



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE**

## **Hansard Verbatim Report**

**No. 28 — November 28, 2023**

**Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Randy Weekes  
Speaker**



**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

**Twenty-Ninth Legislature**

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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Mr. Travis Keisig  
Last Mountain-Touchwood

Mr. Blaine McLeod  
Lumsden-Morse

Ms. Nicole Sarauer  
Regina Douglas Park



[The committee met at 15:30.]

**The Chair:** — Welcome to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. I am Terry Dennis. I'll be chairing the committee today. With us today we have Ms. Nippi-Albright, Deputy Chair. We have Mr. Todd Goudy. Okay, sorry, Erika Ritchie is not here today; Ms. Nippi-Albright will be substituting in. We have Mr. Todd Goudy. We have Mr. Travis Keisig, Mr. Blaine McLeod, and Mr. Doug Steele, substituting for Gary Grewal.

I'd like to advise the committee that pursuant to rule 148(1), the 2023-2024 supplementary estimates no. 1 were committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice on November 27, 2023: vote 73, Corrections, Policing and Public Safety; vote 30, Government Relations; and vote 27, Parks, Culture and Sport.

And with us today, Mr. Matt Love has joined.

**General Revenue Fund  
Supplementary Estimates — No. 1  
Parks, Culture and Sport  
Vote 27**

**Subvote (PC01)**

**The Chair:** — Today the committee will be considering these supplementary estimates. We'll begin with the supplementary estimates no. 1 for vote 27, Parks, Culture and Sport, central management and services, subvote (PC01). Ms. Ross is here with her officials. I'd ask the officials to please introduce themselves before they speak for the first time. And do not touch the microphones. The Hansard operator will work those.

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

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Well thank you very much, Chair and committee members. I'm pleased to be here today to answer your questions related to the supplementary estimates for the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. First I would like to start with the introductions following by some brief remarks.

The officials joining me here today are Drew Lombard, my chief of staff; Twyla MacDougall, deputy minister; and Bernadet Hamill, executive director, Status of Women office here in Saskatchewan.

Thank you all for being here today. Now two initiatives for the Status of Women office require supplementary appropriation from treasury board for this fiscal year. First is Saskatchewan's implementation of the national action plan to end gender-based violence. The following appropriation requests are fully offset by federal funding under the implementation plan. An additional 5,000 is for a four-year program management FTE [full-time equivalent]. The Status of Women office received 110,000 in funding for the FTE in '23-24, and the additional funds will bring our appropriation to a matching level with the federal funding which is 115,000.

Another 50,000 appropriation will allow the Status of Women

office to double their small-grant funding program and inject a total of 100,000 into community-based programs that target prevention of interpersonal violence and abuse.

The second item stems from the partnership with Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health. Under the partnership, Shoppers will provide approximately \$5 million worth of menstrual products over three years, 350,000 cash to cover initial distribution costs. The province agrees to cover distribution costs for the remaining term of the agreement. This appropriation request will grant approval for the spending of 350,000 received from Shoppers earlier this year. This will pay for the initial distribution of the products to school divisions, transition houses, and women's shelters.

The Status of Women office is responsible for the shipping expenses over the next three years as directed by cabinet. This supports the mandate and the objectives of the Status of Women office to lead and coordinate and the development of initiatives that support women to live safe, healthy, and prosperous lives which supports a high quality of life for all of us, for all Saskatchewan residents, and the province's economic growth.

With that, I will turn it back over to the Chair. My officials and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. We'll now open it up for questions. Ms. Nippi-Albright.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — miigwech, Mr. Chair. For sake of time — we're only here for a few minutes — so if you don't have the answers available, you can table or send it to us if you're not able to answer the questions. I'm just going to start with the . . .

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Well first off, it depends on what the question is, right.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Yes. If you don't have it available.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — No, but it also depends on what the question is. Some questions we cannot table. So depending on what they are, we're more than happy to be able to accommodate you to the best of our ability.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Yeah. My questions will be related to this one.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Excellent. Thank you so much.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. I'll just talk a little bit about the funding that you have here. So my question is, why wasn't this included in the original budget estimates? These supplementary estimates, why are they included now rather than in the original budget estimates?

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Which program are you talking about? Are you talking about the national action plan? Or are you talking about the . . .

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — I'm talking about the central management and services dollar item, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Okay. Okay. Do you want to . . . Bernadet?

**Ms. Hamill:** — Hi, my name is Bernadet Hamill and I'm the executive director for the Status of Women office with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport.

So in answer to your question, last year when we presented our budget and our budget ask, at the time we were estimating the value cost of the FTE. And at that time we budgeted at a mid-range level for that staffing level for the skill and abilities required.

And when we were negotiating the national action plan funding for Saskatchewan and developing Saskatchewan's implementation plan, we were . . . Treasury board provided us with the funding in the budget, but the agreement wasn't signed until July. So we were able to include an additional \$5,000, which covers the better level, if you will, reflects the salary of the FTE. And so, yes, at that time the amounts hadn't been confirmed. So that's why we're here today.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. So will any money go to support survivors of sexual assault?

**Ms. Hamill:** — So Saskatchewan's implementation plan is being finalized right now, and through that Saskatchewan plan we have a variety of initiatives that are targeting prevention, education, and survivors of interpersonal violence and abuse.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So just to be clear, are you saying that that funding will be allocated for new programming, or adding to what already exists?

**Ms. Hamill:** — I'm sorry. Could you clarify the question? Because I believe our ask is for the FTE, and I'm not sure if you're asking about the plan itself.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Your plan, the Saskatchewan plan. That's what I'm asking you.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — We're discussing the FTE here.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. So then that is it. The dollars here is just for that FTE. It's not going to administration; it's just for the FTE. Is that correct?

**Ms. Hamill:** — That's correct.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. So with this national action plan, do you perceive that there will be any — or is there going to be any more — money available to organizations?

**Ms. MacDougall:** — Twyla MacDougall, deputy minister, Parks, Culture and Sport.

The action plan to end gender-based violence is an agreement that we have between the federal government, and it is an agreement for \$20.3 million over four years. I think that's what you're talking about. That's not related to the supplementary estimates.

These estimates are purely for us to be able to manage over that four-year period. And we worked diligently with many ministries

across government to either enhance existing programs or consider new programs. And all of that will be detailed once they're finalized with the appropriate ministries.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. Oh, just one second. I'm going to move over to the question on the menstrual products.

So how will these menstrual products be disseminated? And will they be publicly available for all students? And how will we be creating space for trans and two-spirit menstruators? And the other question is — there's a number of them — how many products will be available for each student? Basically each student may require 130 to 260 pads or tampons per year. So how will that look?

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Well the project has been designed to really meet the ones with economic need, and so we distribute to women's shelters. Like we had a really good opportunity where we went to the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] here in Regina and had the opportunity to be able to present them with their allocation of menstrual products.

So it will be for the women's shelter there but also too for women who, say, have come from the general public who require it. They would be able to supply for them also. So we have women's shelters and we have, like I said, YWCA. And then we also have, within our schools, the allocation will go to schools in need. So the school boards are the ones who are going to be in charge of the distribution.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So then they're left with the communication strategy to the trans, two-spirit community that may need that. Is that correct?

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Well like I said, it's the shelters and then, like I said, the YWCA which is open. So it's not specifically designed, say, for as you're saying, the trans or two-spirited. I mean if they are in need, absolutely. They're more than welcome to, you know, come to the Y and pick some supplies up.

Because we know that — I did some quick math myself — it's about \$20 a month is what it costs an individual for menstrual products, and that's just a rough. So when you think of a family in need, say has three daughters and the mom, well then that starts to add up fairly significantly.

And this program really is going to be a blessing to a lot of families. I must say that the Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health is so forward thinking, so really understands and is helping us meet the needs of women in this province.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So thank you for that. So can you share how safe space will be created for trans and two-spirit menstruators?

**Ms. Hamill:** — So just to answer the question a little bit with that, so as the minister said, we're distributing the products to school divisions and school divisions are then distributing the products to the schools. So they'll be working, school divisions are working with their schools specifically, and they would be working with any policy or process that is in place.

And as the minister pointed out, the products are for any

individual who menstruates, so that includes a trans or two-spirited person. They're not being just designed specifically only for . . .

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — A certain segment of the population.

**Ms. Hamill:** — Right, yeah. It's meant to be an inclusive program.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So you've mentioned the Ys, the school divisions are going to get it. What about the front-line crisis centres? Will they be part of this distribution where they will get products?

**Ms. Hamill:** — So transition houses as well. Provincially funded transition houses have all received products as well.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So are those the only front-line crisis centres that you have identified or will there be more?

**Ms. Hamill:** — Well at this time we're working with our ministry partners to identify the most vulnerable individuals. So provincial transition houses, women's shelters, and the schools were identified as where the most vulnerable individuals are.

[15:45]

We're constantly working with our partners so if there's any opportunities — because we were fortunate enough to be getting increases, small increases, but some incremental increases in years two and three of the program — that if there's other opportunities for other areas those ministry partners will cue us for that.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay, so I'm going to go back now. My apologies.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — I just want to say, I really want to commend the work that's being done within the ministry within the office of the Status of Women along with the individuals from the Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health where they said, where is there a need? And we're doing everything we can to ensure that we can meet that need. And so I must commend them for the work they're doing because this has got a lot of moving parts, but I think it's going to be very successful.

And I know when we did one of the first distributions, it was in the city of Prince Albert. And we had the principals of the schools that were in attendance, and oh, they just said, you know, I don't think you really realize how this is going to be so life changing for a lot of students because a lot of them do, when they're facing financial choices to make, it's not the easiest choice to make. And you know, we don't want students choosing to miss school or miss the opportunity to participate in activities because they don't have menstrual products. So I must say the Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health, they get it. And they really have been so supportive of Saskatchewan, so we can't say enough good things about them.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. Thank you. Now I'm just going to go back to the gender-based violence. As you know, as many know, that the most recent data from Stats Canada outlines that Saskatchewan has the highest rate of gender-based violence

in Canada and has the highest rate for almost the entire time that the government has been in power. So this \$5,000, like this extra adding to the FTE position, so how is that going to help Saskatchewan women in the whole province? Like these dollars that you have.

**Ms. Hamill:** — Yes, so \$20.3 million over the course of four years is going to be greatly expanding, enhancing Saskatchewan's initiatives and through the work through the Status of Women's office.

And this particular position that was approved by treasury board for this current budget year is leading the work. There's a lot of intricate work that goes on in coordinating and leading the work across the ministries through the Government of Saskatchewan. We are responsible for the management and oversight of the federal agreement. And so, coordinating all the accountability reporting, gathering the data, rolling it up, doing all the intricate work that it takes in managing an agreement and a project of this level and magnitude requires dedicated staff. And so treasury board recognized that when they provided us with the FTEs.

So the \$5,000 that we've come to ask for today is to just enhance that one particular FTE to bring it up to full range. At the time the \$110 was to cover at a mid-level salary. It did not include some particular benefits and things that would be associated with the level of that position. So this extra \$5,000 was approved through the federal agreement. So that's what we're asking for here today, is to support that specific staff member so they can do the full scope of work that's required of them.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So in that work that's going to be required of them, do you have target measures and timelines of when you're going to achieve them? And also do you have incentives or disincentives if you don't reach them? And how are those dollars, this 20.3 million, is it going to be available to organizations? Or tell me where that's going.

**Ms. Hamill:** — The management of the agreement includes a specific . . . Thank you for asking about accountability and measures. So this position specifically is managing all that work for across government because there's many data targets, other several specific measures and specific accountability reporting, that Saskatchewan is obligated to the federal government to uphold our minimum requirements to meet the terms and conditions of the agreement. So with that includes gathering all that data and rolling it up.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So, like I've been involved in projects that are from the federal government as well. And often what I see is what's the real benefit to the communities, other than the administration piece where we spend a lot of money in administration, are the deliverables? What is the impact we're going to see for women, mainly women, that are in these situations?

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — You know, the administration aspect is so minuscule out of this whole project. If you look at it, it's 115,000 times a year, and this project is for four years. And this is over a \$20 million project, so that lets you know that this is just a small part.

However, I have to commend the work that the Status of Women

here has done. They ensured that when we negotiated the national action plan to end gender-based violence for here in Saskatchewan, we put our elbows up and we made sure the programming fits Saskatchewan because, you know, the federal government would have been more than happy to have one size fits all.

But let's be honest. You and I all know that in fact what is relevant here in this province is maybe not relevant in the Northwest Territories, maybe not in Newfoundland-Labrador. So we made sure that when we put forward to the federal government, before we signed on, to ensure that the programs that are going to be developed are going to be developed to best meet the needs of the women in Saskatchewan.

That's what we did, and I have to commend the Status of Women. They did not fail us. They absolutely went to the wall. They put their elbows up and they made sure that Saskatchewan's needs are going to be met.

Now you said something very interesting. You said we have the highest rate, and yes, we acknowledge that. Are we proud of that? Absolutely not. And that's why we signed on. But the sad part is this is not new. This did not just happen when we formed government in 2007. We had those numbers beforehand.

So this is why we are addressing this today, because we know that this cannot continue. We want to ensure that every woman, every child in this province — every man, woman, and child in this province — has the ability to live in a safe community. And this is how we're going to do this, is we are rolling up our sleeves, and we are doing everything we can to ensure that the programs that are going to be delivered here in this province are going to meet Saskatchewan's needs.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — That is fantastic. So tell me how much funding will be allocated for new programs? Or will it just be added to already existing programs?

**Ms. Hamill:** — So Saskatchewan as part of this agreement had to put up \$20.3 million. It's a match-funding agreement. So the programs and services that we have are . . . Because it's only four years' worth of funding that covers a 10-year national action plan that the federal government has provided us, we are looking to maximize the benefit of having this extra funding through expanding initiatives and existing actions to go further with what we're doing already, what we know what works.

We're working across government with all the ministry officials to identify initiatives that they have that they know works and continues to expand upon those.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you for that. You said that you're going to continue identifying programs that do work. So I'm First Nation and I do a lot of work with First Nation communities. And the domestic violence within First Nation communities is horrendous, and many, many visible First Nation women do not feel comfortable, often don't feel safe enough to come and take part in the programming.

So when you talk about you know that these are successful, like so how have you measured the effectiveness of the programming that are working within First Nation and Métis communities?

**Ms. Hamill:** — So I have to be clear on something. The Status of Women's office is not responsible for the programs and services that are delivered by other ministries. So in developing Saskatchewan's implementation — I call it Saskatchewan's action plan — is relying on the subject matter expertise from our colleagues across the other ministries who do their diligence in measuring programs. We talk about performance measures. They're measuring and evaluating their programs and services.

So part of the evaluation of the implementation of the action plan, Saskatchewan's implementation of the national action plan includes a variety of specific measures that the federal government worked with the provinces and territories to say, this is what we want to look at. So we have to roll up our reporting into that.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — But today we are here to talk about the supplementary estimates that are here before us.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Right. So thank you for that. I know we're wrapping up here, so I'm going to do my own at the end here. So we do know that gender-based violence against women doesn't seem to be, doesn't appear to be an issue that is taken seriously by this government. And you just have to look at . . . It appears this government is not really protecting women. Just as an example is the recent arrest of Ryan Domotor . . .

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — I'm going to stop you right now.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — And the invitation last year of Colin Thatcher to the Throne Speech.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Nippi-Albright, I would ask you to stay on the path of the estimates please.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. Okay. So my question again, okay, I'll go back to this then. So you say that you're quite proud. How are you working and coordinating and collaborating with different ministries to come to be on the same page, to work in coordination with each other and intersectorially? How is that working and how do you measure that?

**Ms. Hamill:** — So as I mentioned earlier, we lead and coordinate and work with ministries across government to identify different initiatives that support really, I mean, working towards ending intimate partner violence and abuse really means really ramping it up around prevention.

So the Status of Women's office, part of the work that we do with this is we co-chair a group called the inter-ministerial committee on interpersonal violence and abuse with the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General. And there's members from most of the human service ministries, probably all the human service ministries, including the Ministry of Social Services; the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Health; Ministry of Government Relations; and several others. And through that group, that committee, we come together as public servants in our roles and share information. We talk about the different strategies and actions that are going on.

And one of the very interesting ones that's really helping raise awareness across this province is the collaborative work that



we're doing, that Status of Women office has been doing with the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General and the Ministry of Corrections and Public Safety and Policing and a couple of other ministries that have come along, on a public awareness campaign called Face the Issue.

And that particular campaign, where right now we're really excited because we're going to be moving into our third phase, which we know . . . Because, you know, as the minister said, I mean interpersonal violence and abuse is not something that happened recently. This is a hundreds-of-years-old problem. And we know it's going to take a long time for us to get to a place where it's not even just recognized but people fully understand and are aware of how their behaviours and their attitudes intersect with inappropriate behaviour when they are not able to manage themselves. So accountability is a very big part of our work too.

At ICIVA [inter-ministerial committee on interpersonal violence and abuse] we have three pillars. They are prevention, intervention, and accountability. And so from that work and those pillars and that standpoint, if you will, the human service ministries come together. They share information with the work that they're doing and the progress that's being made, and also talk about continuous improvement and where there's areas that we can improve. And so public awareness was one of those ones that was identified a couple years ago, and so that's where a lot of good effort has been made. That's just one example that I can give to you today.

[16:00]

**The Chair:** — Thank you for that. Now that we have reached our allotted time, I will ask the minister for her closing comments and then yourself.

**Hon. Ms. L. Ross:** — Well thank you very much. I am proud of the work that we are doing. But some individuals, as you brought forward, I'm not going to ever stand up and say that was acceptable behaviour. And I want you to know that.

But I am so proud of the work that we are doing within the ministry, within the Status of Women. We're really making a difference. We've taken a small mighty group of women who have risen. Their voices are being loud and clear across government. And us standing up and being one of the first provinces and territories to sign on to the national action plan, that was big. They came to Saskatoon and we signed that. And you know, it was celebrated because it sent a message that we take this very seriously. We would never condone any activity that would make a woman feel unsafe or make a child feel unsafe.

To me, I'm passionate about this and I think everyone in the room here knows that. I will always go to the wall to ensure that we do absolutely everything we can to ensure that we have a safe place for women and children and men to live. So you have my word that I'll do absolutely everything we can to advance what we need to do in the Status of Women. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you for your comments, Minister. Closing comments, Ms. Nippi-Albright?

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you so much for taking the time to answer my questions. So one of the things that would be

interesting and I'd be curious to know down the road is how are we helping those in the North, would be one of them.

The other one that's near and dear to me because it touches me is the MMIW, missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit. Often when an Indigenous woman goes missing or murdered, we don't hear about it. And you say that you want to protect the women in this province. I think the most vulnerable in this province are First Nation and Métis and two-spirit individuals. They're the most left out. And we need to do all that we can and work in coordination to make sure that all women are safe.

And far too often domestic violence is something that . . . Like it's touched my life. It's touched my family's life. And we don't do enough to protect our women. We don't do enough to ensure that they have a voice to say, stop. That this is not acceptable anymore. And we as legislatures need to step up and protect the most vulnerable.

So I will take your word and say, you're here to protect the women in this province and to ensure that we are moving this upward scale to move it down so that we can end domestic violence, gender-based violence against women. So gichi-miigwech for answering my questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you for your comments. We'll now move on to vote 27, Parks, Culture and Sport. Central management and services, subvote (PC01) in the amount of 405,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to His Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2024, the following sums for Parks, Culture and Sport in the amount of 405,000.

Do I have a mover? Mr. Goudy. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Thank you everybody. We'll take a two-minute break here to change minister and officials. Thank you.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

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

**Subvote (GR12)**

**The Chair:** — We'll move on to vote 30, Government Relations. Subvote (GR12), First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs. Minister McMorris is here with his officials. I would ask the officials to please introduce themselves before they speak for the first time and do not touch the microphones. Hansard will take care of that. Minister, please introduce your officials and make your opening comments.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left I have Jeff Marcotte, who's the assistant deputy minister of central services. To my right is . . . Jeff Markewich, sorry. Jeff Markewich, and Giselle Marcotte on my right. I got the M's mixed up. Sorry. And Giselle is the assistant deputy minister of First Nations, Métis relations and Northern Affairs. And behind me is Sheldon Green, the assistant deputy minister of municipal relations.

So first, Government Relations, or GR, requires an additional \$17.5 million in First Nations gaming agreement and Métis Development Fund payment to be paid to the First Nations and Métis organization. This payment reflects actual net casino profits for '22-23 coming in higher than forecast, partially offset by lower than forecast actual online gaming profits for '22-23 and a reduced forecast for online gaming profits for '23-24. Gaming payments are made based on casino and online gaming profits in accordance with formulas set out within the gaming framework agreement and lotteries and gaming Saskatchewan Act.

Second, GR requires 700,000 for the First Nation and Métis Consultation Participation Fund. This is the result of increased utilization of this fund.

And finally, GR requires \$400,000 for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls+ Community Response Fund. This fund is fully offset with revenues from the federal government as the fund has been offered through the national action plan to end gender-based violence. With that, that concludes my remarks and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you Minister. We'll move it on to opening it up for questions. Ms. Nippi-Albright.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. Thank you for that. And you've answered a few of the questions I was already going to ask, so thank you for that.

So I'm curious. We'll go straight to the MMIW dollars. So did I hear you correctly, that was 400,000? Or you're putting more additional dollars in? I missed that. I was busy writing.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So yes, it's \$400,000 for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls+ Community Response Fund, which is a federal flow through. But yeah, \$400,000 more. I'll just leave it at that.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — 400,000. So the \$400,000 is from Saskatchewan? From this government, is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I'll let . . . [inaudible].

**Ms. Marcotte:** — Good afternoon. Giselle Marcotte. So we have a \$400,000 fund already in existence. And as part of the national action plan we have received another 400,000 into government coffers, and that is what we are seeking for supplementary estimates. So it's an \$800,000 fund for a couple years.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. So with that additional 400,000, how much of it is going to existing programming? Is there anything going to the federation or the communities themselves or families that have loved ones that have gone missing

and/or murdered?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So I'll start, and then maybe Giselle would want to talk a little bit about some of the applications that we've already received. So 100 per cent of those dollars will go out, and it's on an application basis. In other words, communities will have an idea of what they would like to see to support murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, and so they will put in an application. We have a look at it, approve it, the money goes out. So 100 per cent of the dollars that we receive will go out through an application-based process.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So of the \$400,000 that you have, do you have criteria in place for like what this will go towards? And I'll just ask, like how much of that will go towards supporting families that have loved ones that have gone missing or murdered?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — So I think what we'll do is I'll just get Giselle to talk about a few of the successful applications, which will then give you kind of . . . Like it isn't dollars to an individual family, for example. That's not what this program was set up to do. But I think when maybe Giselle goes through a couple of examples, it will explain better kind of maybe the criteria, but what has been accepted.

**Ms. Marcotte:** — So the overarching focus is on prevention and safety, and so a variety of projects, such as healing lodges, self-defence classes, human trafficking awareness workshops, intervention initiatives to support Indigenous women and girls and two-spirited individuals to leave abusive relationships, and training to build healthy relationships.

And you know, a big part of it is about partnering with other organizations. So some of the activities include educating young women in intergenerational trauma and history behind why First Nations women are viewed negatively in society. That's something with Sturgeon Lake Health Centre, the creation of a young girls' advocacy group, reawakening traditional teachings through a variety of tools. It's funding that goes to an organization, community that has put in a proposal on what they want to do in this regard.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So how much of those dollars will go towards supporting, say, RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] detachments?

And there's a reason I ask, so I'll just share. One of my nieces went missing, and the missing persons report only went to Saskatoon, the municipality. And I asked, why is it not across the province? And part of it is, I don't know if it's coordination, lack of coordination, or lack of financial resources. So my question is, will there be any dollars to support RCMP detachments or municipal police organizations when they do a missing persons alert or posting to ensure that it gets to all the detachments and, I guess, be widely distributed across Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — We have a couple of examples of money that has gone kind of to policing, but not to kind of the question that you're asking, which tends to get into more policy of Justice and/or the police forces. But again, maybe Giselle will talk about the two that we can identify.

[16:15]

**Ms. Marcotte:** — Thank you, Minister. So RCMP Heritage Centre for example, partnership with a Place of Reflections, has programming and, you know, they had Red Dress Day. And it's closing in October. The Sisters in Spirit vigil, they had some sessions. Saskatoon Police Service equity and cultural engagement unit, in response to Call for Justice 9.2 about cultural engagement unit in partnership with Saskatoon Tribal Council. So projects that way. But what you're speaking of, we've not received applications for that, nor would it be in line with a community organization or an initiative in that way.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. The other piece I wanted to ask was, will any of these go towards . . . Like I know that the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, they're opening up a centre — Eagle . . . I forget — and it's a centre to help MMIW. Is there any dollars going to be allocated to help the Nation in their support program, etc.?

**Ms. Marcotte:** — I'm not seeing any applications or grants that were provided, nor do I think any were applied for. We have supported the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] and the Prince Albert Grand Council and the PAGC Women's Commission in their proposal to hold a one-day event, an event to bring . . . missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, plus their families, two-spirited women and girls and families together.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So would there be, I guess like one of the challenges with families is when a loved one goes missing, that initial time that their loved one is missing, after a while the families are left by themselves to go and continue the search. And they often are working with different organizations.

Will there be an opportunity in your allocation funding stream to, say, to offer supports for the continuing search for missing loved ones or murdered . . . I guess, looking for their loved ones?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Again, I think kind of missing the mark on what the program . . . The program is for applications to come forward on programming in a certain area as opposed to supporting, for example, you know, the ongoing search of a missing person. That kind of really doesn't fall into the mandate.

That is directed, really, through the federal government on through the commission as to where these dollars kind of would go. So it isn't really targeted towards that. It's more around specific programs, as Giselle has mentioned, to help people deal with trauma at the time, not necessarily funding to increase, you know, the search for a missing person.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. So do you have the funding criteria that you have, and would that be — I'm just cognizant of the time — if it's possible to table that so that when I go out and work with the communities that I can share that information to say, here is the funding that's available, here's how you . . . who's eligible and under what circumstances they're eligible for. Is that something that could be tabled?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Yes, absolutely.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — We'll table it. It's also online. It can be found online.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — But we can also get you a hard copy.

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

Okay. I've spent enough time on that one, so I'm going to move to the Consultation Participation Fund. So you're asking for additional dollars. To date, with these additional dollars is this consultations with the communities or Métis locals, First Nation bands, or . . . Help me understand.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I'll start with it, and then I'll turn it over to probably Giselle again to follow through. But so this is, again, when the duty-to-consult is triggered. Communities, which would be quite often First Nations or Métis, have the opportunity then to apply for some dollars to help deal with the consultation process. They would apply through GR. We kind of have a fast grant that we're processing quite quickly. And we go out to the various communities. The uptake has been great — lots of activity but also lots of activity from both First Nations and Métis communities to help with the consultation process.

So that's why we're back. In other words, the allotment that we had, the budget that we had has been fully allocated and we need to then allocate more to get to the end of this fiscal year.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. So go to the gaming agreement. So this, just for clarification, so that additional dollars is for the shortfall in the online gaming. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — No. What this is is that revenues from casinos, for example, have been higher than anticipated, than budgeted, so it would be at whatever number. It's offset a little bit because the revenues from online gaming hasn't been as high. So the total number is \$17.5 million. That needs to be adjusted and then will go out to First Nations and Métis communities.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay, just hold on. Maybe go through more questions here. Okay, so in these four areas that you have here for the 18.553, so are these, like these four areas, contractual in nature?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Well the gaming agreement for sure is contractual. And there's stipulations on how . . . I guess all four would be. I mean, the murdered and missing Indigenous women is a contractual agreement with the federal government. And maybe the consultation policy framework is not necessarily contractual; it's just a fund that we have that's accessible by communities when the duty-to-consult has been triggered.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So just with the Consultation Participation Fund, is there a cap at 50,000? 100,000? 150? 200,000?

**Ms. Marcotte:** — No. We have maximum grants, maximum \$10,000 fast-track grants per project. If a community has been notified several times for different types of projects and they apply for grants and it's over 50,000, we do what we need to do to get that authorization. And we don't have a cap.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So is there a communications strategy that you have for communities that would like more than the 10,000 or 50,000 or 200,000? Like is there a communication strategy that you have that they're not limited just to the 10,000? That you're open to 50,000 or 100,000?

**Ms. Marcotte:** — When a duty is triggered, they receive a notification letter with the opportunity to see if they're eligible to apply for a \$10,000 fast-track grant for that project. So if there's another project, then they are informed. That's the strategy is that they receive information every time something . . . they receive a notification. It's noted in that letter that they have the opportunity to apply for that grant.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So that first letter doesn't say that if you require more than \$10,000, ask for more than \$10,000? And that this is not the only time, that this is not the one-time funding for this? Is it clearly identified in the letters that are sent out when duty-to-consult is triggered?

**Ms. Marcotte:** — It's a \$10,000 grant per project, and that's the maximum. And so if another project comes up, they would get another letter saying, you can apply for another fast-track. But it's for a different project, a different duty-to-consult that's been triggered.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay.

**Ms. Marcotte:** — And sorry, it's also on the website with the community guide on how to follow through with these grants and the criteria.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay, so just help me understand. I'm a little confused because I know one organization in Pinehouse got \$200,000. So what was that? And it was in the last fiscal. I think it was July last year.

So I'm just wondering, so I'm just trying to clarify, trying to get some understanding why there appears . . . Maybe I'm confused why one place got \$200,000 and somebody else got 10. Was it clarified, or how did that . . . Help me understand.

**Ms. Marcotte:** — It would have been project-based. So there would have been that many projects, that many duty-to-consults, that much exploration going on for example, or vegetation management. Anything that triggers a duty-to-consult, they would get a notification letter and be able to apply each time and it just totalled up.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So, okay, so then what you're saying is that that \$200,000 was one project?

**Ms. Marcotte:** — No, that could have been 20 projects.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — But it could have come in maybe one payment because . . . It would be unlikely, but all the projects would be roughly around the same time. But they would show they received X amount of dollars globally but it would be individually how that funding would be allocated.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Okay. So is it something that, like where would somebody find that if it was, like how it was divvied up, like that? Just as that example. Is that something that the public

can access, or is that something that could be tabled for here?

**Ms. Marcotte:** — We can table it.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you. That would be helpful. Because often when communities say, we want to get some dollars, I'm like, well I only understand it that you can get 10,000. And then they come back and say, well why did this community get 2,000? And I'm like, I don't know. And so if you could table that, that would be extremely helpful when I go back to the communities.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I would just ask that if you could kind of narrow it down, what you're looking at, instead of us having to go through every grant that has gone out.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Well just . . .

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — That would probably be a fair amount of work, which we're not opposed to doing. But if you have specific communities you would like to know first of all, let us maybe start working on that so it's narrowed down.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — So we could start with the Pinehouse, the \$200,000, because it would definitely show a clear picture of what projects and the extent of activity in that area that triggers consultation.

**Ms. Marcotte:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — And did you want it for just this past fiscal year?

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Yeah, this past fiscal year would be just a good starting point to . . .

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — No, the one we're in? Or the last fiscal year? Or does it . . .

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Although, well we're in . . . what is it, 2023-24 fiscal year? Yeah, this fiscal year.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Okay.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Or 2023. Actually if you could go back to . . .

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — The year before?

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Last year, and then because you don't report until the end of next . . . the end of March, right?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Right.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Yeah. So just for clarity, 2022 to 2023 fiscal year.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Yeah.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Yeah. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Yeah, we'll do that.

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — For Pinehouse.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Yeah.

**The Chair:** — Seeing no more questions, we will move on. Minister, do you have some closing remarks?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I just want to thank my officials — even though I got the names wrong — but thank my officials for the great work that they do each and every day. We're very, very fortunate.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. Ms. Nippi-Albright, do you have any closing comments?

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — Thank you so much for taking the time to answer my questions and help me get a better understanding of some of the requests that's coming forward here. So miigwech.

**The Chair:** — Okay, we'll now move on to vote 30, Government Relations, First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs, subvote (GR12) in the amount of 18,553,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

Government Relations, vote 30 — \$18,553,000. I'll now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to His Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2024, the following sums for Government Relations in the amount of 18,553,000.

Do I have a mover? Mr. Keisig. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. We'll have a quick pause here as we switch out officials and minister. Thank you.

[16:30]

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

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

**Subvotes (CP06), (CP13), and (CP15)**

**The Chair:** — We will now consider the supplementary estimates for no. 1, vote 73, Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. Subvote (CP06), Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency; (CP13), Custody, Supervision and Rehabilitation Services; and (CP15), policing and community services.

Before we get going I'd like to welcome Ms. Sarauer here, and Minister Merriman is here with his officials. I would ask the officials to please introduce themselves when they speak the first time, and do not touch the microphones. The Hansard operator will take care of them. Minister, please do not touch that, and

introduce your officials and your opening remarks. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon to committee members. I'm pleased to attend the committee today to provide you with information regarding the additional funding that we are requesting be provided to the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety for the '23-24 fiscal year.

The ministry requires an additional funding of 11.401 million in '22-23 to support the operations of the province's correctional facilities. Correctional facilities are facing overtime salary pressures as well as other operational pressures such as food service and offender provisions.

As the province's lead agency for emergency preparedness and response, the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency experienced a very busy fire season. Response expenditures are \$85 million over our annual budget. The SPSA [Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency] is faced with the unfunded expenditure of 47.02 million. Broken down, 6.9 million for the provincial disaster assistance program, and the remaining portion of 40.12 million is for unfunded emergency fire response.

The RCMP also requires an additional fund of 7.643 million. This is due to costs related to contractual obligations.

Finally, 1.160 million is required to support the provincial protective services due to operating costs associated with the PPSTN [provincial public safety telecommunications network] radio fees.

I'd be now pleased to answer any questions from the committee, and I'll have my officials introduce themselves as they speak. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. We'll now open it up for questions. Ms. Sarauer?

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. And thank you, Minister, for your opening remarks. I'm going to ask a few quick questions understanding we're limited on time here, trying to get through as much of this as possible.

First, a few questions for Corrections. I understand that there is an expenditure for overtime. Could you go into further detail on how much overtime we're talking about?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Did you want it in dollars or hours overtime?

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Hours, please.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Hours, please.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — If available.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Okay. I'll just go through, kind of because it's broken out into different categories just for the committee: one-to-one hours we are 25,549 hours; hospital shifts of 40,202.8 hours; transportation and escorts of 8,380.75 hours; overflow dorms are 87,870 hours; lockdowns and searches is 4,570 hours; maintenance supervision is 2,187.5 hours; and

others is 9,892. And others, well others are a bunch of varieties, about 10 different things in the others.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Just to clarify, those numbers are overtime?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Those are total hours used, as I understand it, for overtime.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. This challenge for overtime, is this a capacity issue in terms of inmate capacity issue, so you need to add on staff? Is this a recruitment and retention issue of having enough staff? Or is it all of the above? Or is it something else that I haven't mentioned?

**Mr. McFadyen:** — Mark McFadyen, executive director of custody services. It's a little bit of a combination of both, but the count certainly drives, you know, drives the business. Our counts are high and we can demonstrate that later.

But just, you know, for staffing, your question in regards to staffing, we are shy for staffing. We have several correctional officers who are on leave, in '23-24 approximately 81.5; worker's comp, 34; vacancies, 53; and then our nurses as well; admin support staff, 19.5. So we're kind of down just for those reasons alone.

And then when you add the extra contingency units because of our high count, it just perpetuates itself that if you don't have enough staff to start with, and then we have the extra units open, that the overtime just continues to grow. But it's a combination of both, but the counts drive the need for the staff to begin with.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. Could you drill down into those numbers that you said — staff that are on leave and the reasons why they are on leave?

**Mr. McFadyen:** — Well I don't have the reasons for why, if you're looking at worker's comp numbers, why they're on comp. I don't have a listing of every reason why somebody's on comp or a reason why people are on leave. But it would be maternity. It could be terms to other areas within government. It could be parental, etc. But if you're looking a list down for every single staff that's on leave and the reason, whether it be comp or other, I don't have that with me right now. But if it's required, we can certainly get that. But it would be a combination of those type of activities.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — That's okay. I was more just looking to see if there was a pattern or a challenge in a particular area or something like that.

**Mr. McFadyen:** — It's pretty much standard from one facility to the next for the same reasons.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — You mentioned capacity being a challenge. Do you have point-in-time counts for today or recent, and how those numbers compare to a year ago if possible.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Just for the committee's knowledge, the numbers, this is as of today, but they do fluctuate on a daily basis of new offenders coming in and people being released. But as of today it's 2,249 individuals is our count.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Can you have that broken up by facility please?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Sure. And again — sorry, just to clarify — this is just adult. This is not youth. Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford, 35; Regina correction at 759; Whitespruce, 22. What else? In the impaired driving treatment program; 15. Besnard Lake — sorry, I went right to White Birch — Besnard Lake, it's 13; White Birch is 11; P.A. [Prince Albert] correction is 566; Pine Grove, 240; and Saskatoon correction centre, 588; for a total of again 2,249 individuals.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Could you provide the percentage of capacity? Do you have that number for each facility?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — For each facility? Saskatchewan Hospital, 48 per cent; Regina correction, 97; Whitespruce, 56; the impaired driving, 50; Besnard is 52 per cent; White Birch is almost 69 per cent; P.A. is 114 per cent; Pine Grove is 144 per cent; and Saskatoon is 116 per cent, for a grand total average across the province of 105.4 per cent.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. Do you have these same types of numbers for a year ago as comparables that you can provide the committee?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — I have a roll-up total count of this point in time last year. I don't have a breakdown of that. Last year at November of 2022 was 1,973 individuals.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Do you have a percentage as well, or no?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — A total percentage of last year as far as capacity? No I don't, but I'll make sure that the committee does get that.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Okay, thank you so much. I appreciate that. I have some questions for SPSA. I'm wondering if you could talk a bit about the provincial fire season in terms of the number of fires as compared to the assumptions behind the original budget for wildfire and evacuation activities.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — As I'm learning a lot about this file, we do have a placeholder of in and around \$90 million in our budget for fire season. And as we don't know what that season will entail, depending on what the moisture is in the North, there's a whole bunch of mitigating factors in that. So we always have a base budget for that. And then if there are flex, if we need more dollars, then we go back and we have the ability to get more dollars like we did this year. Because the fire season was very bad in the first half of the fiscal year and then in the second quarter it actually settled down quite a bit.

But we did have, I think it was over 500 fires in the North. And on top of that there were also grass fires as well that also consume dollars, and I think there was over 700 grass fires in the province. So that's where we have to be able to flex up those dollars, the additional dollars that we're looking for today.

[16:45]

**Ms. Sarauer:** — So how many fires does the ministry anticipate when they set their original budget?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — I don't think we have a prediction of how many fires there are going to be. We predict on what our base funding is in the budget and again if we need more budgetary dollars then we can go back to treasury board and come back for supplemental estimates. As we did have a very challenging fire season, we were able to meet that with the dollars from the treasury board that was allocated.

Very similar that we have in other ministries where there are placeholders and if something goes up or down, we do have that flexibility to do that. But we've seen over the last couple of years the fire season has been very challenging so we do have the ability to flex up on that.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — What is the placeholder based on?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — My guess, and I would stand corrected, I think it's on a historical 10-year average.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — And when is it up for review again?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — I would say we're always continually doing it. If we need to adjust up, we always have the dollars available to us. So whether it's budgeted or not budgeted, we have the ability to meet the needs of what the fire season is. So we've never had a problem with that as far as cash flow and financing that.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — But does this money also include funding for hotels and alternate accommodations for those who need to use them because they are evacuated, in particular those from northern communities during fire season?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Yeah, I can break it out a little bit of the dollar amounts of that 90.6 million, if that's what you're asking.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Sure.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Sure, okay. 77.316 million is for evacuation search and rescue for response to wildfire activities and . . . Trying to see where the breakdown of this is. There is an additional 4.795 million for power outages in the North where people's food were spoiling. And there's also some offsetting costs included, I believe, in that original amount of transportation as well as lodgings.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — How does the ministry choose which hotels to use for individuals evacuated from northern communities?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — We have an ongoing working relationship with a lot of the different hotels to be able to house individuals when they are being evacuated. Obviously we try to keep them closest to their home community as we can, making sure that we keep family members together, and we work with all the different hotels. There's 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 different hotels that are used during evacuations, but we also have overflows into other hotels and agreements with them that if we need to flex into those we can as well.

One of the big areas that we use certainly in the South is the U of R [University of Regina]. We use their campus which we have utilized quite a few times in the past. So it's not just hotels.

It's other dorm facilities depending on what the exact situation is.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — What are the financial guidelines with respect to hotels that are used to house individuals evacuated?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — We actually have a pre-negotiated set amount for . . . depending on again volume of how many that we're using. But we have that all negotiated out. Usually it's a preferred rate that we get based on volume. If we're renting out 50 rooms, we would get a preferred rate on that, and most of it is under the rate that the average person would get walking in the door. So we get a better rate just because of the volume.

And it's also, you know, the volume of rooms that we're renting out at that point in time, and we're also usually renting them out for a longer duration of time. It's not just an overnight stay. So the hotels understand that people will be staying there for weeks and can accommodate their schedule and their cleaning in and around that.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Could you provide some more detail as to the ministry's policy in compensating for power-outage food loss?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — The policy as I understand it is \$100 per person per community that they can receive for power loss due to wildfires. We want to make sure that again we understand that the cost is certainly larger or of increased value in the North and also the availability of food is not as convenient as it is in the major cities. So we want to be able to make sure that we . . . From what I heard from some local leaders up there, that they were very happy that we were able to do this. And again it was \$790,000 and there's about a dozen different communities that utilized this, up to one community was a maximum of \$256,000.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. I have some questions about the RCMP allocation. You mentioned this is related to some contractual obligations. Could you provide some more details?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — I can provide some high-level . . . There are some directives that come out of Ottawa through the RCMP that increase the costs that we are not aware of that has been decided, whether it be equipment or whether it be clothing, whatever it is, or additional training that the RCMP requires. The federal government will mandate that and we have to pay our percentage, which is on a 48/52 split with the federal government. So a lot of it is mandated. Oh, sorry — 70/30. I keep getting the First Nation one and the . . . 70/30 for the province.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Are you able to provide more detail as to what exactly the funding is for?

**Mr. Cameron:** — Rob Cameron, ADM [assistant deputy minister] of policing. So the kind of things that we're seeing in the context of the RCMP and what they're looking for for new expenses or increasing expenses and what's adding to this increase in budget, so specifically things like body armour, shields, tasers, carbines, night vision, breaching tools — a variety of other equipment that gets mandated through either occupational health and safety issues or through changes in national standards.

The national standards are set by Ottawa, the RCMP in Ottawa,

and then they spread across the country as you would expect. As a province that is in contract with Public Safety Canada for the service of the RCMP, we don't get a lot of say in that so we end up having a situation where a cost is downloaded to us. As the minister said, it's a 70/30 split with us, and so we cover 70 per cent of that cost overall.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — You mentioned national standards. I'm wondering if you can walk me through how that differs from, for example, municipal police and their standards?

**Mr. Cameron:** — So generally speaking the standards aren't necessarily a lot of distance apart. But what you have at the national level is some key incidences that have created very public incidences, for example Mayerthorpe, Moncton, other events like that where the RCMP has done quite an extensive review, looked at equipment and different parts of those situations and then as a result have come up with a new standard of equipment they need.

And some of this goes not just into the equipment that is personally required by the members themselves but also the way they structure their communications, their command and control. We just saw a lot of this through the Mass Casualty Commission where there was some indication of changes required in the RCMP, not only in equipment but training. So these are the kind of things that we see.

In the province here the Police Commission sets standards, as well as internally police services will set their standards as well. There is an attempt to have some uniformity across the board, but not always is it exactly the same. And so things like Mayerthorpe and Moncton brought out the requirement for additional carbines, patrol rifles or patrol carbines I think is technically what they're calling them now. So these were things that all of a sudden we had to invest in so our RCMP here in this province would have that equipment as well. And there's a variety of other pieces of equipment or technologies that they've now acquired that have cost us additional funding.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Are you able to provide any details as to any specific differences between the two — the standards of RCMP, the national standards that have been set and other policing bodies? You mentioned carbines in particular. I believe there are other police services that do already have those. So are you able to provide more details on that? I know we're getting into . . .

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Yeah, maybe I can just provide a higher level on that. As Rob said, each police department determines what they are. Obviously smaller police departments would need different pieces of equipment versus Saskatoon. And the RCMP have to respond to a wide variety of issues, so they have a different standard as well. I'm not sure if there is one specific standard for municipal policing across our province, just because they do have differences.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — No, I understand that and I'm not asking for that. I'm just wondering if, I suppose what I'm trying to get to is, are they trying to bring RCMP up to a standard that perhaps other municipal forces or other policing forces in Saskatchewan are already at? I'm just trying to get a gauge of, a lay of the land of where all of policing services generally are in Saskatchewan and where there are gaps, I suppose.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — I think maybe to answer your question, the RCMP would be close to the top as far as setting standards, and the municipalities would assess whether they need to meet those standards for their particular needs. Or is the need overall for that area being met by the RCMP?

So I think that we work in conjunction with the municipalities and the RCMP to see if the need is there, and if it is there, who is able to be able to meet that need, whether it's the RCMP having that standard already, and if it's not close to an RCMP detachment that has that standard, do they need to be able to bring it up to meet the needs of their community.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Cameron, could you provide a breakdown of the actual costs? You had mentioned body armour, for example. Do you have how much money was spent on body armour, how much money was spent on training, that sort of thing?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — For the RCMP?

**Ms. Sarauer:** — For this allocation of funding.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — We'll have to provide that to the committee. Because we have the overall dollar amount, but we'll provide that breakdown of that. I think it's at \$7 million, just over \$7 million. But we can provide a breakdown of that, of what the RCMP, their new standards are and what it exactly cost per. We'll provide that breakdown for you.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you so much.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — There will be a human resource component in there as well, just for salary increases and that type of stuff.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. The Chair is informing me I have one question left, so I'm going to ask if the PPS [provincial protective services] could provide a little bit more detail as to the allocation of funding for their, I think it was mentioned, radio fees.

**Mr. Cameron:** — Rob Cameron, ADM of policing, again. So the cost for the \$1.160 million is for our cost for two areas. One is for the actual radio usage, so the dispatching for our provincial protective services specifically.

[17:00]

And then 0.5 million of that annually is related to the leasing and licensing of the actual radio system and the units that are in the vehicles or portable radios and that kind of thing.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. I appreciate it. I think Mr. Chair was going to cut me off, I believe.

**The Chair:** — You betcha I was. Thank you. Having agreed upon our time, we will ask the minister for his closing comments.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank my officials and the committee members and thank Ms. Sarauer for the questions and the respectful dialogue. And just a quick thanks to all of our first responders that are out there,



being able to do this day in and out.

[The committee adjourned at 17:05.]

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Minister. Ms. Sarauer, do you have any closing comments?

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. I echo the comments of the minister in his thanks, in particular to the officials who were here today. I really appreciate, always appreciate any opportunity I have to speak with all of you and ask questions. Thank you for all the work that you do on behalf of the province every single day.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. We will now move on to vote 73, Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, subvote (CP06) in the amount of 47,020,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Custody, supervision and rehabilitation services, subvote (CP13) in the amount of 11,401,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Policing and community safety services, subvote (CP15) in the amount of 8,803,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Policing, Corrections and Public Safety, vote 73 for 67,224,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to His Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2024, the following sums for Policing, Corrections and Public Safety in the amount of \$67,224,000.

I have a mover, Mr. Steele. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

Do I have a mover?

**Mr. B. McLeod:** — I so move.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That completes our committee's business for tonight. I'd like to thank the committee members and staff here. Seeing that we have reached our time of adjournment, this committee stands adjourned until the call of the Chair.