions for the evening.

**The Chair:** — All right. Thanks for the comments. We'll move on to the bill. So clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021*.

I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 28, *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021* without amendment. Ms. Lambert moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. All right, this concludes our business with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. Do you have any final comments?

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — I'll be brief; it's late. Thank you very much to the member of the opposition for his questions. They were well thought out and very considerate, so thank you very much. A fulsome discussion always makes us better, doesn't it? And so I really appreciate your interest but also your support for both of these, all three of these bills because I know that especially the one such as Wanuskewin is very near and dear to your heart, being an MLA from the Saskatoon area.

So thank you, everyone: for the committee members for being patient and sitting with us this evening, for the Chair, for the staff from the Legislative Assembly for being here this evening to ensure that we have the ability to conduct these in a good manner. And I also want to thank the members from within the ministry

for their work and their support, ensuring that we are well prepared for this evening and that we have the ability to answer the questions that were posed to us. So thank you very much, everyone, and have a good evening.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Mr. Love, quickly, if you've got anything.

**Mr. Love:** — Yes. Thanks everyone again for being here, the officials for the work that you do. Thanks to our staff, and thanks to all committee members for staying late again tonight.

**The Chair:** — All right, everyone. We'll now move to vote on the estimates and supplementary estimates. Minister Ross and Ms. MacDougall, you're free to leave.

**General Revenue Fund  
Corrections, Policing and Public Safety  
Vote 73**

**The Chair:** — So we're in estimates. So this is vote 73, Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. Central management and services, subvote (CP01) in the amount of \$883,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Public safety, subvote (CP06) in the amount of 95,249,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Saskatchewan Police Commission, subvote (CP12) in the amount of 1,766,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Custody, supervision and rehabilitation services, subvote (CP13) in the amount of 193,835,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Policing and community safety services, subvote (CP15) in the amount of 238,985,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, vote 73 — 530,718,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2022, the following sums for Corrections, Policing and Public Safety in the amount of 530,718,000.

**Mr. McLeod:** — I do so move, Mr. Chair.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund  
Integrated Justice Services  
Vote 91**

**The Chair:** — We're now moving on to vote 91, Integrated Justice Services. Central management and services, subvote (IJ01) in the amount of 50,800,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Integrated services, subvote (IJ02) in the amount of 56,499,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Capital and improvements, subvote (IJ03) in the amount of \$84,926,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Non-appropriated expense adjustment in the amount of \$8,596,000. Non-appropriated expense adjustments are non-cash adjustments presented for information purposes only. No amount to be voted.

[20:30]

Integrated Justice Services, vote 91 for 192,225,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2022, the following sums for Integrated Justice Services in the amount of 192,225,000.

**Mr. Grewal:** — I do so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Grewal. Mr. Grewal has moved. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

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

**The Chair:** — We now move to vote 3, Justice and Attorney General. Central management and services, subvote (JU01) in the amount of 1,065,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Courts and civil justice, subvote (JU03) in the amount of \$53,106,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Innovation and legal services, subvote (JU04) in the amount of \$41,227,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Boards, commissions and independent offices, subvote (JU08) in the amount of \$47,124,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Justice and Attorney General, vote 3 — \$142,522,000. I'll now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2022, the following sums for Justice and Attorney General in the amount of \$142,522,000.

Ms Lambert. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund  
Parks, Culture and Sport  
Vote 27**

**The Chair:** — We're now moving on to vote 27, Parks, Culture and Sport. Central management and services, subvote (PC01) in the amount of \$9,595,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Parks, subvote (PC12) in the amount of \$32,286,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Resource stewardship, subvote (PC18) in the amount of \$7,888,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Community engagement, subvote (PC19) in the amount of \$30,839,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Non-appropriated expense adjustment in the amount of \$6,106,000. Non-appropriated expense adjustments are non-cash adjustments presented for information purposes only. No amount to be voted.

Parks, Culture and Sport, vote 27 — \$80,608,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2022, the following sums for Parks, Culture and Sport in the amount of \$80,608,000.

Mr. Keisig. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund  
Tourism Saskatchewan  
Vote 88**

**The Chair:** — Okay, let's move on to vote 88, Tourism Saskatchewan. Tourism Saskatchewan, subvote (TR01) in the amount of \$14,673,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Tourism Saskatchewan, vote 88 — \$14,673,000. I'll now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2022, the following sums for Tourism Saskatchewan in the amount of \$14,673,000.

**Mr. Grewal:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Grewal. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund  
Supplementary Estimates — No. 2  
Corrections, Policing and Public Safety  
Vote 73**

**The Chair:** — Vote 73, Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. Public safety, subvote (CP06) in the amount of \$19,700,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Custody, supervision and rehabilitation services, subvote (CP13) in the amount of \$15,700,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, vote 73 — \$35,400,000. I'll now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2021, the following sums for Corrections, Policing and Public Safety in the amount of \$35,400,000.

**Mr. Keisig:** — I do so move, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Keisig. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

**General Revenue Fund  
Supplementary Estimates — No. 2  
Justice and Attorney General  
Vote 3**

**The Chair:** — All right, we're now moving into vote 3, Justice and Attorney General. Courts and civil justice, subvote (JU03), in the amount of \$3,174,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Innovation and legal services, subvote (JU04), in the amount of \$770,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Boards, commissions, and independent offices, subvote (JU08), in the amount of \$1,156,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Justice and Attorney General, vote 3 — \$5,100,000. I'll now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2021, the following sums for Justice and Attorney General in the amount of \$5,100,000.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Ottenbreit. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Committee members, you have before you a draft of the first report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. We require a member to move the following motion:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

Mr. Grewal. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. All right. That completes our committee's business for this sitting. I would like to thank the committee for your attention and for your efforts on this. It's certainly well-received. And thank you, Mr. Love, for sitting in with us this evening.

I'd also like to thank and recognize Shirley, knowing full well that this could be our last time together. You have been an amazing, awesome Hansard operator, and we're going to miss you. And enjoy your time off and your retirement . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What did I say? Shirley? Sorry, Cheryl. Yes. But awesome, awesome. You've been an awesome member. So thank you for that.

And our Procedural Clerk, Stacey, as per usual thank you very much.

And with that, I'll ask a member to move a motion of adjournment.

**Mr. Keisig:** — I'll move a motion to adjourn, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Keisig has moved. All agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

[The committee adjourned at 20:44.]