

Title: Tuesday, June 6, 2006 Public Accounts Committee

Date: 06/06/06

Time: 10 a.m.

[Mr. MacDonald in the chair]

The Chair: I would like to welcome everyone to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts meeting today, June 6, 2006. It is an historical meeting. It is the first time that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts has met outside session in quite some time. The Standing Committee on Public Accounts was first appointed in 1906. However, the Legislature Library and the Legislature committees branch records started in 1972, and there was no evidence found that the committee had met outside of session from 1972 onwards.

My recollections go back to the 1950s, when there was a book written in honour of the province's 75th birthday. In that book it indicates that in the mid-50s the Public Accounts Committee met not only during session but outside session and, oddly enough, had a lot to say about certain land transactions by the government.

But we shall proceed with today's meeting. The chair would like to call this meeting to order. He did not do that. I would like to welcome everyone in attendance. We'll quickly go around and introduce ourselves.

[The following members introduced themselves: Reverend Abbott, Ms Blakeman, Mr. Bonko, Dr. Brown, Mr. Chase, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Lindsay, Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Prins, Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Webber]

[The following staff of the Auditor General's office introduced themselves: Mr. Arklie, Mr. Dunn, and Mr. Hug]

[The following departmental support staff introduced themselves: Mr. Bell, Ms Davis, Mr. Finnerty, Ms Graham, Mr. Hearnden, and Mr. Perry]

Mrs. Dacyshyn: Good morning. Corinne Dacyshyn, committee clerk.

The Chair: Could I have, please, approval of the agenda that was circulated?

Mr. Rogers: Moved, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rogers. Moved by Mr. Rogers that the agenda for the June 6, 2006, meeting be approved as distributed. All in favour? Opposed? Seeing none, carried. Thank you.

Now, this morning we are going to meet with AADAC, the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission. This portion of the meeting will end at noontime, and then in the afternoon we will meet with Mr. Ray Danyluk and the Hon. Pearl Calahasen and their staff from the Northern Alberta Development Council. Lunch will be served at noon.

The chair at this time would also like to welcome the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder. Welcome.

Now we can start with our meeting with AADAC. We are going to have a 20-minute overview, a PowerPoint presentation, and this will be presented by . . .

Mr. Rodney: Your friendly neighbourhood MLA for Calgary-Lougheed and chair of AADAC, Dave Rodney. It is a rather auspicious occasion – isn't it, Chair? – not only because of the fact that this is a wonderful time to profile the great work that AADAC and its fine employees do but also because of the date. It is, indeed, the sixth day of the sixth month of the sixth year, isn't it?

On that note of good luck, I would like to formally introduce our

president and CEO at AADAC. That's Mr. Murray Finnerty. If you could give us a wave, sir. Jim Hearnden is the vice-president of corporate services, and he's just in front of you there. Barb Davis is, indeed, the vice-president of community services. Then there's Bill Bell, the vice-president of provincial services, and the senior director of financial services, Karen Graham. I believe in the back we have Mr. Bruce Perry, Assistant Deputy Minister of Alberta Health and Wellness, finance and corporate services. Oh, he's right at the table. Fabulous. As you should be.

Today I'm going to provide an overview of the commission's programs and services. I'm going to illustrate the trends in substance use and abuse and gambling along with the cost and consequences that form the context within which AADAC is working, also provide an overview of AADAC's services and expenditures for '04-05, of course, and conclude with a review of some performance measures I'm quite sure you'll be quite interested in.

To start out with the vision, the AADAC vision is: "A healthy society . . . free from the harmful effects of alcohol, other drugs and gambling." The mission mirrors that: "Making a difference in people's lives by assisting Albertans to achieve freedom from the harmful effects of alcohol, other drugs and gambling." Our mandate is to operate and fund services addressing addictions and to conduct related research. Our role is "to promote people's independence and well-being" – how? – "through increasing use of social, emotional, spiritual and physical resources, and to provide cost-effective, holistic alternatives to hospital-based and medical services."

As you can see in the org chart that's not only up on the screen but also in your packages, the commissioner reports, of course, to the government of Alberta through the Minister of Health and Wellness. I have to tell you that I have nothing but the highest of regard for our health minister. We really, really appreciate her guidance and support.

For 2004-2005 AADAC's organizational structure is comprised of four divisions that you can see: the executive directors of program services, information services, corporate services, and the national research co-ordination director as well. We could go into that in more detail if you care to later.

Moving right along to slide 5, there are three areas of programs and services for AADAC: information, prevention, and treatment. I know, even just from sitting in the House with you, that you've been brought up to date on what those really entail.

I'm going to move on to the three points on slide 6, the first of which is that the services provided by AADAC are indeed extensive. I don't know if you folks are aware of this, but each year close to 30,000 clients receive treatment and more than 120,000 people receive information and prevention services. Point 2 about accessibility: with a province-wide network of programs and services in 48 communities in '04-05 I think it's quite obvious that Albertans have access to services in the communities right where they live and work. The third point about effectiveness: while the majority of clients are very satisfied with the services they receive, a majority also report that they are abstinent or improved following treatment.

This is not a brand new organization. This organization is over 55 years old, and they've been making a big difference to a whole lot of people for a lot of years. These are people who for a variety of reasons are at risk or have become addicted. Now, AADAC started by addressing the needs of a few, but it has expanded, of course, to help many more in this current affluent and complex society we live in.

Now, if you look up on the slide here, you'll see that this is not one of the newest treatment centres. In fact, it's the oldest, founded in 1951. It's the John McDougall residence right here in Edmonton and was the first administrative centre and clinic for the Alcoholism

Foundation of Alberta to treat drinking problems. I include it here to illustrate AADAC's long history of excellence and experience in service to Albertans.

Just to provide a bit of context around the work of AADAC through a trend summary and through an explanation of the costs associated with addiction, first of all with alcohol. Similar to other portions of the country alcohol is, indeed, the drug most frequently used in Alberta, and it's the drug most commonly associated with health and social problems. There's a causal relationship between alcohol consumption and more than 60 types of disease and injury. Alcohol is also associated with numerous mental health, interpersonal, and social problems.

In 2004 80 per cent of Albertans over 15 years of age consumed alcohol, and approximately 3.5 per cent are alcohol dependent. Each Albertan 15 and older consumes the equivalent of 506 bottles of beer each year, and that is above the national average. It's the drug most commonly used by Alberta youth. Drinking rates are highest among young adults aged 18 to 24, and of course binge drinking, yes, in this age group is of particular concern.

In comparison to alcohol a minority of the Alberta population uses illegal drugs. Among those that do, cannabis, including both marijuana and hashish, is the most popular. Although illegal drug use affects a relatively small proportion of the Alberta population, almost 1 in 5 Albertans who reported using illegal drugs experienced one or more harms related to their drug use. In 2004 15 per cent of Albertans aged 15 and older reported using cannabis – that's 15 per cent – 3 per cent used other illicit drugs, and 1 per cent are considered drug dependent. In 2004 less than 1 per cent of Albertans 15 and older reported using speed, or amphetamine, in the past year.

10:10

Now, while the proportion of the Alberta adult population who experienced gambling problems has remained relatively stable since the mid-1990s at 5.2 per cent, problem gambling rates in Alberta are higher than in most Canadian provinces. Problem gambling can lead to a number of serious consequences: mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, loss of financial stability, interpersonal problems, and criminal involvement. One of the most severe health consequences that maybe has even come close to people that you know of is suicide due to gambling. Between 2000 and 2003 in Alberta about 2 per cent of suicides were gambling related. Further, research has suggested that among aboriginal populations rates of problem gambling for both adolescents and adults are two to 15 times higher than in nonaboriginal populations.

On to some relatively good news. Alberta has made great strides in reducing the prevalence of smoking and the use of other tobacco products by adults and youth. Declining rates of tobacco use in Alberta and other Canadian jurisdictions have been credited to the implementation of comprehensive tobacco reduction strategies, including education, prevention, cessation programs, and a little bit of legislation that we're all familiar with.

Tobacco is considered the single most significant cause of preventable illness and disability and death in Canada and in most developed countries. Smoking is estimated to cause 82 per cent of all lung cancers, 29 per cent of heart disease cases, 81 per cent of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease cases, and that's for Albertans 30 years old and older.

Twenty per cent of Albertans 15 and older smoke. This compares to 25 per cent who were smokers just a few years back, in 2001, and 26 per cent in 1999. The highest rate, as you might expect, is among 18- to 24-year-olds in Alberta. It's 28 per cent. One additional note on First Nations: there was a health survey report that indicated that although aboriginal smoking rates are declining, they're still almost double the Canadian average.

On to prescription drug use. Indications are that it has increased since the '80s and that the abuse of the drugs is part of a pattern of multiple-substance use, especially by seniors. An estimated 10 to 30 per cent of elderly medical hospital patients are admitted because of medication toxicity. The misuse and abuse of prescription drugs is associated with considerable harm and, of course, death as they are often used in combination with alcohol or other drugs. Most Albertans, of course, use prescription drugs for therapeutic reasons, but concerns arise because of the addictive potential of certain drugs, the inappropriate prescribing practices that we've seen even recently very close to this building, diversion of medications to the black market, and escalating costs for therapeutic drugs.

On to some of the numbers I know that some of you are going to be interested in, the estimated cost when it comes to alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use. In 1992, going back a ways, it was \$1.6 billion, or \$600 per person; in 2002, the last reports we can really rely on, \$4.4 billion, or \$1,400 per person, more than double. In 2002 alcohol and tobacco accounted for most of the total costs: \$1.8 billion for tobacco, \$1.6 billion for alcohol, and \$1 billion for illegal drugs. Indirect costs, of course, add to that, including productivity losses, and represent the largest portion of the costs, and that's almost two-thirds of the total. Addiction services, I think – and you can choose to agree or disagree – provide a really good return on investment in that studies show that for every dollar that is invested in treatment, \$7 is saved.

So relative to the revenue generated from alcohol and tobacco sales and legalized gambling, AADAC's information, prevention, and treatment programs are a very effective use of public funds. As an FYI Alberta spends \$4 per capita to fund the Alberta tobacco reduction strategy, or ATRS, which is one of the largest per capita expenditures on tobacco reduction in the country, and the decrease in the smoking rate from 25 per cent to 20 per cent from 2001 to 2004 represents an estimated cost avoidance to the Alberta economy of \$470.6 million in direct health care costs.

Grant money. In 2004-2005 AADAC received \$65,649,000 from Alberta Health and Wellness to operate programs and services, an overall increase of \$7.294 million, or 12 per cent, from the prior year. Where did that money go? Well, \$3 million went to social responsibility, including the Red Deer community shelter and detox service, a million dollars went to developing and implementing a prevention campaign to influence risk-taking behaviours of young adults, and half a million dollars went to enhanced services for women's initiatives. We shouldn't forget the \$2.8 million for staffing and other price/volume increases. So AADAC also undertook a number of activities to enhance substance abuse and problem gambling information, prevention, and treatment services.

A few of the highlights from '04-05 when it comes to information. As a member of the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions AADAC was instrumental in gathering support for the 2004 Canadian addictions survey, or CAS, as you see on the screen. It was the first comprehensive national survey in a decade. Secondly, AADAC collaborated with national partners and other key stakeholders to develop a research strategy that supports Canada's drug strategy. The agenda included co-ordination of the Alberta youth experience survey and the 2002 costs of substance abuse in Canada study. Thirdly, in partnership with the Alberta Centre for Child, Family, and Community Research AADAC collaborated on a research project that focused on youth under 18 and addiction and included a focus on alcohol use during pregnancy.

When it comes to community partnerships, in '04-05 AADAC helped to plan and host a number of forums for addressing drug use. Perhaps some of you were aware of these if they were in your area. In the Red Deer area there was the Alberta workshop on metham-

phetamine; in addition, the Edmonton drug strategy workshop and the Hinton community drug strategy workshop.

When it comes to public awareness, the last note on this slide, AADAC launched a province-wide public awareness campaign using print and transit posters. Perhaps you've seen them. The campaign back then emphasized core businesses under the banner Change Is Possible.

Now we're going to break up our 20 minutes here with a little something. Perhaps you've seen this; perhaps you haven't. Again, if you're wondering where some of the money goes, here's an example of the hard work and careful messaging that's vital to raising public awareness on important issues.

I'll show you one of the two TV commercials developed last year aimed at preventing the use of crystal meth. Yes, although these were not developed in '04-05, they're part of the government's response to methamphetamine and demonstrate the need to stay vigilant regarding emerging substance use trends and to respond with made-in-Alberta solutions. This particular campaign ran for 4 weeks. So if we're ready on sound, I'll just tell you this. The first six seconds may indicate to you that we're going in a certain direction with this commercial. Stay tuned for the last 24 seconds.

[A DVD presentation was shown]

One of those commercials, I think, we got incredible response to not only from across the province but far beyond. Other places have wanted to pick this up. In fact, was it just last month, Mr. Finnerty, that this was featured as one of the ways to deal with this problem on CNBC in the United States of America? So onward. Hopefully, we're doing something right. In 2004-2005 21.8 per cent, or \$14,791,000, of AADAC's expenses were spent on information services.

We'll move on now to slide 22, the highlights of the prevention work. One, ATRS, the Alberta tobacco reduction strategy. On behalf of government AADAC continued to lead and co-ordinate in that direction. The government provided \$12.4 million to ATRS. Of these funds AADAC received \$9.4 million. Of course, there are annual reports on the strategy.

10:20

In 2004-2005 as part of ATRS AADAC launched a province-wide public awareness campaign focusing on prevention and cessation and promotion of AADAC's smokers' helpline and introduction of messages about second-hand smoke. The second part of that. Evaluation of this campaign showed a high level of recall, 61 per cent of youth and 39 per cent of adults. The majority of Albertans who recall the campaign messages agreed that the advertising was a really good use of taxpayers' money.

When it came to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, AADAC worked with that partner in developing an enhanced problem-gambling strategy. As part of the strategy AADAC delivered the Deal Us In vendor-training program to over 1,500 casino supervisors and management staff.

You can see FASD up there. Since 2001 AADAC has provided enhanced services for women, an initiative, of course, designed to better reach women who are pregnant and need help for a substance use problem. The enhanced services for women initiative received a funding increase to provide a spectrum of services from information to prevention to harm reduction and treatment for women who are pregnant and at risk.

Near the bottom you see youth and schools. In collaboration with the Alberta School Boards Association AADAC developed a comprehensive substance abuse prevention and early intervention

program for schools across the province and continued to deliver a comprehensive school strategy that included curriculum-aligned resources and situates AADAC counsellors within schools to assist students.

Prevention programs, ladies and gentlemen, accounted for 10.1 per cent, or \$6.851 million, of AADAC expenses in '04-05.

Moving on to residential gambling treatment centres, you'll find that in the Northern Addictions Centre in Grande Prairie. In 2004-2005 we also added tobacco cessation programming at the Lander Treatment Centre in Claresholm, introduced a women-only day treatment program in Edmonton, provided start-up funding for the Safe Harbour Society in Red Deer, and funded expanded out-patient and residential services at Aventa in Calgary.

Some of you, I know, are very concerned about concurrent disorders. You might be happy to know that AADAC has worked with the Alberta Solicitor General and Capital health to develop and implement the Bridges program, a residential program for male young offenders who have concurrent mental health and addiction problems and are sentenced to open custody.

For over 30 years AADAC has provided treatment for clients who are dependent on opioid drugs as well. AADAC clinics are located in Edmonton and Calgary, and they offer medically prescribed methadone treatment, clinical supervision, counselling, and referral.

Funded agencies are a key component of AADAC. AADAC has provided in that particular year over \$12 million, which is an increase of \$700,000, in support of community-based organizations. That's 23 funded agency grants and 10 program contracts in '04-05. This funding extends the AADAC service continuum, with agencies providing services that include overnight shelter, social detox, halfway houses, targeted programs for aboriginal Albertans and for women.

I see that we maybe have five minutes left, so we're getting near the end.

As illustrated by the map on the screen – perhaps you can find your friendly neighbourhood there – AADAC and AADAC-funded agencies were located in 48 communities in Alberta in 2004-2005. That reach is extended by satellite offices and mobile teams and through partners in community agencies. There were 933 treatment beds available through AADAC and AADAC-funded agencies in '04-05, and 68.1 per cent of AADAC expenditures, or \$46.3 million, in '04-05 went to treatment. In '04-05 AADAC administration accounted for 5 and a quarter per cent of funding and 5.43 per cent of staffing, or – and I know that you're all going to want to write this down – 31 full-time employees.

For information and prevention, slide 25, performance measures are population-based given that no single agency or organization can tackle all of the issues or solve all of the problems. When it comes to treatment, performance measures are directly related to services provided by the commission to ensure that they provide optimum benefit to clients. Performance measures for information focus on public awareness of AADAC and awareness of the effects of alcohol use in pregnancy. The rationale is this. Albertans who are more aware of AADAC are more informed about where to go for information on alcohol, other drugs, and problem gambling.

In '04-05 AADAC came within 2 per cent of meeting the target for awareness, which was 90 per cent, and the commission exceeded the target for awareness of detrimental effects of alcohol during pregnancy, which was 90 per cent.

Now, prevention measures include teen smoking rates and heavy drinking by youth. Why would we do that? Well, because most regular smokers start at a pretty early age, from what we've found, and activities focusing on youth prevention are key to reducing the number of smokers in Alberta. A pattern of regular heavy drinking

is associated with a higher risk of experiencing alcohol-related harm.

Don't worry, Mr. Chair. We have only two slides left after this.

The success of AADAC prevention services is evidenced by a decrease in the prevalence of smoking among Alberta youth 12 to 17 and a decrease in the prevalence of heavy drinking among young Albertans from 15 to 29. Last point on this slide. In 2004-2005 AADAC exceeded performance targets for prevention. The smoking rates for youth 12 to 19 decreased from 18 to 14 per cent, and heavy drinking rates for young people 15 to 29 decreased from 34 per cent to 31 per cent.

Second-last slide. Treatment and performance measures include satisfaction and effectiveness because we want to measure satisfaction considering that the client's perception of a particular service obviously affects if they come back or if they refer other people to it. Even the most effective and efficient program is of limited value if it doesn't fulfill the needs and expectations of those who participate or those who are thinking about it. Point 2: assessing satisfaction reflects organizational commitment to continuous improvement. It's amazing to see that in the field. Thirdly, surveying client posttreatment to determine whether they are abstinent or have reduced their alcohol or other drug use or gambling activities is a direct measure of program income. Lastly, in '04-05 AADAC met the performance target for client satisfaction, 95 per cent, and came within 3 per cent of meeting the target for client improvement following treatment, which was 95 per cent.

To wrap it up in two quick points. Direct service delivery accounts for the bulk of AADAC's budget. By focusing on sustaining the province-wide system of services, AADAC is able to maintain high service standards and maximize access. Finally, AADAC builds on past successes and responds to challenges now and future challenges by working with others, by remaining innovative in service delivery and providing programs and services based on research and best practice.

I am very proud and honoured and humbled to work with the incredible angels we have in the field and, of course, those who administrate them and help make it happen. I appreciate the opportunity to be here, Mr. Chair.

Before we entertain questions, I wonder if Mr. Dunn would care to make some comments.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Dunn: Well, thank you very, very much. Just to remind the members, there are no comments or recommendations in our annual report that deal with AADAC. The information that was provided to you prior to this meeting, the annual report that Mr. Rodney has gone over, is also reproduced in many ways in the ministry of health's annual report, section 1. The performance measures that are contained in here are also in the ministry of health's report, so those get broadcast together with AADAC's separate financial statement. So there is good publicity through the ministry of health's report, section 1.

Those, Mr. Chairman, are my only comments. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Rodney.

The first member who indicated that he would be interested in asking a question is Mr. David Eggen. Before we get to questions, I would like to note on page 7 of the annual report that a current member of our Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Len Webber, sat on the commission board between April 2004 and January 2005.

Now we will proceed. There is quite a list of members who have indicated that they would like to ask a question, and we will proceed in the usual manner with David Eggen, followed by Mr. Lindsay.

10:30

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd just like to say that I appreciate the report that the hon. member has put forward and for all of the staff being here. It's quite an auspicious occasion to be meeting outside of session, and I hope that we can continue and expand on that concept in the future with Public Accounts.

I guess I'll choose my more general question. This is one that I grapple with all the time, being a public representative. You know, given that gambling, alcohol, tobacco, and really the proliferation of at least two of these activities or substances are in fact regulated by the provincial government, I would like to ask: what specific steps has AADAC taken in regard to perhaps limiting the access to these substances and activities by the general population? Of course, the ease of access to alcohol and to gambling in particular has been quite marked in these past dozen or so years. You know, as an MLA and then in the past as a parent and as a teacher I've been very concerned about this, so perhaps you could illuminate a bit as to what specific steps you have done to lobby the government to perhaps counteract this proliferation of alcohol and gambling in our province.

Mr. Rodney: Thank you very much for the question. If the chair will indulge me, I would like to thank the hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills, Len Webber. He did some incredible work – you made reference to page 7 – and it was right after we were both elected that it was determined that he had other talents as well that could be utilized by government in different places, and they asked me to sit in the chair. Part of the reason that I bring that forward is that, as you folks may or may not be aware, I was the chair of AADAC only for the last three months of the '04-05 fiscal year, so I will be relying upon my incredible staff for a number of these questions. If you were to ask me questions about anything since, I think I'd be quicker to feel comfortable with all of the numbers.

Of course, your question is more policy related. If the chair is okay with this, I will tell you this. AADAC does everything it can, of course, from the prevention, information, and treatment sides of things, working in partnership, though, I will tell you, hon. member, with the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, who have a board. They do incredible work. I've seen it first-hand. We've actually had joint meetings with AGLC and AADAC, so there are, I would say, continual efforts. That's something we'll continue to work on.

Anything further to add, especially in the '04-05 year? No?

You have a follow-up, I presume.

Mr. Eggen: Yes. Absolutely. Well, given that there is a specific outcome, a goal to reduce children's access to tobacco and to reduce the addiction to tobacco at a young age, what specifically is AADAC doing in regard to reducing the use of power walls to sell tobacco in convenience stores? You know, were you making any specific efforts in this past year to reduce the sort of accessibility and the appeal of tobacco to young people?

Mr. Rodney: I've heard people whispering, "Good question," and it is a very good question.

Chair, I don't know. Would the rules be the same for this meeting as for others? Technically we're looking at numbers for '04-05, and the question on power walls wouldn't exactly fall into that category. Or do you want to give me a little bit of room?

The Chair: You go right ahead.

Mr. Rodney: Okay. I want to deal with these issues as much as you.

Mr. Eggen: Sure. Okay. I'm not trying to go around the rules.

Mr. Rodney: No. But let's do it this way. What I will say is that power walls are on our list of things that we want to improve on when it comes to the legislative point of view. You've heard me say prevention, information, and treatment a number of times. That's what AADAC has done, and that's what it'll continue to do.

Another angle, of course, is on taxation, which we will continue to work on. Another one is legislation. I've seen what's happening in other provinces and states, and I look forward to the opportunity to decrease any opportunity to invite young people to become addicted to anything unhealthy, to be honest.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. Sure. Thanks. That's good. I guess I'm just looking specifically at the stated goals, which are performance measures otherwise, at how you might execute those. Thanks a lot.

Mr. Rodney: Sure. Absolutely. Private members' bills would be helpful in bringing forward these sorts of things too.

The Chair: Mr. Lindsay, please, followed by Harry Chase.

Mr. Lindsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, brother, for that excellent overview and for a very well-prepared annual report.

On page 34 of your annual report you show an increase in community services expenses of approximately \$4.4 million. I'd like to hear, I guess, an explanation for the reasons surrounding that increase in expenditures.

Mr. Rodney: I'm going to hand it over to Murray Finnerty on this particular question.

The reference to "brother" is that the chair of this fine committee on one occasion heard a comment during a previous meeting, and he thought it was yours truly. It was actually Mr. Lindsay. I had said that I can understand mistaking us; we look pretty similar. We're actually twins. That's where that came from.

On a more serious note, page 34, the \$4.4 million.

Mr. Finnerty: Mr. Lindsay, thank you for the question. The \$4.4 million was allocated in this way: \$1.7 million dollars went to a tobacco marketing campaign for youth that year, \$400,000 went to an expansion of problem gambling services, \$400,000 opened the opiate-dependency clinic in Calgary for methadone treatment, \$300,000 was spent on various provincial initiatives, and \$1.6 million represents our annual manpower increases.

Mr. Lindsay: Thank you.

My supplemental, then, is on the same page. Why did expenditures for residential treatment services increase by approximately \$1.2 million? If you could just give an explanation on that expenditure as well.

Mr. Finnerty: Again, that was mainly due to manpower and price/volume increases that we incur every year. In particular, Aventa, which is an addictions treatment centre in Calgary for women, had undergone an expansion in their facility, and we provided them with an additional \$300,000 in their operating grant in Calgary. Another \$200,000 went to other funded agencies that Mr. Rodney alluded to in his presentation.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase, please, followed by Reverend Abbott.

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much. In the year 2004-2005 the government invested through its heritage trust fund in tobacco sales. It took in approximately \$650 million in tobacco taxes and, I would think, probably a similar amount from alcohol. Add to it the billions of dollars that result from gaming revenues. It seems that the government itself has an addiction to the so-called sins. Do you have a sense, Mr. Rodney, as to what percentage of that total revenue is actually dedicated to prevention? In other words, what percentage does AADAC receive of the overall revenue taken in from alcohol, gambling, smoking, and so on?

Mr. Rodney: I certainly appreciate where you're coming from on this, sir. The number is 3 per cent.

Mr. Chase: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Another percentage question, dealing with the end result – institutionalized jails, hospitals – the end run. As soon as we put people into institutions, the cost goes up. I notice that 67 per cent of the 2004-2005 budget was dealing with treatment, and only 10 per cent was put into prevention. In other words, the problem is out there. To what extent in the 2004-2005 year has AADAC moved towards reversing the trend; in other words, putting more money up front into prevention as opposed to dealing with the after-effects?

10:40

Mr. Rodney: This is a really good question, and it's a question that addiction services, agencies, and governments around the world are facing. In all honesty, you'll find hon. members and their constituents suggesting that we should spend no money on prevention and information, that it should be all on treatment. We also have those who go to exactly the other end of the spectrum and say that it should only be on prevention and information. I understand that it's a fine balance. We're trying to treat those who obviously need the help, but we want to get them before they ever need that. So I would say that the percentage of prevention/information/treatment is constantly re-evaluated.

As you might know, between '04-05 and now we've had rather significant increases, and that's going across the board for all prevention and information and treatment services. If you're seeing television and you're listening to the radio, newspapers, et cetera, there's a lot out there, but if you don't see that, go to the schools. We're working more and more at every level, from trustees down to teachers and kids, more and more every day.

Mr. Chase: I just want to throw in a compliment. The PARTY program at the grade 9 level is a highly successful program, and it's those types of programs in prevention that I would like to see increased and aimed at youth.

Mr. Rodney: Sure, and I'll tell you that there are so many programs coming from the grassroots level. I don't know if you folks are aware, but it was back in October when we launched the Alberta drug strategy. It was after the Canada drug strategy had been launched and before one gentleman from the east coast had presented what he'd been doing at the local level. I am so proud to say that more than 50 Albertan communities are doing their own grassroots approach, that are hand in glove with what we're doing as well. We can't do it by ourselves. We need the PARTY program, other agencies, other funded programs, other programs that are funded by communities to work together because these programs and these problems are huge. They're life and death for a lot of people.

The Chair: Thank you.

Reverend Abbott, please, followed by Ms Blakeman.

Rev. Abbott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Dave, for a great presentation and a great overview. My questions are coming from pages 11 through 14, where you have the overview of the AADAC operations. It includes the number of beds and mats that are available for treatment. I think you mention in your report that there were 930. I just did a quick calculation on the calculator here, and I only got 846, so I'm wondering where the rest of those are. That's not my main question though.

My main question is around the proportion. Did you say that it was about 3 per cent of the population that were, you know, either problem drinkers or had problems with drugs? If you did, that's about 96,000 people, and for those 96,000 we have 930 beds. I'm just wondering if AADAC feels that that's sufficient.

Mr. Rodney: You are very close: 933 beds. I wonder if the calculation you had may have excluded funded agencies, which aren't AADAC agencies but are funded by AADAC. You look at different percentages, and it's around 5 per cent, 5.2 per cent that are problem gamblers. You add it all up, and does it look like everybody who has a problem is getting treatment? Absolutely not.

There are two sides to that coin. All that we all need to do is look around in our communities, and we see people that don't want help. They haven't hit rock bottom, they won't admit they have a problem, and they're not coming in. That's where we need to be good friends and neighbours and encourage them. If we have better access to beds, that would help, too, because now we do have backlogs, and we will lose people. It's kind of like saying to you: "Okay. You've got a broken leg. Come back in a week or three." Not the most healthy situation. So a lot of people are attended to. There are some that we're missing, and we know that. In any system there are going to be cracks, but we're doing our best to plug them, that's for sure.

Rev. Abbott: Thank you. I guess that's getting to the nub of my question, and that is: how do we compare with other provinces as far as the problem drinkers and drug addicts to treatment bed ratios? The reason I'm asking this question is that if we're behind, I guess that's good for our government to know that, so we can address that issue, hopefully, in the future.

Mr. Rodney: Sure. What I can tell you is that we can get you exact statistics in written form later if you care to, but I know that we're right in the middle of the pack. I'll ask our CEO, Murray Finnerty, if he cares to make further comment at this point.

Mr. Finnerty: Well, I think, Reverend Abbott, that in terms of trends in North America probably Alberta has one of the best funded addiction agencies in North America. In '04-05 at \$67 million that's roughly \$30 per capita, which is way above the average across Canada, and in many jurisdictions in the U.S. it's \$1 or \$2. So we're extremely well funded. Now, do we have enough? You never have enough. You pointed out correctly: 900 treatment beds for 3 million people. It's way above everybody else. I know we're talking about '04-05, but we've added 68 specific residential youth treatment beds in the last two years in terms of an extra \$20 million in funding that was provided by the Legislature, and that's not enough. It's a fight. It's a constant fight.

Mr. Rodney: Just to add to that, when we've had the opportunity to meet our colleagues from across the country and the States and even around the world, people are asking us how we do what we do. I've

seen presentations on programs that folks in Europe are hoping to do maybe one day, for instance, that we've been doing for years. So great things are happening, but to be honest these are almost bottomless pits, I have to say. Perhaps the good news is that the dollars we're talking about here have been multiplied by close to one and a half since then. So I do believe the government is responding.

Rev. Abbott: Good. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Blakeman, please, followed by George Rogers.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much. I'm interested in the performance measurement around prevention, particularly smoking, because there is a disparity in numbers according to what I've looked at. Now, evidently the percentage that you're listing of young smokers 12 to 19 having dropped to I think you're claiming 14 per cent is taken from StatsCan. But when I look at the Canadian Cancer Society, they are listing higher, and in particular Action on Smoking and Health, which is local, is listing 19 per cent of Alberta teens between the ages of 15 and 19 years are current smokers. How do you deal with the differences in numbers? You must have run into this before. How are you working with that?

Mr. Rodney: Sure. In fact, for the benefit of the other members, you're referring to what page, Ms Blakeman?

Ms Blakeman: Well, 19 or 25. There's a summary at the bottom of page 25.

Mr. Rodney: Right. Gotcha. It's difficult to get really good information, but there are some sources, and sometimes they're slightly off. That's what we've found. Whether it's, as you've mentioned, local, provincial, or national.

Bill's got some stats. Do you care to share?

Mr. Bell: I was just going to speak to the point that there's a Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey, that AADAC relies on heavily as its data source.

Mr. Rodney: I don't know if that answers your question directly though. I wonder if you were trying to make a point that we should hear.

Ms Blakeman: Well, according to your own report on page 28 it says that you used the StatsCan Canadian Community Health Survey to come up with that percentage.

Mr. Rodney: Right.

Ms Blakeman: Didn't you just give me something different?

Mr. Finnerty: Well, perhaps I could comment, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Yes, please.

Mr. Finnerty: Statistics are damn statistics, as we all know. The Canadian health survey every two years is the reliable instrument that most of us use across the country in order to compare between jurisdictions. That's what you'll find in here. Now, you'll find ASH and the Cancer Board and the Lung Association using other local surveys that they may have just done, but we rely on the every-two-year survey that gives us health data on a number of things, includ-

ing smoking, as the only reliable instrument over time, so what you'll find in here consistently is the CCHS data.

10:50

Mr. Rodney: Those are bigger, wider surveys, that are more comprehensive over time. In fact, it's caused us a few problems, I can share with you. Since it is only every two years, if we make a target in the middle year – this has happened in the past, where we had a certain target that was actually higher than where the smoking rate was already at. Do you understand the problem? All we did was readjust, and we brought it down, and that was good news, that we actually beat our target.

Yeah. Statistics. We can make them dance either way. We just want less teen smoking, for sure.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Well, as a supplementary then.

The Chair: That was already two questions, but you can proceed.

Ms Blakeman: Well, that was a clarification on something that sounded like different information.

What happened in this year that we in the future from this year did not get an inflationary increase in the tobacco reduction strategy? What decisions were made in this year that you were happy enough with the funding you were getting that we didn't see an increase in funding down the road? Is it because you felt that your statistics were good enough?

Mr. Finnerty: We felt that we were making good progress. When we made our budget submission, we made the request at the same level that we'd had the year before, which we felt was sufficient to fund the strategy.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Rogers, please.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Rodney, I thank you and your team for a very enlightening report. Pages 15 to 17 of your annual report describe AADAC's core business goals, achievements, and outcomes. I'm just wondering if you could give us a bit of a breakdown on how much AADAC spends on each of its core businesses?

Mr. Rodney: Page 15. We spend about a third of the money on information and treatment. You want exact numbers, I presume. Karen, do you care to comment?

Ms Graham: Sure. Information services, 21.8 per cent; prevention services, 10.1; and the remaining on treatment.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you. I'm just wondering if you could share with us your success. How successful is AADAC in meeting its business goals related to each program area?

Mr. Rodney: We want to give you some stats. I actually anticipated this. I knew we'd need the answers in front of us in terms of numbers. When it comes to information, 88 per cent of Albertans knew about AADAC – these are performance measures that were researched – and 99 per cent of women were aware that using alcohol during pregnancy could lead to lifelong disabilities in a child. On the prevention side of things prevalence of smoking, that we've talked about, and regular heavy drinking among Albertans has declined since 2001. These prevention performance targets continue to remain really important for us at AADAC.

Treatment is perhaps a little easier to measure, obviously, than information or prevention: 95 per cent of clients were satisfied or very satisfied with services received, and 92 per cent of treatment clients reported that they were abstinent or they improved following treatment. They reported less alcohol use, less drug use, less gambling, and improvements in areas such as employment and health and family relationships.

So I think you and I know that we want hard stats. We all do. We want to know what our return on investment is. In certain areas it's pretty obvious – energy is one area – but in some places it's a little softer. I would be happy to admit that it's hard to measure a little bit of the information and prevention, but hopefully the treatment stats, you know, will be indicative of the successes that are happening.

But I won't sit here and pretend that it's all success stories. The rate of recidivism is extremely high. People come back, and they come back, and they come back. Before I came to this area, I thought: well, you hit them once, and we should be done. That's just not the way that it works. It's human nature. Some people would say that it's an incredible success that they came in the first place. Some people would say that it's an incredible success that they came back. It might be the biggest success when the third time's a charm, and they lick the problem, and they're onto healthy, happy relationships at home and at work and contributing to a positive economy instead of breaking open the neighbourhood store for their crack cocaine problem.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bonko, followed by Ray Danyluk, please.

Mr. Bonko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate your admittance that, you know, this isn't always success because for a while there it seemed like we were one big love-in here.

You talked about hard stats and return on investment. How do you actually measure the success from year to year when you're trying to measure different levels, whether it be in gambling or drinking or tobacco? How do we measure the success with the program?

Mr. Rodney: Well, we have the performance targets that you see here. As you've mentioned, yeah, AADAC could be a bit of a love-in because there are great stories, but there are terrible stories. There's good news, but it's because of the bad news. As an example of the continual re-evaluation, we have a retreat coming up in September. Performance measures and targets are front and centre. We need more, harder performance measures, and we're going to go get them. To answer your question directly, we have performance measures that are compared every year. We compare them with other groups that have them, because a lot of folks don't.

Do you care to comment more on that?

Mr. Finnerty: The only comment I'd make is that as all of you know, in the health services or social services area it's extremely difficult to do performance measuring. I think AADAC has tried to come up with outcome measures where you're actually trying to make a difference, i.e. the smoking rate or the drinking rate, rather than purely relying on volume dollars spent et cetera.

I think, as Mr. Rodney has stated a number of times, we can't solve these problems ourselves. AADAC is only the primary delivery agency. We need the schools and the police and the community and everyone else. I guess the question that we debate with our friends from the Auditor General all the time is: how much can we alone affect these outcomes?

So performance measuring is really tough in this business, but we certainly try to have hard data and hard performance measures where we can.

Mr. Bonko: Okay. My second question was: why is there not a percentage of sales that goes directly from either gambling, smoking, or drinking, in fact, into the cessation programs? As you said, you're already underfunded. This way it would be that the ones that are taking it are paying for it as well.

Mr. Rodney: That's a good question for our colleagues in the House.

Mr. Finnerty: That's a debate for the Legislature or Treasury Board. Dedicated revenue is what you're talking about. Not very many jurisdictions do that. Some do. Ontario has announced some dedicated revenue for gambling; that is, a percentage of their tax that they receive.

I guess I don't accept the statement that we're underfunded. We're one of the best funded agencies. Always we could have more, but I would rely on the guidance from the House in terms of how much money we should get.

Mr. Rodney: It's a healthy debate that I would like to see a lot more of in the Legislature. As a friend south of the border said in a rather aggravated way one time: bring it on. I mean that in an encouraging way. Let's do what's best to keep Albertans healthy and safe and happy. Whether it's tied funds or lump sums, I know that when these people get their hands on it, it's quickly out the door and helping people, and that's what we want to do. So thanks for bringing up that point, and feel free to bring it up across the street the next time we meet.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Danyluk, please, followed by David Eggen.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much. I'd like to compliment you on the report as well. I want to refer you to page 34 of your report. As I understand it, there was an over 10 per cent increase in your budgets. Could you kind of enlighten me on what direction or what specifics that extra increase went towards?

Mr. Rodney: I think that Mr. Finnerty referred to some points earlier about the 12 per cent increase. I'm going to allude to a different part because, Murray, you did this section right here, didn't you?

Mr. Finnerty: Yes.

Mr. Rodney: Okay. In addition to what he had mentioned, \$3 million went to fund the social responsibility ministerial request that included Red Deer community shelter and detox services, and two and a half million dollars went to staffing and other price/volume increases and expansion at Aventa, that we've referred to earlier. So those are the places where that over 12 per cent went.

11:00

Mr. Danyluk: Okay. Thank you.

Secondly, I notice in the Department of Health and Wellness an increase of about \$1.5 million over budget.

Mr. Rodney: Yes. It was above the budget originally.

Mr. Danyluk: Could you tell me what happened there?

Mr. Rodney: Yes. There were installments of \$1 million and \$500,000 for two different reasons. Actually, we anticipated this. Murray, you've got the exact answer right there, don't you?

Mr. Finnerty: We received additional funding, \$500,000, from Health and Wellness to increase our funding to our enhanced services for women program. The second was a federal grant that came for a campaign on high risk taking by youth, a \$1 million grant. So they were after-the-budget grants that came to us.

Mr. Danyluk: So what happened, just for clarity, is that it came from the feds.

Mr. Finnerty: That's right. It was passed from Alberta Health to us.

Mr. Rodney: Yeah. One, the \$1.5 million, was directly from the feds through the provincial government.

A second question?

Mr. Danyluk: I did the two, but if you want me to proceed, yes, I will. You're going to give me more?

The Chair: Well, you should be careful, Mr. Danyluk, because you will be there this afternoon.

Mr. Danyluk: I understand that. That's why I'm so well behaved today.

The Chair: I'll be glad to put you on the list again.

Mr. Danyluk: That's what I'm after.

The Chair: David Eggen, please, followed by Mr. Johnston.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you. The question is in regard to treatment beds and problem gambling. My understanding is that a large proportion of total gambling revenue in fact comes from a relatively small population of problem gamblers. So I'm just curious to know why, unless I'm seeing this wrong, there are only two dedicated treatment beds to focus on problem gambling. Don't you think it would warrant more targeted monies?

Mr. Rodney: Good question. Do I think it should warrant more?

Mr. Eggen: No, no. I'm just wondering: what's the logic behind that?

Mr. Rodney: Well, is that an accurate number, Murray? We've visited, for instance, all over the province when we go and do our board meetings. Grande Prairie is a great example of a place that specializes, even with the business side of things. Often people present with one problem, and gambling is part of that. So I think that the number two would definitely be misleading.

Bill, did you want to say something about that actually?

Mr. Bell: Just a comment that NAC has four designated beds. There was a program that came into place in '04-05. A number of our other funded agencies – the Walter "Slim" Thorpe in Lloydminster would be an example – have significant expertise in serving clients who have gambling problems, but they are not designated beds.

They're not designated for gambling. It's a designated program but not designated beds.

Mr. Rodney: So there is much more treatment than you would see with that number.

One thing I will tell you, hon. member, is that gambling is an addiction that people do not come forward with that much. Let's face it; it's not always life and death. You're not necessarily losing your house or your spouse or your business. But when it finally does get to that point, that's when we see a lot of these people. We wish we'd see them earlier, to be honest. I know it's this fiscal year, but as you know, we've got the responsible centres both in Calgary and Edmonton as a pilot program right inside the casinos, and I expect that that's going to expand. After that, we're going to see more people coming forward, and that's when we'll have more beds dedicated directly.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. Thank you.

Just in supplement to that, I'm wondering if you collect statistics that would show the correlation between the increase in problem gambling and the expansion of gambling facilities available in the province. Have you been studying that over an extended period of time?

Mr. Rodney: We don't have stats on that. I would expect that Alberta Gaming and Liquor are looking at that, and we're doing that in partnership. We do have an upcoming, joint meeting with them again this coming year, so I'd be happy to ask that question on your behalf.

Mr. Eggen: Yeah. If you wouldn't mind, I would appreciate that. Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Johnston, please, followed by Mr. Chase.

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 34 of the annual report, net operating results, in 2004 it's \$471,000, and in 2005 it's \$809,000. What's the reason for the increase?

Mr. Rodney: I see two people on my left eager to answer. Is it going to be Karen first?

Ms Graham: Sure.

Mr. Rodney: Okay. Great.

Ms Graham: It's not very complicated. It wasn't a huge surplus, but basically we had savings due to higher than anticipated manpower vacancies.

Mr. Rodney: So for those who missed that, if you're looking on page 34, middle column, at the very bottom you'll see that it's actually a surplus, which I guess is a good thing. It's a larger surplus than the year before, and it was due to staffing vacancies. We actually would want more people to give that money to, and we're actually very successful at finding people for jobs even though it's pretty difficult in some of the far-flung places that have a higher cost of living. So that's actually a surplus.

If you look in the notes on the pages following, you'll see exactly how that works. This is, as you can see, quite a broad brush stroke, but it does add up.

Mr. Johnston: I believe that your board of directors is on page 7. Other than Mr. Webber, is that where we are today?

Mr. Rodney: Is that page 7?

Mr. Johnston: Page 7, I believe.

Mr. Rodney: Let's just take a quick look. That's where we are right now, although two of the people on this list will have their terms finishing. In fact, they are three-year terms. They can be renewed once, and that's what's happened with two of the people on here. They are done. This last meeting, that we had last week in High Prairie, was their last one. We will have not two but three new board members starting in September, and we're awaiting final approval of who those people are. Can I mention that one is a youth? I can't mention that. I can't mention any names.

You will be pleased to know, of course, that if you take a quick glance here, you see that these people are from across the province. If we could tell you anything about their backgrounds – we can't be specific, but pick a walk of life and we have really great representation. We have an independent board that helps select these people every time. It's quite a grueling sort of screening, and the response of people, the number of people hoping to become board members with AADAC – I'm not going to say that it has skyrocketed, but it's increased incredibly over the years. It used to be tough to find people. Now we've got lots to choose from, and that's a good thing.

Mr. Johnston: Okay. Thank you. I just want to mention Mr. Ed Johnston. Although that's my son's name, I don't know this person in any way.

Mr. Rodney: From Water Valley.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Rodney, before we proceed to Mr. Chase, could you clarify for the chair, please? The people who were appointed to the commission, that is done through order in council, correct?

Mr. Rodney: That's correct. Yeah. It's a public nomination process, actually, that's really well publicized. I would like to actually, if I may, thank colleagues around the table and beyond who helped out in suggesting names. I never saw them because it went to a third party, but I know that they did have some people in mind that they thought could help.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase, followed by Reverend Abbot, please.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. The segment of Alberta's population that is showing the greatest increase is First Nations, yet First Nations are disproportionately represented when it comes to addictions, unemployment, incarceration. It isn't the government's role to be patriarchal or patronizing, but could you give me a little bit of background in terms of First Nations representation on AADAC committees or special programs that are working in partnership with First Nations to address the difficulties?

Mr. Rodney: A good and a fair question. I'll approach it in at least a couple of ways. First of all, I will mention that, of course, things happen on various different levels: community levels, provincial, and beyond. Even as late as last week, in touring facilities up in High Prairie, we saw AADAC agencies that were designated for First Nations, aboriginals, Métis, and the general public. Some were community, some were AADAC, and some were federal. So if

people say, “Well, you’re not,” often it’s because the feds are doing something or Health Canada is doing something or the community organization, wherever it happens to be, is doing something.

I don’t know, Chair, if I’m allowed to make reference to a board member. Can I mention that we have at least one person with First Nations blood – right? – and many who work with First Nations groups as well? When it comes to targeted programs, I wonder if we should have some of the AADAC staff give you some specifics if we can.

11:10

Mr. Finnerty: Thank you very much. This is a very important question. There’s no question that up to 50 per cent of our clientele are of aboriginal background. They’re disproportionately represented in our system totally. We have a number of initiatives under way. It doesn’t maybe sound high enough, but our target is to have 10 per cent of our staff that have aboriginal background. The difficulty, of course, is finding people that have the necessary university training, et cetera. We’ve been fairly successful. We also fund seven aboriginal agencies, funded agencies, that directly deliver off-reserve. Of course, we run into the federal jurisdictional problem on-reserve. We have regular meetings with the federal folks, who have eight treatment centres on-reserve in Alberta, to try to co-ordinate our services.

One of the difficulties is that folks don’t like to go to their home reserve, in this case, to get treatment because auntie is probably working at the centre. Just like in the normal population, folks from Grande Prairie will probably come to Edmonton for treatment rather than the other way around. So you have that difficulty of folks wanting to move around.

But we’re very concerned about it. One of the initiatives that we would hope to move forward with is to have more mobile workers for street kids. In downtown Edmonton, downtown Calgary it’s a huge problem. A lot of those kids are native. So we’re certainly extremely aware and have a number of strategies that we’re trying to implement to address it. It’s a serious concern.

Mr. Rodney: Thanks for that, Murray.

A lot of things are happening on the ground, and we’ve been encouraged by what we’ve seen. A lot of things are happening at the upper levels. I’m not at liberty to say right now, but just put it this way: this chair, through our fine minister, is really hoping to work closer with the federal counterparts as well. We’ve made actions towards that, and we’re anxiously waiting for that opportunity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. My supplemental, if you can approach it, may be just a yes or no answer. Given the catch-22 circumstance of casinos, a number of reserves are looking for casino approval as a way of getting out of poverty, as a way of addressing concerns, yet those same casinos provide further addiction, only closer. Does AADAC have any type of advisory role when it comes to the Ministry of Gaming’s approval of casinos? Do you within your department have a counselling or advisory role with regard to gaming and casino approvals on reserves?

Mr. Rodney: In a one-word answer, no. What we do have is a constant dialogue between AADAC and AGLC workers, and the AGLC/AADAC boards meet. But when it comes to licensing, that’s beyond our jurisdiction. You know, hon. member, I’m as frustrated as you are. We want Albertans to be healthy and happy. You’re right that it’s a catch-22 situation, though, because Albertans want to enjoy freedoms, and they want to have choice. Sometimes, though, they need to be protected from themselves. I believe that

our society as a whole is still searching for that balance between freedom and health.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Reverend Abbott, please, followed by Ms Blakeman.

Rev. Abbott: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Picking right up on that theme, Mr. Rodney, and going back to page 16 in your annual report – and I know this was touched on somewhat by Mr. Rogers – I guess I want to dig a little bit deeper on your awareness campaign. I see that it’s holding steady over the past several years at about 88 or 89 per cent. In fact, between ’03 and ’04 and then ’04 and ’05 it seems like 1 per cent forgot about what AADAC was. I don’t know how they did that. Let me say before I get into that one that I’m very impressed with the number below that, the 99 per cent of women who are aware that alcohol during pregnancy can cause birth defects. That’s a very, very important statistic, and I’m glad to see that it’s so high. I wish it was 100 per cent.

Getting back to the first one, the 88 per cent, I’m just guessing – and you shouldn’t do that – that probably the 12 per cent that don’t know about it are maybe the ones who need to hear about it the most. So I’m wondering what you do on the street to get your message out there. Like, are you in the downtown, you know, places like the Bissell Centre and places like Hope Mission? Do you have your ads up there? Are the people right down on the street level aware of where they can get help?

Mr. Rodney: A very good question. We’re not everywhere. I guess it would gobble up too much of the provincial budget if we were. A lot of things are happening. Maybe it will be lunchtime conversation, but I’ll tell you some experiences that have happened to me when I was at a public event and people had no idea that I was the chair of AADAC, the interplay between people, and I’ll just make an allusion to it. It was at a sporting event, and a gentleman had appeared with beers and was passing them down the row. The gentleman beside him said: “You’ve had enough, pal. Take a look. Go get some help.” Right on field level: 1-866-33AADAC. They had a whole conversation about it.

When you see the Oilers back here on – what is it? – Saturday night, take a look near the centre line. You’ll see Alberta Quits on the boards there. Of course, that’s a certain segment of the population, and someone’s saying that we’ve got to hit the street kids. There are posters – you go into washrooms; you look in newspapers – in a number of places.

Do you care to comment more about mobile offices or teams? Where that’s at and where we hope it to go.

Mr. Finnerty: Thanks, Mr. Rodney. It’s probably not relevant to this fiscal year, but one of the major issues that’s coming forward on the Crystal Meth Task Force – and the Premier’s Crystal Meth Task Force is going to report here shortly – is the need to be on the street where these kids are sleeping under bridges. Now, it’s largely a child welfare issue, where they don’t have the social supports, rather than an addictions issue. However, it’s a major, major concern, Reverend Abbott.

I’d like to also comment, if I may, Mr. Chairman, that we’re happy with the 99 per cent awareness of the Alberta population not to drink when pregnant. But do you know what the doctor-reported statistics are? Eleven per cent of females still drink when they’re pregnant even though our surveys show that virtually everybody knows that you shouldn’t. So, you know, it’s really tough.

Mr. Rodney: So that's a hole that we're trying desperately to fill, but let's face it: that personal choice is invading.

I have a few more stats directly related to the first question, Mr. Chair. When it comes to who is not getting the message, age categories, almost 15 per cent are 18 to 24. Maybe they're distracted with other things. Twenty-seven and a half per cent are 25 to 34. Are they too busy working or not working? I don't know. Twenty per cent are 35 to 44. And when it comes to that percentage that isn't aware of AADAC, just over half are male, 52.4 per cent. We'll keep trying.

Rev. Abbott: Interesting.

A follow-up then. Touching on what Mr. Finnerty said about drinking while expecting, I see that your target is 90 per cent, and of course you've far exceeded that. I'm wondering if there are any plans within AADAC to raise that to 100 per cent. The reason I ask that is because, you know, even one case of FASD costs millions of dollars to the taxpayer, so this would be a place, I think, of key investment opportunity.

Mr. Rodney: We're moving that to 99 per cent this year, and I hope 100 isn't far off. You're completely right. We know all about that. I've actually been very pleased to see how other provinces and states are coming to Alberta to find out what we're doing not only with FASD but also preventing it, and I have to give kudos to Alberta Health and Wellness and the hon. Mrs. Forsyth and her department. One thing that hasn't been raised a whole lot is that the partnerships between ministries and between levels of government have been very gratifying. I think we'd feel very alone if it wasn't there.

Rev. Abbott: Excellent. Thank you.

The Chair: Ms Blakeman, followed by Ray Prins, please.

11:20

Ms Blakeman: Thank you. Referencing the bottom of page 9 around prevention and avoiding harm and reducing risk factors for substance abuse, I'm wondering if you can describe and give details on this commitment to harm reduction strategies specific to drugs.

Mr. Rodney: I'd like to defer to a specialist in the field here because she has way more examples to share than I do.

Ms Davis: Just in terms of harm reduction one of the initiatives that we have under way that we're very pleased with is the Alberta drug strategy, and harm reduction is one of the core strategies within that umbrella. That's created an opportunity to increase co-ordination and collaboration both at the provincial and the local levels.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Could someone explain why there's been a refusal to offer harm reduction strategies in correctional facilities in Alberta around needle usage, for example?

Mr. Finnerty: If they're provincial institutions, we are working with the Solicitor General. It is their determination on what harm reduction policies they would implement in jails that would be compatible with their security concerns. As far as AADAC is concerned, if it is needle exchange, that's an HIV health-related issue. I'm not trying to pass the buck, but it's not an addiction issue. So we would look to Health and the Solicitor General to make the determination on whether they should have a needle exchange. As you well know, there's a great deal of debate around that.

Ms Blakeman: That's why I'm asking the question.

Mr. Finnerty: We at AADAC officially endorse harm reduction. You can't absolutely quit cold all the time. Some folks – thank God – can, but others need a graduated methodology. Harm reduction goes all the way from safe grads to needle exchanges to all kinds of things to reduce the harm to someone while they're trying to recover or get off something.

Mr. Rodney: Just to follow that up, I think it's even in the name AADAC. The last A stands for abuse. A hundred per cent, nobody ever addicted to anything, is what we're shooting for, but we do know that we live in the real world, and sometimes before abstinence comes harm reduction. It's a sad reality.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Prins, please, followed by Bill Bonko.

Mr. Prins: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to relay my congratulations to you, Mr. Rodney, for an excellent report and the excellent job that you with your staff have done here. I note when I'm looking at your report that the amount of money that AADAC spends is actually more than many of the ministries that we have in this government, so this a pretty large organization, and they do a lot of work.

I'm turning to page 19. There is at the bottom of the page a bit of a chart talking about the prevalence of regular, heavy drinking among young Albertans. Thirty-one per cent, 31 per cent, and 33 per cent was the target for 2004-2005. Where do you get these numbers, and what evidence can you provide that these numbers are actually accurate? How would you ever get to a number like 34 per cent or 31 per cent? How can you prove that that's accurate?

Mr. Rodney: Good question. The data that you're referring to, Mr. Prins, on page 19 is in relation to the performance measure for prevalence of regular, heavy drinking among young Albertans. It's Statistics Canada, sir, the Canadian Community Health Survey, known as CCHS. They did it in 2000-2001 and in 2003. Now, in 2000-2001 the CCHS included a sample of – get this; I've got the number right here – 14,456 Albertans 12 years and older. In 2003 the sample was 12 years and older, and there were close to 14,000. So the reason that we think they're pretty reliable is that we're talking about many thousands of folks from that age group. It's from that that we make generalizations on the large level. Those aren't the only places that we looked, though. We also looked to more localized groups in the past, and in the future we'll deal with school boards. Partially because of PIPA and other acts I can't release a whole lot of that information, but we use it.

Mr. Prins: Thank you very much. We're talking about regular, heavy drinking, and it's defined as "the consumption of five or more [alcoholic] drinks per occasion, at least once per month." So does that mean that if somebody goes out, say, on a Saturday night or, you know, during the Oilers playoffs here on Whyte Ave – if you go out and have five drinks once, are you then considered a heavy drinker?

Mr. Rodney: In a word, sir, the answer is yes. On that particular occasion you are a heavy drinker according to the definition. We all know what can happen on one night on Whyte Avenue, like last week for instance.

It's a commonly accepted definition around the world, as a matter of fact. It's used in population research across Canada and many

other countries, so we're just trying to be comparable to other jurisdictions in the country and around the world.

Mr. Prins: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bonko, please, followed by Dr. Brown.

Mr. Bonko: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is somewhat based on a needs assessment. Can we be assured that the demand isn't in some way dependent on the supply? That is, we may not know about the demand until there is an outlet in the form of a service centre. How do we know that, in fact, we have sufficient numbers to be able to handle the demand out there based in a community?

Mr. Rodney: You know, we'll see some of that sort of indication on the news sometimes. We learn things from there. I'm not being the least bit facetious.

We deal with one side of the equation, and it is the Solicitor General that deals with the other. Why would we pass the buck? That wouldn't make any sense. We're in this together. But if there was no supply, there would be no demand. So we have to continue to work with the Solicitor General because we need that side of the equation to go down. Our side will go down if their side does too. I know that they're doing everything that they can. Hopefully, with the new federal government clamping down on things, that will help too.

Mr. Bonko: Okay. What ongoing tracking of demand is being done to ensure that every community's needs are being met?

Mr. Rodney: Which one would you point to in that regard?

Mr. Finnerty: You're talking about availability of alcohol?

Mr. Bonko: Or even just the treatment centres in relation to.

Mr. Finnerty: We certainly do regular surveys amongst the 48 locations we're in across the province. We know where there are pressure points. There are a number of communities that have long-standing requests in front of us for expanded services, particularly in detoxes. We're really concerned in a number of areas like Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie with the growth that's going on there although we have a big centre in Grande Prairie.

So we're constantly monitoring the demands and the needs. We have wait-lists all over. Every year we do our darndest to make our presentation through Health and Wellness on what our needs and demands are. We do regular in-house surveys. We also look at all the crime stats that are generated through the court system. We look at hospital admissions across the nine RHAs in terms of where they are recording alcohol or drugs being a prime driver for someone entering the acute health care system.

Mr. Rodney: We get a whole lot of feedback – I can give you a little supplemental answer to that – from our own area offices. You know, they're going out one day a week to the satellite office. They'll tell us, "We need a full-time office," or "We need a full-time employee" because all of a sudden there's an explosion in gambling or alcohol or crystal meth or something else. They'll tell us. When we go to our board meetings, we have open houses every time. Everyone in the community is invited, and there are formal invitations that go out to people.

We just launched – what? – three new offices. Is that right? And that's in response to what people tell us. RHAs come forward. Members of the police force come forward. Members of the educational communities come forward. MLAs have come forward. It's at that point when we have a whole long list that we'll take it to Health and Wellness, and they'll help us out every bit that they can.

So there are, you know, formal statistics, and then there's a whole lot of personal, face-to-face feedback that we receive very regularly.

Mr. Bonko: Well, the one stat that was mentioned for the court incidences – just a clarification, Mr. Chairman. It would maybe be of benefit to all the members if we could have an idea as to what sort of occurrences in court your organization deals with on an ongoing basis to be able to validate your concerns.

Mr. Finnerty: According to federal stats, 56 per cent of the crimes that are committed in Canada are either alcohol or drug related.

Mr. Bonko: And if we shrink it down to Alberta?

Mr. Finnerty: Well, 10 per cent; you know, we're 10 per cent of the population. Over 50 per cent; I would suspect that the police will tell you, you know, that in Alberta it's the same stat.

Mr. Rodney: Yeah. And we've seen gains in that direction as well. We've had the drug court here in Edmonton. There's the pilot project that's coming to Calgary as well. I believe it was you, Mr. Bonko, who earlier mentioned that if we could keep these people out of these places and, you know, getting healthy programs to keep them healthy – I'm not going to say on the street, but in their communities – we'd be way ahead. That's what we're working towards. I hope that these drug courts are so successful that we're going to see them in different centres across the province as well. That doesn't mean I'm looking for more drug addicts to get in trouble and therefore get out of trouble. We want to keep them out of trouble in the first place. But if they're there, we want to divert all that energy into something positive.

11:30

For those who are unfamiliar with the concept, rather than just mandating someone straight to jail, where, as Ms Blakeman has pointed out, there may or may not be services for those people, they are actually under house arrest, for instance. You know, each case is different, but they would be mandated to have treatment to which they are responsible and have to report back. There's some nice love, and there's some tough love. A lot of these folks really need some help in that direction, and I think we're going to see more of that.

Thanks for the question. It's a good question.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Brown: Mr. Finnerty, on page 1 of the AADAC profile for '04-05 it has a statistic regarding youth clients. It says that 62 per cent of the youth clients have completed grade 9. That may or may not be statistically significant, depending on what the demographic of the youth clients is, but it brings to mind, to me, an issue of education as a social determinant of addiction. I wonder whether you could tell me whether AADAC has done any sort of multivariate analysis of factors such as educational attainment in determining addiction or in targeting your prevention programs to specific educational groups or age groups.

Mr. Rodney: Mr. Chair, I'll just interject. I know that the question is directed from Dr. Brown to Mr. Finnerty, but for the benefit of

those around the table, I believe, Dr. Brown, you're referring to the AADAC profile rather than the annual report. I believe each of you received a profile on adult clients, on AADAC-funded agencies and programs, AADAC prevention services, and the last one, at least in front of me, is youth clients. So that's what he's referring to.

Mr. Finnerty: Certainly, Dr. Brown. We have a major school strategy, that we launched with Alberta Education about four years ago now, I think, Barb. Unfortunately, we're finding that we're having to target younger and younger kids all the time. It used to be sort of junior high school, grade 10 kind of level. We're now into upper elementary. A lot of kids are getting engaged in drugs and smoking at age 10, 11, and 12, which is unbelievable.

We have been very successful with the support of Alberta Education in their curriculum resources. We have four regular modules in the school system now, grades 4, 7, 9, and 11, where we have embedded either in CALM, which is their senior high school level course, or in the upper elementary schools education on alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and problem gambling. I think all of us know that the schools are overburdened, but they're absolutely the best target for us. So we are making, I think, major inroads in terms of curriculum resources, and we all know that kids are very influential in terms of what they learn. The environmental movement back in – I was going to say my day – most of our days came about largely because of what happened in the school systems.

The other major demand that we're getting in terms of addressing the youth population is requests from schools to have on-site addiction counsellors in their schools, and we are doing our darndest to accommodate those requests, but we can nowhere near meet the demand. I don't know; there are – what? – 400 schools or something in the province. We just don't have the staff. But in some of the major high schools where we've been able to do some pilot projects, the fact that that counsellor is available on-site has made a huge difference in terms of kids coming forward.

I don't know if I'm particularly answering your question. In terms of educational attainment, addiction affects all walks of life, right from your university-trained lawyers, doctors all the way down although, like everything, the lower the educational attainment level, the more susceptible kids tend to be in terms of getting involved. A good social support system and a good connection to their school are huge beneficial factors in kids not being engaged in drugs.

The Chair: Before we proceed with Dr. Brown's second question, could you clarify for the committee whether any of those initiatives that you discussed include the DARE program at the elementary school level?

Mr. Finnerty: We work with the RCMP and the police forces with their DARE program, but that is funded by the police forces. We do not fund that program, no.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Rodney: In direct answer, also to supplement for the hon. member, some of the stats will come from schools. But as you and I are probably thinking: well, a whole bunch of those kids aren't in schools, and where do we get the stats from there? Well, we get them at AADAC offices. We've had decent success in the past with school boards. As late as last month we met with the Alberta School Boards Association. So on that level there are a number of initiatives that are popping up across the province on behalf of local people. We're not even asking for them, but they're bringing them forward. We're asking them for certain things, and they're working with us on that, but there's more than that just happening.

We are living in an information age where freedom and privacy are being balanced, and it's been a little unfortunate that that's gotten in the way of some of our statistics, sir. I've spoken personally with two of the heads of major school boards, asking why there were problems in us getting statistics from them. I found out the nature of the problem, and what we decided on is that we would include each other on future instruments that would be going forward. So that was a stumbling block. It's now a stepping stone. I hate to be cliché, but it was a problem, and now it's not. We look forward to getting more and better and more varied statistics on the schools. We'll keep tracking the others in the facility.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Brown, please.

Dr. Brown: Yeah. Just to follow up, Mr. Finnerty, you mentioned pilot projects. I'm wondering whether in assessing the efficacy of these prevention measures, particularly in schools and whatnot, would you apply the scientific method in having control groups; for example, applying them on different First Nations reserves or different schools or different parts of the province to test the efficacy of various programs so that you could see over a period of time which programs were most efficacious?

Mr. Finnerty: That's a tough question. No, if you want a simple answer. We don't have the funding to do the research that we should be doing, particularly in the prevention area. Prevention is really difficult to measure in the sense of, as we all know, which message was it that really prevented Sally or Johnny, saying: I don't want to touch that stuff? Was it the scary crystal meth ad? Was it, you know, the black lungs? Was it something the teacher said? As we all know with our own kids, peer group influence is just huge. Was it the peer group they were in? Prevention is a really, really difficult thing. It's the age-old argument. If we built more hockey arenas, we'd have less kids stealing cars. How do you measure that? I don't know. There are long-term results, but the honest answer to you is no. We don't have the funds to do that kind of – it's long-term research, and as you know, it's very expensive with control groups et cetera. We don't do it.

Mr. Rodney: Would you say it's fair, Mr. Finnerty, that even if we had the funds, how would you word the question? So you didn't do drugs, or you didn't have a gambling problem or alcohol or whatever. Is it because of – what? Like, I guess I'm just trying to back this up by saying: how do you measure prevention? You know, the fact is that it was prevented, thank God. It's kind of a backwards sort of thing.

The Chair: Thank you.

David Eggen, please, followed by Mr. Danyluk.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thanks. My question is in regard to pages 18 to 20 of the annual report. This is your stated goal of prevention, and it's one of the core business values of AADAC. So given that and given, as we said before, that there are approximately 92,000 aboriginal people in this province yet they're disproportionately represented in regard to addictions, I'm not seeing on the prevention side any specific, targeted programs for aboriginal people. I know that you expressed some difficulties you have in regard to reserves, but of course our aboriginal population is rapidly urbanizing, so perhaps I could just get some clarification on what prevention programs you are using to target aboriginal addictions.

11:40

Mr. Rodney: We do have a list. We're going to uncover it in a second. We anticipated the question. As I mentioned, just being in High Prairie last week, we visited a number that were either community funded, AADAC funded, AADAC offices, or federal.

Mr. Finnerty: The main avenue that we use, Mr. Eggen, is in the aboriginal-funded agencies who do outreach work with them. I can certainly give you a list, from Action North Recovery Centre in High Level to Sunrise treatment in Calgary to a number of programs here in Edmonton. There are 12 major agencies across the province that we fund that are native based, and they do not only treatment but prevention and counselling services.

You're absolutely correct. The off-reserve population is growing tremendously, and in downtown Calgary, downtown Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge there are large problems of a concentration of folks. You could say that it could perhaps be the aboriginal ancestry, but in large cases it's poor kids that have gravitated to the city with no social support. So are they aboriginal, or are they just kids in need? I mean, you sometimes have to be careful with the labels that you use.

Mr. Eggen: Yes, of course.

Mr. Rodney: And then there's on reserve and off reserve as well.

But just to fill in some of the blanks: High Level, High Prairie, Valleyview, Wabasca, Calling Lake, Peerless Lake, Bonnyville, Fishing Lake, St. Albert, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, Calgary, and some have more than one. We can give you exact details.

Mr. Eggen: Right. But, I guess, just in supplement to that, then, those are facilities that are providing both treatment and prevention, right?

Mr. Finnerty: Yes.

Mr. Eggen: So my question specifically is if they quantify what monies are being dedicated to preventative measures to reduce the rate of addiction for aboriginal people in the province. Perhaps this is an area that we can explore.

Mr. Finnerty: We don't break it down that way. We do have some targeted programs. For instance, we do some Chinese gambling programs, you know, but we don't use ethnic based. Our prevention programs are for the general public of Alberta. Whether a television ad or a poster campaign or outreach workers, we don't differentiate between who should get the message or not.

Mr. Rodney: Part of the problem in coming up with an exact number – and I'm frustrated with that too – is what component of a certain message is prevention, and how much of it is information, and how much is treatment? So in treatment how much prevention are you getting? The numbers do get mixed up together, that's for sure. If you're wondering if every child gets hit whether they're aboriginal or not, they do because they're in the school. Of course, if they're not in the school, that's a different problem.

Mr. Eggen: Sure.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Danyluk, followed by Mr. Chase, please.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My question is maybe more holistic in different areas. You can refer to page 34; you can refer to page 18 or other references, but don't look because the question is just a little bit different. My question is: I have a hard time differentiating between prevention and treatment – that's number one as far as your expenditures – but more precisely I would like to know the differentiation between how much you spend on youth as opposed to how much you spend on adults, 18 being the breaking ground.

Secondly – and I'll ask my supplemental at the same time, so maybe they can co-ordinate it together – in that, can you tell me what the occurrences are or the inquiries between the youth and the adults? Are the hits proportionate with the money spent?

Mr. Rodney: Sure. A lot of the prevention information campaigns that we have, public awareness et cetera, hit different ages. I'll give you one example. When we came up with these, I hate to say it, wildly successful crystal meth ads, we were trying to hit the kids and their parents, and we got them both. You know? A while ago we had the smoking ads. I don't know if any of you saw them in theatres. Wow. Incredible response, and everybody goes. They were kind of geared towards kids, but it got the parents talking about it. The parents, mom and dad, smoke. All of a sudden the kids are saying: well, listen; you don't want us to start, but you're doing it. So all of a sudden they're quitting.

I've got to tell you that it's pretty hard to find out if our hits are actually getting the group. Sometimes we get others. Do we have any exact stats that we could share? Karen, do you have anything?

Mr. Finnerty: I don't think, Ray, we have exact stats, but I will tell you that the most of our system is still spent on adults. Adult drug use, adult alcoholics are still the bulk of our treatment regime, which is largely in Bill's service area, residential treatment. Although we have put substantial money into youth treatment in the last two years, not in this fiscal year, it's still largely adult.

Mr. Rodney: Now, that's treatment. That's not information or prevention, right?

Mr. Finnerty: True.

Mr. Rodney: Because if you're an adult alcoholic, we're helping you out. Before we didn't have as many beds for kids and, as we all know – what is it? – 68 new beds for kids in the last year alone.

Mr. Danyluk: Having the Youth Secretariat of the province and having a Youth Advisory Committee, that comes from throughout the province, the general consensus and theme of those youth that have been previous addicts or previously been involved in prostitution, et cetera, et cetera, is that they feel that you are not addressing the youth and that you are getting behind the eight ball and trying to do more treatment at the adult level than you are prevention at the youth level. How are you going to address that? No, that's a budget question. Sorry. I guess my point is made.

Mr. Rodney: It's a fair observation. As I mentioned, we've got a youth member coming forward to serve on the AADAC board because we need more feedback like that. Yeah, it's the chicken or the egg. If you've never had the egg, then it's never going to hatch. Right? We want to work more on that, but we can't do that at the cost of not helping people who are close to death, for instance. So we're constantly evaluating. I've had a lot of people that think AADAC is only for kids. It's funny how, you know, we have

different feedback on lots of the campaigns. See, there's all the stuff in the schools, right? It's a balance; we'll keep balancing. But thank you for the feedback.

Mr. Danyluk: Some of these kids aren't in the schools.

Mr. Rodney: That's it. That's it.

The Chair: They're on the street.

Mr. Rodney: So we've got to keep working on education. Go ahead, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase: Actually, this question is a little bit of a follow-up. I've noted on the AADAC profile the most common occupations reported, and it goes on to state that almost a quarter of the problems appeared to be in the construction and trades areas. Way back when, when I was working as a labourer in construction, the Alberta Gas Trunk Line and so on, we used to monthly have provincial, government-sponsored safety films, and there was a great degree of sort of provincial regulation. Now we have companies doing drug testing and so on. I'm just wondering: to what extent is AADAC targeting the labour/construction area with an information component? What is your outreach for construction?

Mr. Rodney: You're asking specifically about labourers rather than white collar, for instance?

Mr. Chase: No. I would say, in this particular case, yes: construction, you know, trades.

Mr. Rodney: Okay. I could give you answers on workplace, which would include everything from downtown Edmonton/Calgary to far flung.

Mr. Chase: I'm just thinking that a lot of people die on the job, and potentially it's drug related or might add to the complications of our death rate on construction sites and in labour.

Mr. Rodney: Yeah. Absolutely. We have a lot of outreach from AADAC offices directly with employers, and a lot of employers come forward to us. I'd kind of like to give you examples but respecting people's privacy because you can figure out who it is by the place of employment that I could tell you. There are programs that are set up. A lot of times it comes out of where it should come from, which is the need, where the people come forward and they say: hey, can we have some AADAC help? They'll set up meetings and so on. Sadly, a lot of times the people you want there don't come because you can't force them because of personal rights.

Is there more, though, that anybody here would care to share about labourers and construction and things that are happening at this moment?

Mr. Finnerty: One of the real issues is: how much does a publicly funded, free service agency provide to a for-profit corporation, if I could put it that way? We certainly bend over backwards and have a lot of employers come to us for information and counselling and advice and, in fact, send folks to us in some areas. In Brooks – we were down there about six months ago – they're swamped in the office from referrals out of Lakeside. We are in the process of

looking at what really should be our role. If you look at the big expansion in Fort McMurray, how much of that should the corporations take on with support and advice? A lot of them do, as you know. They have huge safety programs. But it is a growing area. Workplace safety related to alcohol and drugs is a huge, huge issue. How much we should do versus treating kids off the street with our budget is one of the dilemmas we've got. How far do we go in this area?

11:50

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

My second question has to do with the next page, the demographic characteristics of AADAC youth services. It indicates that 80 per cent reported that they were currently students. Now, as a former junior high teacher I referenced the quality of the grade 9 PARTY program. However, it has limitations in that only a slight number of students are eligible to go, and it's sort of a one-shot program. I'm wondering if in terms of grant applications for programs targeting youth while they're still capturable – in other words, they're still within the school – you can give me examples of other programs that target in-school youth that have had some success, like the PARTY program.

Mr. Rodney: Sure. I'm happy to perhaps pass that on to Barb. She's got a lot of experience in the field.

Ms Davis: With the work that we're doing in schools, what we're trying to do is, instead of focusing on individual programs, to work with local school jurisdictions in developing local action plans that are very inclusive. It would include programs like DARE, like the PARTY program, and really looking at what's available locally. We have in this past year developed three pilot programs in conjunction with the Alberta School Trustees' Association and Alberta learning. Those programs have been funded for a one-year period. They'll be evaluated, and in the next year we're looking at an additional three. So the thinking behind that is to work with the local school jurisdictions, develop programs, demonstrate success, and then really support sort of the lessons learned and that type of thing. We're really trying to move away from any one program being expected to do it all because we know that that just isn't the case.

We routinely work with the PARTY program from a prevention perspective. Also, the young clients in our treatment centres have been involved in that program as well both in Calgary and Edmonton.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

Mr. Rodney: Mr. Chase, to former educators, as you and I are and as others are around this table, wouldn't it be great if you had a bang-up job of a travelling show that kept travelling and coming back and so on so that people around the province would think that that's the way to do it? But every region is different, and every kid is different. It's unfair to say: "Okay. The kids in Fort McMurray need that guy who's going to scare the living daylights out of those kids." Maybe it'll work for one. Maybe it's the exact wrong thing for someone else. So that's part of the problem. But part of the answer is: let's work with them so that the local people can determine the kind of people that they want within certain budgets.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

In light of the time, this meeting has lasted two hours, 30 minutes longer than a traditional meeting of the Public Accounts Committee while we're in session. We still have four members that have indicated a wish to ask questions. So if we could get these questions

formally on the record and if AADAC could respond through the committee clerk to all members, we would be very grateful.

Mr. Rogers, please, if you could read your questions into the record.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be happy to do that, and I'll be brief. Just one question. On page 39 of your annual report in the notes to the financial statements – I apologize; having an accounting background, I tend to read notes – it talks about deferred contributions. I'm just wondering if you might expand for us just what makes up these deferred contributions. It mentions that some of them are from the memorial trust and so on. Just a little expansion of what those funds are derived from and how you use them to supplement your programs.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lindsay.

Mr. Lindsay: Thank you, Chair. There's a theatre group out in the Stony Plain-Spruce Grove area called Multi-Youth Productions, and they've put together an excellent production called *Wasted Angels*, which depicts the devastating effect of crystal meth on youth. They've travelled around the province, and of course they have expenses associated with that, and they're always looking for funding for that. So I guess my question is: have you ever funded that initiative? Would you consider funding it?

Thanks.

Mr. Finnerty: Yes, yes, and yes. Children's Services has been funding them, but we would support them. It's excellent.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bonko, did you have a question? No?

Ms Blakeman.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you. My questions are on performance measurements. I'm really frustrated with what you're working with here. I'm specifically looking at why you haven't moved down a layer in looking at different performance measurements, like reducing the number of days lost because someone was suffering from an addiction or looking at lowering the recidivism back into the system. My question is: why is it taking so many years to change and upgrade your performance measurements? The ones that we're seeing in the '04-05 year, you're now telling me, may get changed by next year, which would be '07-08, and we won't have any comparative data to deal with. So that's taking a very long time. How is it a useful management tool when you're always dealing with percentages that are, like, 95 per cent? Do you consider this a useful management tool the way you've got it now?

Mr. Rodney: Did you want these answered or written?

Ms Blakeman: No. Those are written.

Mr. Rodney: Written. Yeah, we do have answers for that, and I feel your pain. We're addressing it. You'll get a written answer. I promise.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Webber, please proceed.

Mr. Webber: Thank you, Chair. First of all, I have to say, Mr. Finnerty, that serving on the board with you for the short period of

time that I did serve on the board was an honour and a pleasure. I think you and your staff are doing a wonderful job. Mr. Rodney, your role as chairman is very impressive. Continue the good work.

The question I have we alluded to earlier. You had mentioned under the statement of operations that there was a surplus of \$809,000. You always want an operating surplus, but you'd mentioned that that was because of staffing vacancies, and that's a concern. I'm curious to know if there's any type of recruitment that you're doing in order to continue with qualified staffing, getting in qualified counsellors, nurses. What are you doing there? What have you been doing? That's about it.

Thank you.

Mr. Rodney: We're happy to provide all those answers.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have one more question. It's from Mr. Prins, please.

Mr. Prins: On page 34 of your report you show a number of sources of revenue: internal government transfers, then fees and investment income. Now, under fees I'm curious as to who pays the fees. If I'm an alcoholic and I've just been booted out of the house and I'm finally coming to you for treatment, do I have to pay a fee? I mean, is that part of the fee? I'd like to know. There's \$1.457 million as revenue from fees. I would like to know where that's from.

Mr. Rodney: We'll give you a full written answer, but the very quick and dirty is: yes, it's \$15 a day, basically room and board. You'd pay, but maybe somebody pays on your behalf. There's more of an answer. We'll get it to you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

That concludes this portion of our meeting today. I would like to note for the members' information that in the consolidated financial statements, page 37, schedule 2, expenses by ministry, if we were to compare the budget of AADAC to those ministries, there are five ministries in the government of Alberta with a smaller budget than AADAC. I think it is very informative for me as a Member of the Legislative Assembly to get a chance to have a look at this budget in detail, and on behalf of all members of the committee I would like to thank Mr. Rodney and the staff of AADAC for their time and attention and patience this morning.

Mr. Rodney: Mr. Chair, we appreciate the opportunity, too, and although you didn't ask the question, the answer is: no, I do not get a minister's salary.

The Chair: Some day you will.

Okay. I would like to remind all members, please, that we will reconvene at 1 o'clock, and we will be meeting with Mr. Danyluk and the Northern Alberta Development Council and the Hon. Pearl Calahasen. We're adjourned till 1 o'clock. We don't need a motion for that.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned from noon to 1:02 p.m.]

The Chair: Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to call this portion of our Public Accounts meeting to order, and I would like to welcome the hon. minister, Pearl Calahasen, and her staff to join members of the committee this afternoon. I think it would be best if we went around and made a quick introduction of those in attendance.

[The following members introduced themselves: Mr. Bonko, Dr. Brown, Mr. Chase, Mr. Johnston, Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Prins, Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Webber]

[The following staff of the Auditor General's office introduced themselves: Ms Banasch, Mr. Dunn, and Mr. Wylie]

[The following departmental support staff introduced themselves: Mr. Dibbelt, Ms Ewart-Johnson, Mr. Harvey, and Mr. Ward]

Mr. Danyluk: My name is Ray Danyluk. I'm the MLA for Lac La Biche-St. Paul and the chair of the Northern Alberta Development Council.

Ms Calahasen: Pearl Calahasen, MLA, Lesser Slave Lake.

Mrs. Dacyshyn: Corinne Dacyshyn, committee clerk.

The Chair: If any of the other staff from the Northern Alberta Development Council or the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development would like to sit at the table, they're quite welcome to join us.

Now we're going to have a 10-minute presentation from Mr. Danyluk. That's what he told me. So, Mr. Danyluk, if you could proceed, please. We all received this handout in advance, and we really appreciate that. I read it, and I thought it was most informative. Thank you.

Mr. Danyluk: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. For a 10-minute presentation I think I only need one breath.

I do want to say to those of you who are here this morning: please do not judge the importance of a committee only by the amount that their budget is. This morning you heard a 60-plus million dollar budget. Our budget is only \$2 million, but we feel equally as important.

Mr. Chase: Are you suggesting that size doesn't matter, then?

Mr. Danyluk: In this particular case.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for the opportunity to talk about the Northern Alberta Development Council. It will be a challenge, of course, to keep it in the time frame allotted today. There is so much to tell about the council. I'm looking forward to the questions that may precipitate from the presentation. I want to also stress that we are going to be talking specifically about the 2004-2005 fiscal year. The following presentation will look in detail at the projects and the costs of managing the Northern Alberta Development Council.

First of all, I would like to ask Dan to give a brief history of how NADC got started. I'd like to say, with your indulgence, Mr. Chair, that we will be going back and forth in our presentation.

Mr. Dibbelt: Thank you, Ray. Just to give you a quick summary of how NADC did get started, it was created as an advisory council to the provincial government in 1963. It was originally a six-member council. Our first chair was MLA Bob Elliott, and he was from the Beaverlodge area. In 1973 the council enlarged through its own act in the Legislature and was charged with the responsibility to

investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta, and to advise the Government . . . [in matters relating to]

- (a) social and economic development,
- (b) development of communities . . . and
- (c) development of government services and programs

to meet the needs of northern Albertans. A major objective of

NADC since 1973 has been to increase the level of public participation in the planning and delivery systems for government services in northern Alberta. We'll talk a little bit more about that during our presentation.

The primary responsibility is to present the northern point of view to the government. We appoint new members to our council following solicited nominations in October through December. This is our 43rd year in existence. We have offices in Peace River and Lac La Biche and one in Edmonton. This year we also started working with Community Futures and with some of the postsecondaries to try and increase our presence in those different communities in a physical manner.

Thanks, Ray.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Dan. There's no doubt that history is great, and it sets a trend for our future and for our future generations. As all of you know, Alberta's future is very bright and exciting and probably felt very much in Alberta's north, and the excitement goes through the Northern Alberta Development Council.

I would like to advise the committee that the NADC has been going through an exciting time of change. The past year and a half have seen a new deputy minister, a new chair, a new executive director. During the same year and a half our province and in particular northern Alberta have also seen major changes.

Northern Alberta has seen a boom in oil sands exploration and with that huge growth a parallel demand for services and infrastructure. Unfortunately, one of the challenges of being a commodity-driven area is that not all Alberta communities benefit from these booms. Thus, the challenge for NADC becomes one of addressing the needs of communities under extreme growth and balancing that with communities struggling for survival. NADC is directly reflective of the north. Just as the north quickly changes, NADC must retain the ability to change to meet the challenges and the opportunities that change in the north brings.

This morning I'd like to give you a little idea about some of the challenges the north has, just to give you a little bit of background, which I thought was a good idea.

Distance and sparsity of population definitely create distinct challenges for northerners. These are just short bullets. Just to talk about health care services, our per capita funding in the three northern health regions is the lowest in the province. Peace Country is \$1,400 per capita; Aspen is \$1,100; Northern Lights is \$1,000. The provincial average is \$1,700. As we look through some of the challenges that we do have in health, some of the injuries that we have are the highest. Some of the usages are the highest.

1:10

The access to education is difficult because of the sparsity. Let's use a youth group coming from a community such as Trout Lake, Peerless Lake, Red Earth, or the Wabasca area. It basically takes them four hours to come to Edmonton for a one-hour field trip and four hours to go back. It turns into a nine-hour field trip.

Transportation access. I'll give you one illustration. The north has seasonal river ferries, and one trip that could take place from Tangent to Peace River can go from 20 minutes to two hours. The impact on industrial development, also the impact on housing, the oil sands pressures, and the anticipated growth in the future. The cost of housing in areas where there is extensive development is major.

When we talk about sparsity and distance, when we only reflect about the schools and the children getting to schools, some of the children, elementary children as well, have to travel an hour and a half on the bus just to get to school.

We've had a lot of successes in the northern area. One that has really made an impact and will continue to make an impact is SuperNet because it not only helps us in education, in advanced

education but very much in health care and in telehealth, whether it be the transfer of information, of X-rays, of being able to utilize the specialities in the larger centres as well as teaching some of our staff in the north or upgrading them.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to switch to the second slide and begin to define what the north is. As you can see, the Northern Alberta Development Council area covers approximately 60 per cent of the Alberta land mass. We have 12 provincial constituencies and 9 per cent of the province's population.

Mr. Dibbelt: The only thing I would add to that, Ray, is the fact that when you look at the boundary that exists there, it has existed since 1963. There have been occasions when people have requested that we look at the boundary. We've been pretty steadfast in that this is where the boundary was established, and we've left it at that location.

Mr. Danyluk: Our population in the north is somewhat different than the rest of the province. We have a young population compared to the rest of Alberta, and we have a larger proportion of aboriginal people in the north. As well, in fact, all of the Métis settlements are located in the northern Alberta area. Almost 70 per cent of our population lives in the rural setting, either small towns or counties or municipal districts. The balance live in three larger centres, being Fort McMurray, Cold Lake, Grande Prairie. Cold Lake has a population of just over 11,000, Grande Prairie has a population of around 45,000, Fort McMurray presently sits around 73,000, and all of those communities are growing very quickly because of the oil extraction.

Mr. Dibbelt: Again, in particular with the Wood Buffalo-Fort McMurray population, that 73,000 actually incorporates the shadow population, which this year they've estimated at approximately 11,000 people. It's one of the few communities that does in fact incorporate its shadow population. This coming year they're anticipating that it'll be probably 16,000 people. The shadow population is the people who are living in camps in the rural areas that aren't permanent residents.

Mr. Danyluk: As you likely all know, our major commodities and the drivers of our economy are in energy, forestry, and agriculture. The north's international commodity exports equal one-third of Alberta's total: \$57,300 per northerner, totalling almost five times that of the rest of the province. Our province benefits greatly from the north's economy, totalling 17 per cent of the province's revenue. The amounts to \$13,400 per northerner are twice the provincial average.

Now, the figures I've quoted you are from 2002 stats. NADC is in the process of updating this information, and we expect these figures to increase. An updated report could be completed probably later this year, probably later this month.

Mr. Dibbelt: The report will actually be completed later this month, and we'll make sure you all get a copy of that. The other point we want to make with this slide is not that we work three or four times harder than the rest of Alberta – we do indeed work harder – but to show that the per capita funding that we receive isn't always reflected in the revenues we contribute to the province.

Mr. Danyluk: With wealth, of course, comes challenges. With rapid growth comes challenges. With the remoteness and scarcity of population also come challenges. In the north we have all three of these factors, and we certainly do have our challenges.

As said, our sparse population is spread across a massive area. This presents challenges for municipalities trying to qualify under the per capita based funding programs; it presents challenges for value-added industry trying to establish itself in the north, where it faces labour shortages and high-cost transportation of goods; and it presents challenges to communities trying to attract new people to the region.

Talking specifically about infrastructure. Resource roads, access to the City Centre Airport in Edmonton, maintaining failing railway infrastructure, and connecting the east to the west via a road are all challenges that face the north. NADC has been involved in an east-west connector, a link between Wood Buffalo and the Peace regions of our province, since 1999. That process is still ongoing. The recent purchase of the Mackenzie rail short line by Canadian National and the need to upgrade and to meet the needs of the north and the creation of a Commuter Air Access Network of Alberta association are all areas of strategic involvement of the NADC.

The sudden increase in growth in northern Alberta has led to a skill shortage as well as an unskilled labour shortage. We have all heard about the Tim Hortons in Little Town, Alberta, paying \$14 per hour for coffee pourers. As I explained earlier in my presentation, these are the realities of the north, but the bigger picture shows a huge threat to our agricultural sector, which traditionally could not compete with forestry and oil and gas. Now they cannot even compete with retail. Our value-added agriculture sector in northern Alberta is not growing, not because we don't grow the best oats – we do – the best honey, the best alfalfa but because we can't afford to pay the wages to attract workers.

Our resource-based economy brings our challenges as well. The uneven growth, or boom/bust cycle, that many of our northern communities are familiar with impacts investors' willingness to invest in our communities. Instability of growth and insecurity about the long-term land prices keep investors at bay.

NADC is in the process of completing a shadow population study. The shadow population study consists of the workers that industry hires and put in camps. These people are not ratepayers of the communities they reside in. They do, however, use the amenities the surrounding communities supply.

To give you an example – and I use one example, but they are throughout the north – Northern Sunrise county is a rural municipality that is on the east banks of the town of Peace River. They have a population of 2,200, and they sit on the third-largest oil sands deposit in the province. In addition to their population, they have about 950 camp beds in their municipality. Shell is planning a major expansion and proposes an additional 2,000-man camp. This would mean that this community would have 2,200 ratepayers but a real population of 5,100. The impact of this number of people has the municipality's infrastructure in great demand. The problem is that the municipality must meet those needs on a fraction of the overall population.

1:20

The study, though not complete, also looks at Wood Buffalo, which has been a leader in this area. The population of Wood Buffalo, 73,000, as said by Dan, includes an 11,000-person shadow population, and that's at this time, which doesn't include the other companies that are coming on stream; using one example, CNRL, which is proposing a 9,000-man workforce to build their facility.

Mr. Dibbelt: What I'd like to add to that is that this does actually affect a number of communities in northern Alberta. High Level was receiving some per capita funding for health care costs based on their shadow population, but the requirement through Municipal Affairs is that they have to re-evaluate on a yearly basis, and the cost of that is immense. Wood Buffalo will only have three full-time

employees, who will track that so that they can qualify for the funding. In order to get the funding, your shadow population has to consist of at least 10 per cent of your ratepayer population. So it is a challenge for a number of the municipalities. We're not likely going to have that population study back until the end of June, but it's already identified that there are a number of municipalities in northern Alberta that would qualify under this funding.

Mr. Danyluk: That's been a backgrounder, and let me get into a little bit of detail. NADC falls within Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, under Minister Pearl Calahasen. I am the chair of NADC, as I have stated before. Our executive director is Dan Dibbelt, who reports to me and to the minister through the deputy minister, Shelley Ewart-Johnson. We have three offices, as was mentioned and shown on the chart, one in Peace River, one in Lac La Biche, and one in Edmonton.

As the slide shows, our mandate is to "investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta, and to advise the Government thereon." I want to say that this mandate was built and presented when NADC first started in 1963 and still holds true. As I move through the presentation, I will accent a few of those highlights.

On the next slide the NADC council members. As you can see, we have a very good cross-section on council throughout northern Alberta. As vacancies become available, we advertise the opening of the vacancy in the region and accept resumés from interested parties. We look at members that have demonstrated a genuine interest and knowledge of northern socioeconomic experience in the community or the municipal organizations and an ability to really assess northern Alberta issues in the holistic sense. Resumés are reviewed by the deputy minister and the executive director, recommendations being brought forward to the minister and myself for approval and brought forward as an order in council.

Mr. Dibbelt: Our newest member is Williard Strebchuk. He's from the Whitecourt area. He came on board in April. The process we went through in finding Williard was that advertisements were placed in newspapers, letters were sent out to mayors and Reeves from throughout the NADC area, and then we received resumés from there. As Ray stated, Shelley Ewart-Johnson and myself review them, and recommendations are then forwarded to the minister and to Ray.

Mr. Danyluk: Going on to the budget, as you can see, as I mentioned before, our budget is relatively small in comparison to others at \$2 million. If you look at the slide, you can see that we try to maintain very close to budget.

The next slide is budget by object. Our largest expense is staffing and operations and supplies and services. We have a total of 15 employees housed within our three offices, and as you can see, Peace River has 12 members; Lac La Biche has two; Edmonton has one. Now – I guess Dan can say it or I can say it – previously there was only one office in Peace River and the suboffice in Edmonton. It was felt that there needed to be some diversity, and that's why the office was incorporated into Lac La Biche.

Mr. Dibbelt: That was in 2001. Presently we are working with Community Futures, as I previously said. The intent is that we are a little bit more visible in the different areas. Community Futures are present in about, I believe, seven communities in northern Alberta. By working with them, we can be more familiar with what they have to offer, and then they are more familiar with what we

have to offer. It also opens opportunities to partner in studies. There was the Watino-Wanham railway study, in which we partnered with the Peace Country Development Corporation, which is the Community Futures out of Peace River. By partnering we were able to come up with enough funds to hire a consultant to look at the re-establishment of that line. So that's another initiative we're working on.

The other thing you should note is the chair remuneration. Ray gets paid way less than the last guy, which is why we're actually doing a little bit better there.

Mr. Danyluk: As I have discussed earlier, the skills levels are a major issue in the north, and the NADC looks to address these issues in a number of ways. We administer a bursary program with Advanced Education, and we'll have some additional information on the next slide. Also, we provide financial and logistic support for youth apprenticeship training through the youth apprenticeship program. We address the industry and municipal needs through research and co-ordination. We have the Woodland Operations Learning Foundation. We have the Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse Advisory Committee. We fund school, college, and community projects through Northern Links, a funding program whose purpose is to encourage students to complete high school and pursue a postsecondary education.

Mr. Dibbelt: Now, just to give you a little bit more information on one of the particular committees, which is the Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse Advisory Committee, it is a committee made up of the postsecondary institutes in northern Alberta. NADC provides administration services and advice to them, and it's to look at what kind of programs are needed for the colleges and universities to address their skilled labour shortage.

Mr. Danyluk: The NADC offers bursary programs with Alberta Advanced Education and the northern student supplement: 480 northern students received a total of \$581,000; in the NADC bursary program 132 students received \$393,000; the bursary partnership program affected 105 students, who received \$110,000 from NADC plus a \$133,000 leveraged for bursary support – we'll talk about the partnership program a little bit later – bursaries for medical students and for pharmacy students. As you can see, our return service bursaries funding totalled \$475,000 from Advanced Education.

Mr. Dibbelt: I should just note as well that the bursaries for medical students and pharmacy students are new initiatives, and they came about to try and address the shortages we have in northern Alberta.

Mr. Danyluk: In 2004 and 2005 NADC and three other northern regional health authorities developed the northern health care practicum placement pilot program to encourage health care students to complete their practicum placements in northern Alberta. I think that was an excellent, excellent program, and 51 students received a total of \$50,000 from NADC to assist in the cost of completing the northern practicum placement. Okay.

Leading learning successes. In '04-'05 the Northern Links – and I think this is a very important initiative that NADC does – funded 149 projects, campus tours, student liaison workshops, and speakers. They partner with schools, colleges, Métis settlements, First Nations, and other community organizations. That's an increase of 44 projects over '03-'04 and impacted over 10,000 students. We have two measures by which we are calling this program a success. The first is that we look at the student responses and how effective they felt this program is. In the first five years we have a rating of 7.5 out of 10 in their responses. Secondly, we look at our request for

funding. This project has seen an increase most recently, with applications exceeding the available funding by \$350,000.

1:30

Mr. Dibbelt: I'd like to make one comment on this. When you're looking at the students giving the project a rating of 7.5 out of 10 – they're given a questionnaire, and we ask them if this helped them to decide to stay in school. The response has been that 7.5 out of 10 have said that, yes, this has encouraged them. The reality we're seeing in the north is that more and more students aren't necessarily staying through until graduation. That's an initiative that NADC is now looking at. How do we address that? Whether it's through the Northern Links program, whether it's through the bursary program, whether it's working with industry. So while we're showing a very positive result from this area, we are keeping track of the fact that we are seeing areas where it's not succeeding, and we need to address that.

The other change that's taken place in the last couple of years has been that we work specifically with school districts now rather than with individual schools and try to work more on a regional basis.

Mr. Danyluk: The NADC in collaboration with Alberta Education supports the youth apprenticeship projects. The pilot was launched in September of 2004 and includes nearly 250 students from five schools in the communities of High Prairie, Lac La Biche, Wabasca-Desmarais. This has been a very successful program in really having youth have the opportunity to have exposure to trades and to different forms of occupation. I think that one of the most important parts of this project is that it has really encouraged kids to come to school. We've seen very much of an increase in that direction.

NADC's strategy for unleashing innovation is to encourage northerners to identify strategic northern priorities, opportunities, and challenges. We do this by researching opportunities and supporting value-added initiatives in forestry, agriculture, and tourism.

Mr. Dibbelt: In most of these cases, when we're working on this, it is with other organizations or groups both in Alberta and also in northern British Columbia. We'll talk a bit about Branding the Peace, which is an initiative that crosses the border.

Mr. Danyluk: I think that Dan just mentioned the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation. We have worked with the Alberta Natural Health Agricultural Network and the Alberta Economic Development regional alliances. Those are some examples.

Mr. Dibbelt: The innovation network, which is the last point on the slide there, was started by the Peace Region Economic Development Alliance through Alberta Economic Development out of Grande Prairie and Peace River offices. The intention was to actually create a stand-alone physical facility that was going to deal with innovation in the north. The positive out of that is that while that didn't happen, they did partner with the Grande Prairie Regional College, and they're looking at incorporating it right into the college.

Mr. Danyluk: Mr. Chair, we are coming close to our complete . . .

The Chair: That's fine. Go ahead.

Mr. Danyluk: The NADC strategy is to partner with other jurisdictions to promote northern opportunities. The NADC has advocated for improved railroad and air transportation networks. We've provided leadership and technical help or support in promoting the

north and its products, and we are participating in tourism product marketing organizations as well.

Mr. Dibbelt: That, specifically, was the Branding the Peace. That initiative has been in the works for about four or five years. NADC has been involved all along. Most recently, the Branding the Peace association has received a large chunk of funding from both the Alberta government through Alberta Agriculture and the British Columbia government. They're in the process of hiring a branding manager. They have some major industries. I believe that Footner Forest Products is the newest one to join the brands association.

Mr. Danyluk: Competing in a global market, you know, NADC has led. We're part of – I guess we can call it successes – the northern Alberta highway strategy. We also have worked on an east-west connector. We've worked on municipal funding and municipal infrastructure. We have individual municipalities that very much look at their individual challenges and concerns. NADC looks at the north in a more holistic sense and supports communities or communities in partnership.

The integral part of the last two developments: NADC provided funding for a study to examine the reopening of the Hythe-Dawson Creek rail line, which would increase access to the port of Prince Rupert, that was to be reopening in 2005, and NADC continues to be an active partner in the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation as well, providing technical, advisory, and financial support.

Also competing in the global market, the NADC has been involved in the creation and marketing of OpportunityNorth, the recruitment resource for northern employers and communities, consisting of CD-ROMs, brochures, cards, websites. You'll find some of these examples in your packages. These have been used extensively by health regions, school divisions, municipalities, and businesses in the attraction of new employees to the region and to northern Alberta. Another example of how this project is used is Alberta Beef North, which has been a very successful program.

Mr. Dibbelt: Alberta Beef North. Just so you know what that is, Alberta Agriculture started that organization about three years ago, and the intent is to keep the beef in Alberta. There is a large number of cattle leaving Alberta, going to Saskatchewan. We're trying to get them into northern Alberta. That's an initiative that goes down to southern Alberta. They've been using the brochures and the information that we provide to them to attract people to the north.

Mr. Danyluk: A small point at the end on our website. We've had 155,000 hits on our OpportunityNorth website in 2005, and we think that that's a success story in itself.

We do know that Alberta is the best place to work, live, and play, but how does NADC convince everyone else that it is? Well, NADC promotes awareness of significant northern development in a number of ways. Every three years we hold a Challenge North conference, the most recent being held in High Level, and we considered that very much a success. We had approximately 270 registrants in a small community. We've never ever held a conference in such a small community. We took over I guess we can call it the drinking establishment. The individual who owns the facility closed down his facility for four days for this conference because it was the biggest place in town, and it very much addressed the needs.

Making Alberta the best place to live, work, and visit. Again, I talked about the northern conference and some of the action plans that we're doing. Going on – I realize I'm down to about three slides here – I spoke earlier about the collaboration with other jurisdictions and the Northwest Territories memorandum of understanding. Many issues are brought to the table during this

meeting, and many of these issues lead to successful collaboration. NADC is also a key player in the Northern Development Ministers Forum, though we have recognized the Focus North promotional packages in the website, the development and retention and training strategies for northern Canada.

1:40

Okay. All performance measures were exceeded. I want to say to you in closing that northern Alberta is a region of change and in many cases rapid change, and the NADC has had to monitor that change and adjust to meet the needs of northern Albertans. Are we doing that? One only needs to look at two performance measures. The first measure is “partner satisfaction with NADC’s contribution in advancing Northern interests.” This is where northern leaders, the NADC project partners, and stakeholders expressed their satisfaction level with NADC, which was done by an independent surveyor. Our target was 80 per cent, and our score came in slightly higher, 82 per cent.

Our second performance measure is the “NADC Bursary return service rate.” Our target was 75 per cent, and our actual return rate is 78 per cent. I think that speaks for itself.

Maybe you could just say a couple of words about that.

Mr. Dibbelt: Well, in regard to the bursary return service rate, what we look at with the bursary program is to ensure that the students who are receiving the bursary – and they can be from anywhere in the province – come back to the north and work there. Our return rate is 78 per cent, which is excellent. In addition to that, the other bursary program we have is in partnership with industry, and in those cases the students return and work for that specific industry. That rate is also included in the 78 per cent.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you, Dan.

I want to say that the booming economy has turned up a notch the level of excitement in northern Alberta, and NADC is up to the challenge. I know that we had a limited budget of only \$2 million, but I believe that NADC has accomplished much with that \$2 million. Each year our challenge becomes greater, you know, but our opportunities are there, and we need to take advantage of them.

Where are we at?

Mr. Dibbelt: We’re done.

Mr. Danyluk: Okay. I want to thank you for listening to us. The last page just gives us a little information on how you can contact us.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that.

Mr. Dunn, do you have any comments at this time, please?

Mr. Dunn: Yes. Similar to this morning, all that was referred to by Mr. Danyluk is subject to our audit as part of the ministry’s financial statements, and it’s embedded and included in the total ministry expenses of 35 and a half million dollars in this fiscal period. The \$2 million is included there.

The performance information is also subject to our specific procedures regarding them, and it’s under goal 3 in the ministry’s annual report. Goal 3 and all of the comments and the analysis around that are on pages 54 to 62 in the ministry’s last year’s annual report. Okay?

That’s all the comments I have, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Dunn.

Before we proceed with the start of questions from Mr. Bonko, would the hon. minister have anything to say at this point?

Ms Calahasen: Actually, just to say that Chairman Danyluk will take care of it all. If there’s anything that is ministry specific, I’ll deal with that.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Bonko, followed by Mr. Rogers, please.

Mr. Bonko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is from page 3 of your annual report, where you took in a significant amount of meetings. They were all “summarized and presented [not only] to the Premier, northern MLAs and Ministers.” Is there any documentation surrounding the significant tour, which specifically outlines what was done, what was achieved?

Mr. Danyluk: Sorry. You’re referring to page 3, right?

Mr. Bonko: Right. Meetings with key northern stakeholders.

Mr. Danyluk: Okay. Well, what happens, if I can tell you first of all, is that what we do have is a continuing rotation of meetings. Is there documentation of what takes place in those meetings? Very much so. We circulate our meetings between different communities throughout northern Alberta, fluctuating of course north and south and east and west, trying to capture the challenges, the issues, the attributes of different communities. At those meetings what we do have is a public portion, which is usually one day of a two-day meeting, where we have presentations being made by municipal councillors, school boards, groups from within that community that want to make a presentation to us. We document all of that information. If we can handle the challenges ourselves, we take it forward. Otherwise, we take it forward to ministers. So, yes, those concerns are all documented.

Mr. Bonko: Okay. The reason why I ask that is because I didn’t receive anything that would have outlined some of the specific outcomes that were achieved. Obviously, to be able to understand my role, to be able to help in northern development and appreciate the causes and concerns and effects of what the economy is doing, it would be appreciated if I could get some of the ongoing minutes of meetings as to the outcomes that have happened up there.

Mr. Danyluk: Okay. We don’t have any problem with that whatsoever. What we tried to do in the time frame that we did have was to look at, let’s say, the challenges on a more holistic level. I mean, I can give you an example where you have individual municipalities that want access to education. You know, there are communities that are 200 kilometres away from high schools. They make that presentation, and we take it to the Minister of Education. So we didn’t isolate specific concerns, but we can provide you with an example if so desired.

What we also do is we have what’s called the *NADC Communiqué*, and that gives a highlight of what takes place at each individual meeting. We distribute it to all municipalities and, really, to anyone who’s on the mailing list or wants to be on the mailing list.

Mr. Bonko: Okay. That would be great. I’d appreciate that information.

Mr. Danyluk: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Rogers, please, followed by Harry Chase.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Danyluk and your team. A very enlightening report. When I look through the annual report and even the government estimates, there's very little breakdown as to the cost of some of the initiatives that NADC is responsible for. Can you shed any light on that?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, I guess what I can tell you is that, as you see, we have a very small budget. We don't have so many individual initiatives that take place; it's ongoing projects. Now, if we took the road strategy study – Dan, can you help me out? – I don't know if we have a breakdown of what an individual project costs.

Mr. Dibbelt: A lot of the projects that we work on, as we spoke about earlier, are in partnership with other organizations; for an example, the Watino rail line. NADC's contribution to that was \$10,000. The majority of the projects we work on are actually labour time. We don't have a large budget as far as giving grants or working on research projects. In the latest study we're working on, our contribution is just \$3,000. However, our contribution in man-time is considerably more.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you.

Maybe just to follow along the same lines, then, in terms of performance measures are there any measures that have been developed that are not in the report? Are some being developed to help you and maybe help enlighten the rest of us as to how you're performing, how your initiatives are making a difference and doing the job in northern Alberta?

Mr. Dibbelt: We do have an annual survey of our clients and partners. Traditionally we get about an 80 per cent rating from them, so they are satisfied with the work that we are doing with them. Additionally, we also look at whether or not the project is moving along, not just whether or not a study is being done. But if we've done a study, as an example, again, the Watino-Wanham rail line, the question comes: is that study actually being carried on by another organization, and is somebody running with the ball? We also use that as the measure of whether or not a project has been successful.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you.

Mr. Danyluk: If I can add somewhat. To ensure that we're going in the right direction, for the initiatives that have taken place, we survey our clients and also ask them if they feel that we have been helpful, if we've been successful. I can use one example where 112 out of 126 have suggested that we are doing the right thing and that we're very helpful. Overall, on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being dissatisfied and 10 being satisfied, how would we rate our success? Well, as we said before, our clients have said that we're at 7.5.

1:50

Mr. Rogers: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase, followed by Mr. Lindsay, please.

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much. First off, I want to suggest that I sympathize, empathize, share the same concerns of the council in the sense that the amount of money extracted from the north is disproportionate to the meagre amount of money reinvested in the

form of infrastructure and support services. I have sympathy for what the council is attempting to achieve. I gather that it's almost like internal lobbying.

I believe in penny-wise and pound-wise, but with the two pages, budget by object and the 2004-05 budget, I'm having trouble getting any kind of a sense of the breakdown and the value for money. For example, if you look at the staffing, \$1,019,000, I did the math, and that's approximately \$68,000 per person, which is slightly higher than what I was making in 2003 as a teacher with a bachelor of education degree and 32 years of experience. Without a job description or the educational qualifications I don't know if that's money being well spent, and that's why I need some more support documentation.

Also, I get confused. I gather that the total budget was \$2 million. The breakdown from the two different pages is so scarce that without that being defined further, my first question basically would be: why doesn't NADC report specifically how its budget is utilized? It's too generic for me to get a true sense as to value achieved.

Mr. Danyluk: Okay. Well, first of all, I just want to say – and I'll let my staff answer – that a lot of our staff are professionals and are experts in their fields. I'll ask Dan first of all to explain his staff and what their roles and responsibilities are, if you would like, and then I will go on and we'll talk about the two pages or the budget distribution and have a clear identification, if you don't mind.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I'd appreciate that.

Mr. Dibbelt: Just to give you some understanding of what our staff is like, we have three and a half admin staff, and the balance of the staff are either research officers or development officers. They are in a higher salary range and actually quite cost-competitive to northern Alberta.

I'll turn it over to Lorne to talk more specifically about the dollars.

Mr. Harvey: Yeah. Actually, a couple things on the manpower too. When we talk about the manpower, that includes employer contributions and allowances and benefits, too, and the contribution rate is generally around 17, 18 per cent. If you actually take a look at the direct salary costs, it's right around \$800,000, so that would actually bring the salary down below the \$68,000 per person on average. So I just wanted to comment on that.

On the budget and the way that we break it down by object: this is a pretty standard format in government reporting in the financial statements, to do it by staffing, supplies and services, grants, and that. We've tried to keep to a standard format that's reported within our ministry's financial statements as well. Actually, on the one slide we've provided a little bit more information between operations, the council expenses, skills development to give a little bit of a breakdown on the budget. But, again, the bulk of it is around the manpower and then the actual operations costs of the council.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I have trouble with the budgets in general due to their lack of specificity, and that's what I'd like. You can't judge something unless you know what you're judging it by.

The Chair: Thank you. That was more of a comment than a question, Harry.

Mr. Lindsay.

Mr. Lindsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Danyluk, for your thorough review of the NADC. I believe that you're an excellent ambassador for northern Alberta, and I believe

it's appropriate that today you're wearing your traditional northern Alberta attire. It's good to see.

My first question. You spoke briefly about transportation challenges and regarding roads and the lack of east-west corridor links. I'm just curious: what initiatives are under way to address that challenge and expand these east-west corridors?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, I think, as was stated earlier, with the east being more specific to the east-west corridor, what happened was that in 1999 the initiative was first started to have a thoroughfare between the eastern part of the province and the western part and continuing on to Fort Nelson and, as you are well aware as well, the connection to Saskatchewan. That happened during a first ministers' meeting of western provinces, and it was called – you've got to help me out. What was the name of it, Pearl?

Ms Calahasen: Sorry. I forgot the name of it. I've gone blank, a menopausal moment. The northwestern corridor strategy: I think that's what it's called.

Mr. Danyluk: Oh, here we go: the northwestern Canada integrated road concept plan. That's the strategy that basically started the discussion of the east-west corridor, the need for individuals in the northern part of the province to not have to go all the way down to central Alberta and then come up again. There needs to be a link, especially an economic link, with the north.

Mr. Lindsay: Okay. Thank you.

My supplemental. You spoke about the higher population of aboriginal and Métis folks up in that neck of the woods. I guess my question, then, is around: how effective is the province's aboriginal consultation process in addressing concerns expressed by these aboriginal communities, especially regarding the amount of industrial activity and resource development in the area? Are these companies actually consulting with the aboriginal/Métis communities up there, and if so, how effective is it?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, I think there is consultation. There is more and more partnering that is taking place all the time. There is not only consultation as far as the industry with the aboriginal communities but also through education.

As you know, one illustration is when we had the Advanced Education committee. One of the subcommittees was the aboriginal education part. I think we need to work together with aboriginal communities, government, and the communities in northern Alberta. I think we all have the same goals, that we all have the same aspirations, and we are continuing to work with the communities on those different aspects.

I'll just let Dan expand because he can give you some specific situations.

Mr. Dibbelt: Some of the areas where we're encouraging aboriginal participation include simple areas such as the northwest mayors and reeves meetings, which we administer. In this past year that has been changed into the northwest mayors, reeves, chiefs, and chairpersons meetings. So we are incorporating as much as possible to ensure that the aboriginal people are included in everything we do.

The latest initiative that's happening is very similar to the RIWG group, which is regional issues working group out of Wood Buffalo. We're following their template in establishing a similar organization in the northwest to address the Peace oil sands. A number of the meetings have taken place on the Peavine Métis settlement. There's

an organizational meeting on the 20th, and they are also at the table with that and have been very, very involved with it.

We've always encouraged that industry do consult with First Nations and aboriginal populations, and we also encourage the municipalities to always keep them included as well.

Mr. Lindsay: Thank you.

2:00

Mr. Danyluk: Mr. Chair, if I can, I would like the minister to add because she can add the aboriginal affairs aspect to northern development.

Ms Calahasen: You asked about consultation. As you know, there was a consultation policy that was accepted by cabinet in May of 2005. As a result, we've been working with all the aboriginal communities, whether it's Treaty 6, Treaty 7, or Treaty 8, to be able to encourage them to come to the table in developing the guidelines. We have an interim strategy, and that interim strategy outlines what kind of activities and action should occur between industry and First Nations as well as government. That consultation strategy and the guidelines are going to be finalized probably by the end of this year, I think. We're aiming for October. That consultation strategy definitely brings in all of Treaty 8, and most of northern Alberta is encompassed by Treaty 8, some Treaty 6. Basically they are totally involved in the consultation process.

Mr. Lindsay: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Danyluk, could you clarify for us, please, if you don't mind. In the slide presentation it was indicated that 20 per cent of northern Albertans are of aboriginal origin compared with 7 per cent for all of Alberta. Is that percentage reflected in the makeup of the public members who are appointed to the Northern Alberta Development Council?

Mr. Danyluk: As far as we can tell, we have one aboriginal member.

Ms Calahasen: We don't know if they're Métis. They haven't self-identified, so we don't know.

The Chair: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mr. Bonko, please, followed by Mr. Webber.

Mr. Bonko: Thank you. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development works with other ministries in advancing development and government in Alberta's First Nations, a policy on land management and resource development. Now, did it have a particular cost for the Northern Alberta Development Council when they developed that particular policy?

Ms Calahasen: Do you want me to answer?

Mr. Danyluk: Yeah.

Ms Calahasen: This is the chair's show, so I have to wait until he tells me to answer.

Are you talking about the consultation policy?

Mr. Bonko: Right. How did it affect the development costs with the NADC, and what were the performance measures and/or objectives with regard to that particular piece?

Ms Calahasen: Oh, it doesn't affect the NADC. NADC, as you know, is a council that reports to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. Aboriginal Affairs is responsible for the consultation component. As a result, NADC provides us with information should there be anything that would come about in terms of affecting NADC. The NADC certainly has provided us with the information as to the development that's been occurring in northern Alberta, to make sure that whatever we do, we are prepared to ensure that consultation will occur with the First Nations. So that's basically how we are fitting together in terms of information sharing, the potential of the development that will happen in the NADC area, and then Aboriginal Affairs takes into consideration all that information so that we deal with the aboriginal component.

Mr. Danyluk: So if you wanted to say, "Was there a cost affiliated with that process?" – you know, I was trying to think about it – well, is there a cost in having a meeting in the different communities where people make presentations on our regular operations and where some of these issues come forward and some of these presentations come forward, which we in turn worked on and presented some of the findings from ourselves to the minister? I guess there was some cost related in that direction, but it wasn't that it was a separate, isolated inquiry.

Mr. Bonko: Okay. Then between cross-ministries has no effect on how your particular council works with regard to aboriginal affairs.

Mr. Danyluk: No. The cross-ministry initiative is definitely through the minister of aboriginal affairs.

Ms Calahasen: It's government departments that are involved. The council is a council. The council does provide information to us so that we can use that information as we go forward in the cross-ministry initiatives.

Mr. Bonko: Just a bridge to the community.

Ms Calahasen: Yes.

Mr. Danyluk: Just to add, we are only as good as the communities around us because we are the voice of the community as a whole.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Webber, please, followed by Harry Chase.

Mr. Webber: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ray, I'm looking on page 8 at the NADC bursary programs that you have. The more bursary programs we have, the better. I think they're great. This particular program requires the recipients to live and work in northern Alberta for a period of time upon completing their studies. In your presentation you had mentioned that the return service rate was at 78 per cent, which is, I guess, higher than your target of 75 per cent, but to me that seems rather low. Maybe it's just me. Twenty-two per cent not returning: now, what is being done? Are you doing anything to increase these return rates, and for those not returning, are there any types of recoveries that your department is working on?

Mr. Danyluk: Oh, very much so. If a bursary is given to an individual, to a student, and their commitment is to come back into rural Alberta and that individual does not come back to rural Alberta, we're chasing for the money. I guess you can say it that way. They are obligated to pay it back, and we do get that money. On the 78 per cent rating you have to remember that we offer them a bursary, and we're asking them to come back into northern Alberta. What does take place is that a lot of those individuals may

go to Calgary after they get their degrees, or they may go out of country, or they may go out of province. So when we look at a 78 per cent acceptance rate, I think that's pretty good because out of 100 per cent of the people that apply for the bursaries, 78 per cent of the individuals come back into northern Alberta. To me that's a success. You know, it is a challenge because there's no doubt that the enticement of other parts of the job opportunities are all over the world.

Mr. Webber: I do think it's great that they accept these bursaries and then get educated and go on with their careers, but again it is important, I guess, to recover the amounts given in bursaries if they don't commit to their obligations.

Mr. Danyluk: And we do.

Mr. Webber: Thank you.

That's all, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Webber.

Mr. Chase, followed by Art Johnston, please.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Going by the 60 per cent of Alberta's land mass and, as I mentioned this morning, the increasing aboriginal population, I have grave concerns about traditional ways of life and compensation for their loss for aboriginals and northerners in general. I also have concerns about environment in the sense that a lot of our surface water is located in the north, and we're very dependent for our future survival on freshwater sources. The environment ministry has .5 per cent of our total budget. Aboriginal affairs has considerably less than that, and you have such a small budget yourself. Has your council had an impact, for example, on requiring the government to rethink the MOSS strategy?

2:10

Mr. Danyluk: Well, let me just say this. We and I and the council believe that water is our most precious commodity, and northern Alberta's residents and northern Alberta communities understand how precious water is and understand the value of water. So when we talk about northern Alberta and we talk about the three major commodities that operate in northern Alberta, I think that when we first of all mention agriculture, agriculture has changed dramatically in the last 25 years in their realization of the importance of environment, in the realization of the importance of a commodity such as water. I always say that agriculture is probably one of the original stewards of the land because what happens is that farmers pass on their land to their offspring, and they don't want to pass on contaminated land or contaminated water or contaminated air.

We have gone a long ways when it comes to forestry, and I'll use the example of Al-Pac, that looks at environmental zones, that looks at check strips, that looks at reseeded of poplar, looks at and considers wildlife, looks at and considers fish. We talk about the oil and gas industry, and you've heard the Minister of Environment talk a lot about the recycling of water, the reuse of water, and not having an excess amount of water being taken from our rivers, our potable water. The number one issue, of course, is the fear of contaminating any potable water, whether it be well water or surface water.

So do we have a policeman? Yes, we do. Does the Northern Alberta Development Council consider it a priority? Yes, it does. We have brought those concerns forward with the water strategy. We have brought forward some of the concerns of the community, some of the presentations that were brought forward to us.

Mr. Chase: So as it relates to the minable oil sands and the chance of large portions of the boreal forest being sacrificed for oil sands extraction, you believe that your committee has had a direct effect in having that strategy rethought?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, I believe that we have had an impact, and I believe that we have brought forward the issues and some of the concerns of the municipalities. You know, when we look at the footprint that the oil sands has made, it is very small right now when you talk about the land mass, but we are continually not only bringing forward the concerns to government and to Environment; we also bring those concerns back to industry. We did have a meeting with industry in Calgary and talked to industry about the importance of water in northern Alberta and the importance of the recycling of water and the importance of rejuvenating the footprint that is being made, of bringing the land back to where we do have vegetation, so that we do have clear water and clean air.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. My closing comment rather than a question is that any of the water that goes out of the Athabasca River into the oil sands projects does not get recycled. It's permanently lost, and as the plants expand, that's a concern that I'm sure all northern residents have.

Mr. Danyluk: What happens is that the water that may come out of the Athabasca River does not get recycled and get permanently lost. I would disagree with you because I would suggest to you that water, yes, is taken from the Athabasca River, but it is utilized a number of times in the cycle. So it is reused but maybe not recycled and put back into the river.

The Chair: Thank you. It's like the water in the radiator of your car. It keeps going through the loop.

Mr. Johnston, followed by Bill Bonko.

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 8 under Challenge North, which I understand was just a couple of months ago in High Level, were there strategies from the previous conference to that and strategies subsequent that will be worked on or strategies that were worked on at the conference in High Level? That would be strategies, of course, for directions in advancing development in the north.

Mr. Danyluk: Well, you know, there are a lot of strategies that are continuing as we talked about the east-west corridor, as we talked about the rail link connection to the port of Prince Rupert, as we talk about the importance of the air accessibility into the municipal airport in Edmonton. Are some of those revisited? Yes, without a doubt. What happens is that when we have 270 members from northern Alberta that come to a northern conference and we talk about the issues and the challenges with the increase in the economy and the increase in the population, there's no doubt that some of the issues that I can say are brought forward are the shadow population and the ability for municipalities to exist under population counts. They talked about: how do we house the education needs? We talk about the employment needs for industry, not only oil and gas but forestry or mining. How are forestry and mining able to compete with oil and gas when oil and gas prices are high? We talk about the housing.

I think what happens is that some of the issues that are brought forward are carry-ons that have taken place at previous conferences or Challenge Norths, and some of them are new issues with the increased development. You have to remember that, you know, we have a conference once every three years. There are a couple of

things that happen. There are a lot of things that happen in the three years. There are a lot of changes in directions because one community may be completely viable under an agricultural setting, and three years later, after BSE and having no oil development in their area, their challenges completely change. Their area becomes, if you want to call it, devastated because of no input into their community whereas another community, that might be a hundred miles down the road, all of a sudden has an influx of oil and an influx of people, and they don't have any housing.

So one community has too much housing that they can't fill, and the other community has none, and they need housing. You know, the distance and the sparsity do create the challenges on their own. It's not like one end of Edmonton to the other end of Edmonton, where one area of business may shut down but you can still live in the same place and commute. Very hard to commute in the north, especially if you have to commute around.

Sorry. Going back to trying to answer your question, there is an overlap. Are there new issues? Without a doubt there are new issues. If I can isolate, as I did before, a couple of the major challenges are to get some of our value-added product to port, to Prince Rupert, looking at container sites out of Grande Prairie, looking at the Watino crossing, looking at the possibility of providing fibre for value-added production, secondary production.

As I mentioned before, the skilled workforce. It was very interesting because at that time the advanced education committee was sitting. The people there knew, you know, that the advanced education committee was sitting, and there was a lot of interest in what was going to happen to try to enhance our skilled workforce. If I can add as well, one of the prominent areas that came forward is the inclusion and engagement of youth in some of our policy directions and the inclusion of youth in aboriginal communities.

Mr. Johnston: That's all I have. Thank you.

2:20

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Johnston.

Mr. Bonko again, followed by Dr. Brown.

Mr. Bonko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 2 of your annual report it says under Key Strategies: "Engage Northern communities, business, industry and other stakeholders, to identify, co-ordinate and address strategic Northern socio-economic priorities, opportunities and challenges."

The other challenge which you mentioned is commuting. Through what means has the NADC actively engaged the northern communities, businesses, and industries? By air? By car? How are you able to get around? I mean, as you had said yourself, it's a large area, looking at the map. How do you and your members get around?

Mr. Danyluk: How do our members get around?

Mr. Bonko: To engage the stakeholders.

Mr. Danyluk: I guess we use it all. I mean, there are times where it's more economical to use air. We do get around by vehicle because sometimes there is no other access. We really have the two. For an example, for us to have an office in Peace River and have representation from Peace River, for us to send someone as a council member to a meeting, to go all the way south and around, it costs more money for mileage than it does just to fly somebody across. So we always look at the most economical way that we can use, whatever mode of transportation.

But I want to stress to you that the maintenance of the municipal airport is extremely important to northern Alberta for a number of

different aspects: for business, of course, but for ambulance service. Also, you have to remember that if you come from High Level, if you come from Fort Vermilion, it's a two-day trip to come and see a specialist. That's why it's so important to have the Internet, to have telehealth, so that you can go into a hospital in northern Alberta, get your X-ray taken, for that X-ray to be able to be transferred or go through the SuperNet to a specialist in Edmonton, so that that individual doesn't have to miss two days of work, so that that individual does not have to be on the roads.

Answering your question again, yes, we use both, whichever is the most economical. As you see, the area is big, and we don't have the number of highways that are necessary or the number of thoroughfares. We do still have communities that are only accessible by air in the summer.

Mr. Bonko: Okay. I recognize that, and I do support your plea to have or expand even on the muni. I mean, as you are aware, STARS has expanded their territory. They, in fact, are able to reach some of the critical people that are injured out there, and that's just another point for using the muni as well.

Getting back to the other thing, how much of your overall budget is destined for travel and ensuring that everyone is able to get back and forth and around?

Mr. Danyluk: You mean our council?

Mr. Bonko: Yeah. Your overall operating budget.

Mr. Danyluk: I think that \$100,000 for council expenses is where we're at.

Do you want to talk specifically?

Mr. Harvey: Yeah. Basically, like Mr. Danyluk was saying, we do have \$100,000 for our council expenses, but additionally our budget also includes in 2004-05 \$128,000 for staff travel, which includes your accommodation, your meals, your air, also mileage, and everything. Actual expenses for the year came in at \$104,000, so we were below budget for the year.

Mr. Bonko: So that would include staff as well as members, then, or is the staff a separate budget from the council members?

Mr. Harvey: The council members are in a separate budget, but in that year I think the total expenses for council members were right around \$30,000.

Mr. Bonko: Thank you.

Mr. Danyluk: If I can just add to help clarify the process. What does happen is that when we do have our council meetings, there are usually two or three staff that come to the meetings for logistical purposes, of course. Also, there are partnership meetings that are happening throughout northern Alberta that we as council ask staff and especially the executive director to attend.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Brown: Mr. Danyluk, congratulations on your presentation, which was quite thorough. I want to ask you a question particularly about the medical and health concerns in northern Alberta. I had the opportunity of touring the Grande Prairie area last week, and even regional centres like Grande Prairie which are servicing an area of 100,000 or so are in a major crisis with respect to attracting doctors and specialists and whatnot. They're down from six psychiatrists to

one psychiatrist in that huge area up there and have no youth psychiatrists whatsoever. I'm wondering: with only 125 of these scholarships at a \$3,000 rate and only five of these medical student bursaries, which are only \$5,000 to \$10,000, do you have enough resources there available to attract sufficient qualified people?

Mr. Danyluk: No.

Dr. Brown: Given the fact that those are woefully so much smaller than some of the prestigious scholarships, how successful are those things in attracting people into those fields?

Mr. Danyluk: Not as successful as we'd like to be, for sure. I want to say that we have made presentations to Advanced Education. We do have addition of – I'm not sure exactly of the name – the Alberta bursary, that was an additional \$500,000, I believe. But when we talk about trying to attract professionals, there is such a competition that it is so hard to attract those individuals because those individuals could stay in Edmonton and get that sort of incentive at the drop of a hat.

Now, we're in a catch-22 situation, Neil, and I want to say that it's been really tough because of two things. I'll use physiotherapists and speech therapists for an example. We have speech therapists and physiotherapists in northern Alberta. They don't want to move, traditionally, into northern Alberta, so we try to give them bursaries, try to give them incentives. A lot of the time they come up for two years, and then they leave. We'd like to be able to keep them there for a little bit longer because there may be a chance that they may find a spouse and be more committed to stay. But the catch and the problem is that when we have somebody that is there – there are a lot that move out, and the workload on those individuals becomes so taxing that they just want to leave. We have situations where doctors move out of communities because they don't have any time off. There is nobody to spell them off except by using the locum program, those programs to spell them off. But it's just not enough because they're on call 24 hours a day where you have a small community of one doctor.

I'll give you an illustration of a further problem. We've got a new hospital in Manning, and there is no doctor that's available till August. So is it a continuing problem? You know, the private member's bill that was brought forward that said we have to do something that's going to bring those issues to the forefront. I guess, in the long and the short of it, we need to entice and support youth that are in the north to come and be educated and then go back to the north. That's probably the highest success rate. Otherwise, we need to give them enough of an incentive to come there because everyone else is doing it.

Do you want to add?

Mr. Harvey: I just wanted to point out some of the bursaries here that we had offered, to point out the bursaries for the medical students, the pharmacy students, and the northern health care practicum placement, the pilot that's been quite a success.

Mr. Danyluk: You know, Neil, they are successful, right? But the need is so great. Are they successful enough? We keep trying to enhance it.

2:30

Mr. Dibbelt: I'd just like to add something because I was, in fact, at the Grande Prairie hospital last Wednesday getting cataract surgery. So I asked my anaesthesiologist why he came back to Grande Prairie or why he is in Grande Prairie. Why did he choose this location when he could go anywhere? His response was that he was originally from Grande Prairie, and that's why he chose to come

back. The actual eye surgeon is from the Czech Republic, and I believe he was at the meeting with the minister as well on that Wednesday. He came because of the attraction to northern Alberta. What ensued after the operation was about a half an hour of discussion on what the needs of the Grande Prairie College are and what the needs are of the medical profession in the north in attracting doctors, not just doctors but all health care professionals.

NADC is presently working with two regions, one being the Peace Country and one being in the Cold Lake area, to come up with a formula on how we are going to address some of the issues. It's not just attraction. Many communities believe, you know, that if you have a spousal program, that might be enough to attract them. The reality is that when a doctor comes, for example, to the Grande Prairie area, it's very hard to convince him to take a car ride for three hours north to Manning, and now this is his new location. Manning has a beautiful new hospital. Grande Prairie has a very nice hospital, but it needs major upgrades as well. One of the concerns that the doctors see is that without those upgrades it's going to be hard to attract.

So NADC is trying to work with the doctors as well to come up with sort of a global strategy on how we address that. It's not just a matter of attracting them. There are more details that have to be worked on, and that's one of the projects in the plans here for the next couple of years.

Mr. Danyluk: The other part, Dr. Brown, to expand, is that in the funding formula for health care what happens is that if a patient – I'll call him a patient right now – has to come to a larger centre, basically that health authority has to help support that individual coming to the larger centre. When you're in the remote areas of Alberta, you know that there are going to be more exports of people going to that larger centre than imports coming into the remote areas. So we get caught again in that catch-22 of support to the larger centres without being able to sustain ourselves because we're always paying for services outside our area.

Dr. Brown: If we increased the size of the carrot, then, by expanding the number and the value of those scholarships and bursaries, could you not increase the commitment time after graduation? Like the military college, for example, where you had to serve a year in the military for every year that you got of free university. If we expanded that program, made it \$15,000 a year or \$20,000 a year, could we not ask for more in return?

Mr. Danyluk: Okay. Let me give you an illustration using somebody who's dear to my heart. My son, who is between his third and fourth year of engineering, is in Fort McMurray working right now. So I'm saying to him: you know, here's an opportunity to get a bursary because maybe you'll come back to the north to work. His explanation was that if you have the marks, you can choose to go wherever you want to go, and that little bursary is not going to make that much of a difference.

Maybe your answer is right because you have – and I use this as an example – university students that are going to Fort McMurray, that are going into the oil production venue of employment and are making \$25,000 to \$30,000 for three to four months of work. To offer them a \$3,000 bursary per year just does not seem to cut it. So we have to do something different.

I guess what happens is that the council has looked at it and said: would you give us some flexibility with these bursaries? We need to have a bursary that has some flexibility in order to be able to highlight some of the areas we need at particular times, take it away and go into a different area, instead of just having – what's the word? – a general bursary.

The Chair: Harry Chase, followed by George Rogers, please.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I'm referencing the annual report, page 3. I support grassroots, transparent, democratic initiatives, going out to the people to hear their concerns, and this is what this deals with. The NADC schedules council and round-table meetings with community and business leaders in the north to provide an opportunity for them to present issues and concerns to council and identify challenges and opportunities. In 2004-05 the NADC held meetings in Fort McMurray, High Level, and Lac La Biche. There appears to be some overlap or duplication, however, within the annual report. Can you tell us how much of the NADC's budget is allocated specifically for round-table meetings versus what I personally believe are more effective, and that's engaging stakeholders directly and provincial tours? In other words, instead of select individuals coming to you, you're going out and hearing the wider concerns.

Mr. Danyluk: Well, okay. Let me tell you from two aspects our meaning of round-table meetings. First of all, we go into different communities. We will go into a community and get a tour of the community by municipalities or by whichever group is there so that we have an understanding of what their challenges are and discussions. We have a regular portion of our meetings dealing with some of the issues that have been brought forward, whether it's been to our staff or in previous meetings, the general meeting business.

The round-table meeting is not just a round table to sit around and chat. The round-table discussion is basically the opportunity for different groups to make presentations, to have their asks, and to air their concerns. Then we follow up on that. We maybe make a recommendation later on in that meeting about which direction we should go. Each one of those presenters is not only acknowledged by a response, but their concerns or challenges are dealt with in whichever manner we think we can more effectively do it.

Remember that when we have a round-table and we have presentations, we have anywhere from 15 to 25 presenters. I guess one of the measures of effectiveness has been that presenters believe that we do have an impact, that we will carry their message forward to the minister of aboriginal affairs, to the government, to the ministers that are affected in different portfolios. Our participation has been escalating all the time, and we are trying to restructure our meetings so that we have more involvement.

I mean, I can remember that we used to have the presenters from 10 o'clock till 2 o'clock. Now we start at 8 o'clock in the morning. Our meetings start at 7, and we go from 8 o'clock to approximately 4 o'clock or thereabouts – right? – and have a hard time to finish. We don't eliminate anybody, and we don't leave till everybody is done. Usually we have 20 registrants and people that like to make presentations from the floor as well.

Is it effective? I think that it's very effective because we come into a community, we see the community, we try to understand, and we know what they're talking about when they come forward to make a presentation to us. I think it's quite effective, a lot better than if we didn't see it. I think that what happens is that as MLAs, as representatives of the government it's important for us, it's important for you to go into all different communities and areas of Alberta because that is how we are able to represent Albertans, we being no different than yourselves. I mean, we're all here for the same purpose: to represent Albertans to the best of our abilities.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

Given that your community serves the role of being sort of the eyes and ears of Albertans and the information source for a lot of southern Alberta that hasn't had the opportunity to travel north, are

the summations, the minutes, the texts of these meetings publicly available? Are they posted on a website? How is the information that's been gathered made available?

2:40

Mr. Danyluk: Well, previously what we've had is a report that came out twice a year, giving people an opportunity to see what direction we're going, what we're doing, what NADC is all about. We have changed that format. We still have those reports, but as I said before, we have instituted a communiqué that is basically a short and dirty of what has happened at the meeting, what some of the issues were, some of the directions that council has taken, just a short presentation. We don't send out the exact minutes because, I mean, people won't read through all that, but we have had such a positive response from communities with that information.

We talk about a catch-22. I wouldn't call it a catch-22, but it has become a double positive. What has happened is that we have sent out that information, people are looking at what we're doing, and then all of a sudden we are so much busier because we have more involvement. When somebody reads something and says, "Well, this is what we've done here," all of a sudden the office and myself get calls that say: "Well, you know what? We have the same kind of situation here. Can you help us? Can you put us in that category? Would you get us involved in that one? Would you put our name down as one of the groups that are supporting these guys?" So it has been very positive. I say that communication is our most positive attribute, and we need to do it better all the time.

Mr. Chase: Sorry. Just for clarification purposes, how were these quick and dirty summaries communicated? Where would I go to get a copy of the summary?

Mr. Danyluk: All you need to do is give us a call to be put on the list. We e-mail them out to all municipalities. They're online on the web as well. We have different ways because there are some people who aren't able to get on the web. There are some people who don't have access to e-mail. We send them out. We fax them out. We do whatever it takes. We have three or four different lists on how to contact people.

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To Mr. Danyluk: not a page number but the slide called Leading in Learning Successes. Ray, you talked about your collaboration with Alberta Ed on YAP, the youth apprenticeship program. You launched a pilot in September of '04. I'm wondering if you've got any indication of success or what the experience has been with that program. Can you share some of that with us? That's my only question.

Mr. Danyluk: I want to say that that was a pilot that was brought forward that has been – what is the measure? There are so many different measures. When we have gone to anniversaries of the youth apprenticeship program, the positiveness not only by the youth, not only by the industry or the business involved but by the teachers. They have told us, as I said before, that the participation rate in school has completely escalated. What happens is that we have children that had no direction, what they felt in their own mind, and now they have different opportunities, whether the opportunities be to learn a little bit about carpentry or learn a little bit about forestry or learn a little bit about oil and gas. What happens is that the industry and the different groups are ready to jump on board

because they want to be able to give an opportunity for youth to know about their industry and to get interested in that industry because then they may want to go into that field. So participation is number one.

The second one is that the youth have a wider knowledge of the different opportunities where they can channel their energy and where they can channel a direction for the future. I want to carry this on a little further if I can, Mr. Chairman. I think what happens is that as a government we have done a pretty good job of addressing the university college status or acceptance. We have done not a bad job on apprenticeship. But we have done, I would suggest, a fairly poor job of addressing the needs of the individuals who want to be labourers, who want to be in the field, who want to go in a direction but are not sure where they want to go.

I believe we need to have a ready program, which is very much what the youth apprenticeship program is except to extend it a little further. We need to be able to develop a program where the individual is able to take maybe an online course, that may take a month or so, and then be able to go into a field and be a plumber's helper, a welder's helper, a carpenter's helper and to have some practical experience and give that individual a certificate that says: I have participated in this particular occupation. What happens is that it gives the opportunity for that youth to be out in the field and to have that experience and make those contacts. You know what happens? We have in some of our aboriginal communities individuals that don't know where to go, and they say: "Well, you know what? I'd really like to be in oil and gas, but I don't know exactly how to get there." We really don't provide that kind of avenue, a single point of entry to address those needs, and I think we can have that opportunity.

Is YAP doing a good job? Yes. It is introducing youth to opportunities, and it is introducing youth to the possibility of employment. Yes. It is having youth participate in classroom activities. By the way, what happens is that we have found that their marks in other subjects have increased. What I've been hearing is in the neighbourhood of up to 20 per cent.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I appreciate that, Mr. Rogers.

Three other members have indicated that they have questions: Mr. Chase, Mr. Prins, and Reverend Abbott. Mr. Chase, in the time permitting, please proceed.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I'm referencing page 2 of the annual report, where it indicates the key strategy to "promote awareness of the importance of northern development to the well-being of Alberta." Unfortunately, by refusing to defend the Kelowna accord and the \$5.1 billion it would have provided for northern aboriginal communities, our Premier sent out a message that Alberta's northern communities apparently are not worth supporting, at least not through this significant initiative. That leaves your committee with your hands somewhat tied. So how specifically have you implemented the strategy of communicating the importance of northern development to Alberta's well-being as a whole? This kind of goes back to my former question about informing us southerners about the critical role that northern Alberta plays.

Then, going back to the budget, what level of funds were utilized to inform southerners of northern Alberta's importance?

Mr. Danyluk: I can see that the chair said do this quickly, so I will try to do it quickly. What happened is that NADC went to Calgary, held a meeting with industry or groups that were interested in

coming to that meeting to try to express to them some of the challenges that communities have. It was a very fruitful meeting. We've had a lot of communications with industry coming to NADC because of that meeting.

Let me tell you a little story, and this holds true especially in this setting. You know, I speak to some northern groups, whether it be municipalities or whoever they may be. When you come to a meeting, AAMD and C or AUMA or school boards all rush to go sit with their MLA. I say to them: "Guys, you're doing the wrong job. What happens is that we know the challenges you have in northern Alberta. We know the challenges you have there. Pick an opposition member. Phone him up ahead of time. Pick a member from southern Alberta, or pick a member from urban Alberta and ask to sit with them. Phone him or send him an e-mail ahead of time and say: 'Can we sit with you? We are from Sunrise county, and we'd like to sit with the Liberal representative from Calgary.'"

You'd go because you want to know what's happening in northern Alberta. You are obligated to do what's best for all Albertans, and you want to know that. I do the same with southern Alberta, and what happens is that we can all help in that situation and really educate ourselves. Probably the biggest challenge we have as provincially elected members is to educate ourselves about the challenges and the attributes of the rest of Alberta.

2:50

The Chair: Thank you.

Your second question, please, Mr. Chase.

Mr. Chase: Yes. The question I have in terms of communicating to southerners is one of the things that probably you've come up with in your constituency as well. As the critic for Infrastructure and Transportation some of my constituents would say to me: why are you continually pushing for, say, the twinning of highway 63? How does it affect the Calgary-Varsity constituency and their well-being? They don't realize how many of my constituents work up in Fort McMurray.

What I'm basically asking is if you can communicate these northern values or encourage through Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development the jewel of the north and how much it directly supports the rest of Albertans so that they could be more supportive of infrastructure, health concerns, and so on, reinvesting in the north? They see it just as this boom location where, you know, everything is rosy. It's a rush mentality. I'm just saying that through the committee if you could publish that information in readily available sources so that the southerners are informed of the role of the north, it would make our southern jobs easier.

Mr. Danyluk: You know what? We have what we think is a great CD. We have CDs that are made about northern Alberta, some of the challenges, some of the attributes. You're right; we need to share that. I want to answer your question by saying that it doesn't matter about north, south, or whatever, but if the industry of your area prospers, then all of Alberta prospers. If your sugar beet industry in the south prospers, we all prosper. The one thing that I want to say about NADC is that even though we are so sparse and so far apart, we do recognize that we are one community in Alberta, and I think that's critical.

We will get the information for you. I think that's a great idea because I think we'll send it to every MLA. Thank you very much for that.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I appreciate it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Prins, please, followed by Reverend Abbott.

Mr. Prins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Danyluk, for your excellent presentation. I think you're to be commended and congratulated for not only your total commitment but your passion for the north and developing the north.

There are many opportunities up there, many strengths up there, and also many challenges. We've heard about oil, gas, oil sands, ag, forestry, health, education, water, the whole nine yards. We haven't talked about tourism much, and I think tourism is how we want to get the rest of the province up there to see what's going on. What have you done to increase tourism? What do you use to measure your success in generating tourism? What is the cost, or what have you spent?

Mr. Danyluk: Okay. What have we done? As you remember, two or three or five years ago if it wasn't the mountains, it was nothing because it was felt that the only tourism industry we really had was in the mountains. I think we work very hard as NADC and work very hard as communities of northern Alberta to say that we do have something to offer. It's a little different, but we do have something to offer. We are to the stage, if I can say last year's count in the little community of Lac La Biche – and I can only say that one in particular because I do have the counts for it – that there were 175,000 people that passed through Lac La Biche on tourism. What are we doing? We keep showing and trying to enhance some of the attributes that we do have.

Our CD will show that we do have so many positives that people could come and see: aboriginal tourism, rural tourism, agricultural tourism, some of the trails that we have, some of the recreational corridors, the wilderness, the parks. They're different. Lakeland park, you know, the parks in the northwest, the new find by Grande Prairie of the dinosaur, which is supposedly the biggest in the world: we do have those opportunities, and, yes, we're working to make them better. We also have had alliances with the Northwest Territories and British Columbia so that we have some co-operation.

Okay. Sorry. I'd better cut it.

Mr. Prins: That's it for my questions. Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you.

Reverend Abbott.

Rev. Abbott: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Danyluk, for these great, full-colour handouts. Those of us who came a little bit late can catch right up and see what you're all about. I thought only Health had the dollars to do full-colour handouts, but I guess you're stretching that \$2 million budget as far as you can, right? So that's great.

I'd also like to say that I do totally agree with Mr. Chase in that the north is the new Alberta and it's definitely worth investing in. In fact, as we invest in the new Alberta, then the old Alberta will also be very sustainable for the long haul. You know, as the water rises, all the boats go up, as you were saying, Ray.

My question is this: on page 10 of your annual report there is mention of the Northern Links program. I notice that "34 workshops were sponsored in schools across the north to motivate students in their studies and encourage them to complete high school." That's awesome. I guess I'm wondering: is there a measure? I think what I'm specifically looking for is some kind of a performance measure of this program to show if it has been successful or not. I guess I'm wondering how you measure the effectiveness of this program, first of all.

Mr. Danyluk: Well, what happens is that the measure of the program to us is not only acknowledgement from the school systems and the participation and the interest of schools, that they see the importance and they see the added enrolment or continuing enrolment in high schools and going on to further education – that is probably the most important – but as a measure when we do look at the comparisons of percentages, there are more youth that are staying in school. We really need to strive in that direction. It's important. It was a challenge.

What happens is, you know, that we have a situation where we do have a lot of youth that leave school early, and we're trying to tighten that gap. We were at a standing policy committee meeting with CNRL, and I expressed the concern of co-operation with industry of having a caveat: if you have not finished your high school and you come to work for an oil company that you involve yourself in a high school completion program; otherwise, you can't work here. We've done that. We've had discussions with Syncrude and Suncor and CNRL, and we need to continue to do that because whatever program, the kids are going to leave because the opportunities seem so enlightening.

You know, I used \$14 an hour for Tim Hortons, but we have the situation where a guy drives up to Tim Hortons to buy a coffee and asks the kid how much money he's making. When the kid says, "I'm making 14 bucks an hour," he says, "You want to make \$25?" The kid says, "Yeah." He says, "Jump in." The guy doesn't even wait for his wages. He just takes his apron off. He's gone; he's in the truck. He doesn't care – right? – because it's immediate.

We really need to instill the importance of education, the importance of continuing in high school and postsecondary.

Rev. Abbott: Well, thank you. I guess my follow-up is directly related and tied into that because I do agree with you. With the increase of economic activity, you know, in northern Alberta with the oil and gas and all the related industries this is probably somewhat of a cause of the students not finishing high school. I guess I'm wondering if you take that into account. You know, is your program focused properly in this last fiscal year to take into account this increase in economic activity in the north? How are you trying to get it across to these students that it's more profitable for them to actually stay in school than to go out and take that \$14- or \$25-an-hour job?

Mr. Danyluk: We gathered industry, colleges, universities, and schools together – this was in conjunction with the Youth Secretariat as well – and talked to them and looked at different ways of delivering a program, of having the counsellors understand the opportunities and understand the long-range implications of not having an education and not only looking at the short terms.

3:00

So we need to educate our school boards, our education systems, and especially our kids at an earlier level in schools – the youth apprenticeship program is a perfect example – meaning to show them the opportunities that are there, that you can achieve this goal if you continue on in school, and that if you don't and you don't have anything, you know, there's a different road that you will take, and it's not usually going to be very pleasant at the end.

Rev. Abbott: If I may, Mr. Chair, just as a summation.

The Chair: Yes.

Rev. Abbott: I'd like to thank you for that. I know that you also

advocated to CNRL to say that employers have to also have a standard, that they shouldn't even employ unless these kids can produce a high school diploma, so good on you for that.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dunn, would you like to before we end this portion of the meeting?

Mr. Dunn: Really, it's under Other Business. I can pick up something under Other Business.

The Chair: Okay. Certainly.

Mr. Danyluk: I would just like to close, if I can, with two sentences. There was a mention by the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka about the work that's done to the north. I would like to just suggest that we are so fortunate to be in the country we are, being Canadians first, Albertans second, and northerners third, but we all need to contribute to our community, and our community is Alberta.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

On behalf of all members of the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Danyluk, I would like to thank you and the minister and your officials for your time and your attention this afternoon. We appreciate the information that you have provided to us and the answers to the questions. Thank you.

In conclusion, I wish you well in all your endeavours, including advocating, hopefully, for a road to connect Fort McMurray to the Peace River district.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

That concludes that item on our agenda, and we now have item 4, Other Business.

Mr. Dunn: Briefly, I want to end with a question to the committee. You will be receiving this package by the end of next week which talks about the parliamentary oversight committees and relationships. This is the research material that was prepared by CCAF and will be discussed extensively at the forthcoming CCPAC meeting in September in P.E.I.

Don't be put off by the material. First, it's printed in both French and English.

Mr. Chase: C'est une bonne idée. It's a good idea.

Mr. Dunn: Yeah.

It's made up of two components. One, the research they went through – the research being Canadian as well as world, all those who follow the same Westminster parliamentary model – on the importance of this committee and the lessons that are learned in how to make it better. That's the research material together with a lot of aid memoirs, or tools, including things such as preparation for hearings and frequently asked questions, questions that you as members could consider, together with material on how to evaluate the effectiveness of this committee.

The question I'd like to pose to the committee is: because of the limited representation from this committee to the CCPAC meeting, would you like me to try to bring out the executive director or the lead researcher around this material to make a presentation to this committee? You can interact with that individual, challenge them

on the material that's being presented to you, the types and the approach that you're using, the processes and the procedures that you're using, and how you can make this committee more effective. Would you like me to try to bring that person out? I would suggest maybe in the fall, when the committee might be reconvening.

The Chair: We'll certainly consider it. I will confer with the deputy chair, and we will let you know.

Mr. Dunn: Okay. Thank you very much. I'd be prepared to try to do that, and therefore the committee could have that as an opportunity for ongoing education, training.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Now, the chair would like to remind members that are travelling to the conference in Charlottetown to please work with the committee clerk to get those travel arrangements made. We would be very grateful for that. Time is of the essence, particularly when we are looking at airfares and whatnot.

Mr. Webber: This is not related to Mr. Dunn's comments at all. It's Other Business. I just wanted to say a couple of things with regard to that trip to P.E.I. First of all, I had suggested a few weeks ago that when you were considering going, Mr. Chair, you had other motives in mind. I just want to apologize to you for saying that. I do sincerely apologize, and I take that back.

With regard to you appointing me to go to Prince Edward Island, I cannot accept that either. I feel that it is not the proper method of choosing a person to go to Prince Edward Island. With all due respect, I think that it should be done through a lottery-type process, as I mentioned before. When I did mention it before, I don't think that you really agreed with me there. You said that there was a motion that was put forth. I myself don't recall when that was. I don't know if it was in this session or not. But if there was a motion at that time, I would like to maybe bring up another motion, then, right now, a motion suggesting that in the event that the chairman or the vice-chairman is unable to attend a policy committee meeting or conference, then there should be some type of a lottery system in place to choose the individual to replace them. So that's the motion that I would like to put forward.

The Chair: Yes. Corinne has something to add to this.

Mrs. Dacyshyn: I don't have the date here either. I wasn't prepared for this, but I do know that the motion, because I wrote it, said that the chair or his designate and the deputy chair or his designate attend the conference. That was the motion that was passed by the committee sometime in April, I believe, which is not to say that this motion is out of order. I just wanted to repeat what the motion was that was passed back in April. That was, I believe, to make it easier. In the event that someone just was not able to go, they could pass it on.

Mr. Webber: Now, again, I'm sorry. The motion stated that in the event that the chair . . .

Mrs. Dacyshyn: No. Sorry. That was my editorial comment. The motion states exactly that "the chair or his designate, the deputy chair or his designate, and the committee clerk" attend the conference. Period.

Mr. Webber: Okay. That was sometime in April, was it?

Mrs. Dacyshyn: That was in April. I could get the date if you want.

The Chair: No. That motion was introduced to the committee by Reverend Abbott. The committee voted on it, and it cannot at this point be rescinded.

Rev. Abbott: Oh. That's what I was going to ask for clarification. If Mr. Webber would like to put on a new motion, is there some procedure, Corinne, for a notice of motion? Like, does he have to go through a process for that? Any motion made by the committee could probably be amended by the committee or not. Is it part of the Standing Orders? I'm just wondering.

The Chair: No. In light of the fact that the vice-chair has indicated that he is going, travel arrangements are being made. This committee voted. There was time allocated for discussion on this motion. None of this was discussed at that time. The chair is ruling that the motion will remain. If at some point in the future, for the next year for the Public Accounts Committee the chair will certainly abide by the motions of the committee. If the committee wants to pull the names out of a hat, then so be it. But it was to be designated by the chair and by the vice-chair, and that is what has been done. If you want to withdraw your name, that's fine. I certainly appreciate your apology. I really do. But I will designate another member of the committee.

Mr. Lindsay: Just a comment, Mr. Chairman. In regard to the motion that's on the books, presented by Reverend Abbott, talking about if the chair or the vice-chair can't go, then a designate shall attend, I don't believe that that motion indicates how the designate is to be appointed or arrived at. So I think his motion is in order, that the committee could make a motion to clarify how the designate is appointed or whatever.

3:10

The Chair: Well, I would like to have the wording of that motion before we proceed. But, again, the chair is ruling that that motion is in order, and it stands. If you want to overrule the chair's decision, then so be it, Mr. Lindsay. You're quite welcome to do that.

Mr. Lindsay: I'm just asking for clarification on the motion.

The Chair: Well, the chair has provided clarification, and the chair has ruled.

Yes?

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to make a little bit of a statement if you want to call it that. I think that we have advanced our participation in Public Accounts by looking at a different direction and a venue of alternatives on how to be publicly accountable. That was the inception of having a presentation from committees, which we will evaluate here in the very near future. It was a different concept. It was something that was you. I would suggest to you that I believe it was a progressive direction. I plead to you that I believe you should still go. Even though you have your philosophies or your beliefs, I think it's important that you participate as the leader of this committee.

The Chair: I appreciate that. I have already made arrangements for my work schedule in the first two weeks of September.

Mr. Webber, we have had lots of opportunities since your original comments and the designation of who was to travel for you to present a motion and even to withdraw your name. That has not been done until this time, and without notice. But I really appreciate your comments. If you want to overrule the chair, I'm ruling that

that motion as it was voted on by the committee, introduced by Reverend Abbott, stands. You can challenge the chair. The chair will vacate not only the chair but the room, and you can change it. If the committee wants to vote that way, that's fine.

Mr. Rogers: If I may, just a comment, Mr. Chairman. I totally agree with you in terms of the motion, the content of the motion, the process. I don't remember the exact wording, but certainly the fact that it was the chair or his designate, so I'm not disagreeing with you or challenging the chair in any manner. But the reality is that we have an individual that's been designated that has now indicated that he's not willing to attend.

Mr. Webber: I didn't say that.

Mr. Rogers: Oh. Sorry.

Mr. Webber: No. I had said that I didn't like the process on the decision.

Mr. Rogers: Process. Oh, I see. Okay. Fine. My apologies on that.

I think it's of value to this committee for someone to attend. So I guess the question at the end of the day is: will the individual designated attend under the process that was outlined by the motion, and if not, then how do we send someone else? That's all I meant. I'm not trying to challenge you. I'm not challenging you at all.

Dr. Brown: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to speak in favour of the original motion, which was to have the chair and the vice-chair or their designate go. I think it's important to recognize that this committee is chaired by a member of the opposition, and as such it's important that if we're going to have people designated or trained in their roles with respect to this committee, one of those individuals ought to come from the opposition. So I think it's entirely appropriate that we designate the chair and the vice-chair, who are from opposite sides of the House, to have an individual – if we did a lottery, the chances are that they might both come from the same party, and I don't agree with that proposition. I think it's an important recognition of the role of this committee, which is to scrutinize the government's books.

Mr. Webber: Just in response to your comments, Dr. Brown. You're suggesting, then, that if in the event that the chair or vice-chair decide not to attend the conference, they designate somebody of the opposite party to replace them because you say that it is important to have a party member.

Dr. Brown: No, from their own party.

The Chair: In the past there have been members of this committee go to the Public Accounts Committee meetings nationally, and they have both been members of one caucus. That has happened on a number of occasions, and it didn't seem to matter. I think regardless of which caucus the members came from, I would certainly say that they came back with a good understanding, and I would say that those conferences were worth while for them. That's what they told me, at least.

Mr. Webber: Again, the only issue I have is with respect to the selection process. I realize that the motion went through, and you have the authority to choose. I don't agree with that motion. I guess

that I wasn't here the day that motion did pass. I did put forth this new motion, but according to our chair, he will not accept it for a period of time, and I don't know what – maybe a year.

The Chair: Next year if the committee wants to have a different process to send members of the committee to whatever conferences, then so be it. If it's a draw from a hat or a bowl, that's fine. But this was voted by the committee. It was introduced by a member of the committee, it was discussed, and it was passed. These arrangements are already going ahead.

Mr. Webber: There haven't been any arrangements yet with regard to the scheduling of the flights. That hasn't happened yet. In any event, I have a difficulty with it, Mr. Chair, and I would stand to challenge your decision on this.

The Chair: Okay. Well, that's fine. We have had challenges of the chair's decisions in this committee in the past. Perhaps we will designate Mr. Prins as chair. Now, there's a revolutionary thought. We're going to designate him as chair, and he will take over. This has been done in the past. I neglected to tell the previous vice-chair that there can be no discussion on these items. There must be an immediate vote. Those are the rules, and so be it. If the committee clerk could be kind enough to tell me later the will of the committee, that's fine.

An Hon. Member: So do you come back and adjourn the meeting then?

The Chair: No. I have an appointment at 3:30, and this meeting was supposed to be over at 3, so I apologize.

You can challenge the chair. That's certainly your right, and I would encourage you to do so. The person in the chair now must call a vote, and that's it. The last time there were inappropriate comments made in the chair's absence, and there shouldn't even have been any discussion whatsoever on that matter.

Thank you.

[Mr. Prins in the chair]

The Acting Chair: I need a little clarification from Corinne right now as to what we're voting on because if we can call for a vote, he says that there's no discussion on this. So prior to any kind of discussion we want to first know what the vote is.

Mr. Danyluk: I want to know what the motion is.

Mr. Rodney: Chair, Mr. Prins, if I may, we would like the exact wording of the motion before we vote on it. We understand that we can't discuss it, but we would like to hear it.

3:20

Mrs. Dacyshyn: I'm going to read a passage from the Practical Guide to Committees that quotes *Beauchesne* about this particular issue and what the motion will be.

While the Chair's rulings are not subject to debate, they may be appealed to the committee. A Member appeals a ruling by requesting that the committee vote on the motion, "That the Chair's ruling be sustained." In the event of a tie vote on an appeal, the decision of the Chair is sustained. The overturning of a ruling is not necessarily considered a matter of confidence in the Chair. While the decisions made by a Chair are binding on the committee, they do not, however, constitute precedents which bind other committees, nor do they bind subsequent Chairs of the committee in which they are made.

And it gives the *Beauchesne* citation of 821.

So the motion that would be voted on would be the chair's ruling that the motion stands.

Dr. Brown: I will so move then. To put the issue on the floor, I'll move that the chair's ruling be sustained.

The Acting Chair: The chair's ruling you're talking about is appointing the designate.

Dr. Brown: No, the chair's ruling with respect to Mr. Webber's motion to overturn the previous motion on selection of delegates.

Rev. Abbott: So what are we voting on?

Dr. Brown: We're voting to sustain the chair's ruling that Mr. Webber's motion was out of order.

Rev. Abbott: Question.

Mr. Lindsay: No. I'm still not clear what we're voting on.

The Acting Chair: We can't discuss the motion, but we need to have the motion clear.

Mr. Danyluk: You can discuss the motion that you're making now.

The Acting Chair: Just to get clarification for the motion. But we're not going to debate the motion.

Dr. Brown: As Corinne has just indicated by reading it, we're talking about the issue of whether or not the chair's ruling with respect to this matter should be sustained, and I've just so moved. It's a nondebatable motion. If anyone needs clarification on that, the ruling of the chair was that Mr. Webber's contention that we ought to have a new process to select delegates was ruled out of order.

Mr. Webber: And I thus challenged his ruling, which is why we're here now to determine. So we are going to vote today, right now, on whether or not the chair's ruling will stand. Dr. Brown moved the motion that the chair's original decision was to stand.

The Acting Chair: We have to vote on it. All in favour of Neil's motion? Opposed? The motion is lost.

So what that means is that the chair's ruling has not been sustained. This is not a question of confidence in the chair. It's simply that we can entertain another motion as to how we choose the designate.

Len had a motion, so do we go back to that original motion?

Mr. Lindsay: He never had a motion.

The Acting Chair: It was ruled out of order.

Mr. Lindsay: I just wanted to comment because going back to last year, I believe the wording was the same in that either the chair, vice-chair or designate go. Well, last year we decided that the designate was going to go by a draw out of the hat. So that's the point I was trying to make when the chairman was here.

Mr. Danyluk: I know that we are the birth of bureaucracy, but I want to suggest that we need to keep in mind what the goal is, and the goal is to have participation and to have representation at this conference to bring back ideas and to bring back knowledge because

we are going to host. So however we make this motion, I just want to stress, because I haven't heard a motion yet, that a motion come forward that is one of involvement.

The Acting Chair: Okay.

Dr. Brown: I just wondered if I could request Mr. Webber in making his motion, if he intends to do so, if he could clarify with respect to this lottery system that it would be people who are interested and able to go. I think it's important to have some diversity with respect to representation on a party basis as well. I see Mr. Dunn nodding his head in affirmation of that. So if he wanted to put a motion on that basis, I think it would be supported.

The Acting Chair: Okay.
George.

Mr. Rogers: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, my comments will be somewhat along the lines of what Dr. Brown just mentioned. I think it's really important, where individuals are so inclined, willing, what have you, that we have broad representation, and ideally I would hope that this next person going to the conference would be a member of the opposition. I don't know. We only have one member here. I don't want to put Mr. Chase on the spot, but I will. Again, not to try to get in the middle of your party, sir, recognizing that the chairman is a member of your party, but if you are interested in going at all, I am quite – you know, I would hope that that representative is a member of another party. Anyhow, those are just general comments.

Mr. Chase: I'm trying to think of the best way to do things diplomatically. The statements that were made with regard to the chair's desire or not to travel to this conference caused so much convolvement and concern that we, basically, as a party felt that we should not be going on taxpayer-funded circumstances even recognizing the value of this particular trip.

There was a lot of pressure put on the chair of this committee to attend this particular meeting. He took into account the advice from the deputy chair of the committee, he took into account the advice of the Auditor General, and he reversed his regular policy because he felt that it was important to follow the advice of the committee. Then, unfortunately, a concern came out of, I guess, right field. I'll try not to sort of belittle the circumstance. It caused us as a Liberal caucus to revisit the idea of going on conferences and out-of-province tours, so as a caucus we decided that we would not do this. Therefore, being the only representative of the Liberal caucus here, that is the conclusion that we came to.

The Acting Chair: Okay. I'm very sorry to hear that.

Mr. Danyluk: I just want to say that I'm disappointed in that direction because it just sounds like if there's a little bit of heat in the kitchen, all of a sudden you bail out. I don't think that's right. I think we really need to look at the bigger picture for Albertans. I keep re-emphasizing that because I think it is important.

I don't think that you as an opposition can stand up and talk about the democratic rights of Public Accounts and the accountability of Public Accounts if you refuse to participate. That is not right. I really feel very passionate about this, you know, expression because I believe that we are here holistically for Albertans. Yes, we do have some separate philosophies, but it's important for you to take that back to your caucus and say: maybe we have to swallow. Otherwise, I say: well, gladly, we'll go. I'll go. I don't care. I think it's that important.

The Acting Chair: Dave.

3:30

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Mr. Chase, I trust that you'll just convey to your colleagues what has been said here, what will be said, and even invite them to read *Hansard*. Are we on *Hansard* for this? I echo the passion and disappointment of hon. Mr. Danyluk here. I don't want to put pressure on you in that it's a political statement and all that. But let's be honest. Pick a profession. Every one does professional development.

Things happened. As a member of government I know, and as chair of AADAC – you saw it this morning – we've got to answer to a lot of things that are really tough situations and difficult things to answer. But we're here to scrutinize, as hon. Dr. Brown said, the books, and we have to know the best way to do it.

I had the opportunity to go to Niagara Falls last year, and I learned a whole lot. There's a whole lot to be learned. I think that whether it's our chair or someone from your side, we need representation. If this is to be all-party, it shouldn't just be in this room or in the Legislature; it should be at conferences as well, especially if we're going to host.

So no one may have liked the way things have turned out, but I hear in the House often that we've got to do the right thing. I think the writing is clearly on the wall that the right thing is for representation to occur, for learning to occur so that we can be a better Public Accounts Committee and report to our taxpayers, and so that we can put on a wonderful show when it's our turn to host a conference, and we know what we're doing, and we don't have egg on our face. We don't want it on our chair's face or your party's face, anybody's face. Forget all that. That's fear. That's being scared. We just want to move forward. So this is about encouragement rather than any kind of a blame game. Let's get someone from your side there, and let's move on with the show.

Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Tony.

Rev. Abbott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't need to say much now because I think Dave and Ray said it. The only thing I will add is this: according to the Canadian parliamentary system, the opposition is to be the government-in-waiting. If your party's position is that if you ever did form the government you would never go on a professional development trip or on any other out-of-province travel, then that's ridiculous. It's not really setting a good example. I would agree with Dave and Ray on that. So I guess I would ask you also to reconsider, but if you're not willing to do that, then I think the chairman needs to entertain a motion, and we need to put this matter to bed because all of us here have other things to do.

Mr. Chase: May I have an opportunity to respond?

The Acting Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Chase: When democracy in Alberta reaches the same level that it does in the other provinces and in the federal government, when opposition members are represented on standing policy committees and through all committees, then things will definitely change, and we'll have the democratic renewal that I know Neil is working towards in terms of fixed elections and lobby registries.

Please don't put words in the mouth as to what we might do or might not do when we form the government. We try very hard. We try and put partisanship aside when we work on committees such as this, and I'm very aware of that. The comment that was made and that was directed at the chair was of a very personal nature, and

people are saying: well, move beyond it. Well, what I am saying is that it's very difficult to move beyond it when it was directed so personally and family background, et cetera, was referenced, and this is why the individual chose to go to this particular one-off circumstance. If we're going to work together, then we have to respect each other to a greater extent if that collaborative process is going to take place.

Dr. Brown: I just want to reiterate some of the things that I've mentioned before but to elaborate, perhaps. There's a long parliamentary tradition of having Public Accounts Committees chaired by a member of the opposition both provincially and federally. This is because of the nature of the committee. This is a committee which scrutinizes the books of the government. It's a critical committee, and it's unique in this particular respect.

There were some statements made for which an apology has been made. I think, as has been said, that it's time to move on. I would urge you, Mr. Chase, to talk to your caucus and urge them to move on to the next phase and to be fully engaged and involved in this committee because of the special character of the committee. I think it's critical that the opposition have a leading role to play in this committee.

I would invite Mr. Dunn to make some comments with respect to the role of the opposition in this committee and, particularly, with respect to aspects of making the committee function better to make it more effective, more efficient, and with respect to professional development ways that we can improve the performance of the committee in scrutinizing those public books, which is an essential part of the role of the opposition.

Mr. Dunn: Thank you very much. So along what Dr. Brown was just talking about there, the nature of this committee and the annual conference is that approximately 50 per cent of the members in attendance are opposition. It's just the construct. Certainly, the clerk may want to supplement my comments here. I know that there have been members of the opposition who've been there. Ms Blakeman was at the first conference I attended. I think there's a lot to be learned for the committee as a whole, both the chair and vice-chair and government and opposition members, by having attendance from both constituencies at this conference. What it teaches you is how others are doing it and getting around partisan concerns. How are they handling that? Also, how the committee can engage in a wider scope, other sort of activities which I think this committee seems to want to move towards, which is what Mr. Danyluk was just saying, progressively stepping forward.

It is beyond just the individual as the leader there. He represents the chair of the Alberta Public Accounts Committee. He represents beyond just himself, and it would be very, very disappointing not to have a member of the opposition in attendance. As you know, there are other members who can also attend. The Standing Committee on Leg. Offices – it's an all-party committee – also have members in attendance. I believe it's Mr. Strang and Janis Tarchuk who'll also be attending this year. Thus, not having a member of the opposition there is going to be very much of an opportunity missed, very much of an opportunity missed. That's why I was suggesting prior to Mr. Webber's statement: is there some way that we can also bring learning here following that conference by having a special presentation to yourselves so you can extract the lessons learned from other jurisdictions?

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Dunn.
Back to Len.

Mr. Webber: Great. I'd like to move this on a bit here right now because we have time constraints here. We've got places to go.

The Acting Chair: It's costing more money now because we're past four hours.

Mr. Webber: Good point.

Now, I'm not here to try to convince Mr. Chase and his Liberal caucus to decide otherwise. I've accepted their decision. I'm here now to just put a motion forward to suggest that in the event that the chairman or the vice-chairman of the Public Accounts Committee cannot attend or will not attend a Public Accounts conference, a lottery process be implemented with individuals who desire to attend. In those kind of words if you can reword it. You've got the gist.

Mr. Rogers: Mr. Chairman, if I may, do we need something that those individuals inform the clerk post-haste, soon, something like that? I think that's important.

The Acting Chair: Do you want to include in your motion that we do this in the next week or 10 days or something like that so that we can contact all the committee members? Anybody that's willing to put their name in can do that. You can draw, and the chairman then can designate that person.

Rev. Abbott: That'll still give the opposition a chance to rethink the issue.

The Acting Chair: I think so. That way they can have a discussion.
3:40

Mr. Chase: I don't know whether it's in order or not, but I would suggest tabling this motion at this time because there was no indication beforehand that this discussion would have come up. There was no indication to members that a vote would be taking place, and therefore I find myself already 40 minutes late in getting my transportation home. I stayed because I felt that it was important to represent the caucus views, but without the full membership here I'm not even sure if we have sufficient quorum to undertake this decision.

An Hon. Member: We have a quorum.

Mr. Chase: Well, we have quorum, but we don't have full representation, and I don't feel comfortable voting on this particular motion at this time without the representation.

The Acting Chair: Are you making a motion to table?

Mr. Chase: That is my motion.

The Acting Chair: Okay. A motion to table is not debatable. If the motion is defeated, then we go back to the original motion.

On the motion to table this motion, all in favour? Opposed? Okay. That motion is defeated.

We're back to the original motion, and I think the discussion was to allow some time, say a week or 10 days to take your choice. You say it. A week or 10 days?

Mr. Webber: I don't know. Corinne, can you do it in a week?

Mrs. Dacyshyn: I believe that the Speaker is probably anxious to have this matter resolved because I believe he is looking at conference attendance. I would say that a week would probably be the best. I'll send an e-mail and a memo to all the committee members advising them of what's happened and asking them to let me know, and then we'll put the names in a hat and have a draw.

The Acting Chair: So that's the motion. In one week a draw. Discussion on the motion?

Dr. Brown: My concern with Mr. Webber's motion, again, is with respect to the representation of the parties. As Mr. Dunn has articulated and as I have stated, this is an opposition committee. Its major function is to hold the government accountable for the spending of public monies, so I do have a difficulty with simply doing it on a random basis. I do respect the fact that you've indicated if the chair or vice-chair cannot attend, and that's a good restriction to put on it. But in the event that they cannot attend, I would prefer to have someone from one of those parties chosen by lottery.

The Acting Chair: Tony

Rev. Abbott: Yeah. I guess my comment is that the clerk will send it out to all members of the committee. Everybody will have an equal opportunity. If one of the Liberals wants to break ranks and decides that they want to put their name in, they can do that if they believe in that. If they believe in being full participants of the committee, they can do that. I think we're doing it in a very fair manner, so I'm speaking in support of the motion. The other thing that I would say is that they're the ones that are asking for participation. They're the ones that are asking for more all-party committees, so here's their opportunity. If they don't want to partake of it, fine. We cannot force that on them.

The Acting Chair: Any further discussion?

Mr. Rogers: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to propose an amendment that would follow with Dr. Brown's points. I think we've got a good idea what the result is going to be, but if we made an amendment that said that the lottery would first apply to opposition members and then, if none are available . . . Well, it's an attempt.

Rev. Abbott: You mean members of the same party of the chair or his designate.

Mr. Danyluk: Can I speak to the amendment, please?

Mr. Rogers: Let me just finish my point. You realize what I'm trying to do. I want to make an amendment because the reality is that, ideally, we want another member of the opposition to go. No offence to anyone around this table that might be interested in going. By the nature of this committee and this process ideally we should have a government and an opposition member, whether it's the lone NDP or the Liberals, but my amendment would be that the lottery first be open to members of the opposition. Failing that, it would be open to all members.

The Acting Chair: Official Opposition?

Mr. Rogers: All members of the opposition.

Mr. Danyluk: Just on the amendment, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to just say that I would definitely like to see an opposition member come

first. At the same time, I think we have responsibility for accountability. You know, yes, it is the responsibility of the opposition to have us scrutinized for accountability, but if they don't want to be there, I think it is our responsibility. It is our responsibility as well to make sure that the information from that conference is brought back to this committee. If there is no interest there, then I wouldn't put the stipulation that it has to be them. It's just like, using a sports team as an analogy, if you have somebody on the ice that doesn't want to play, you know what the result is. So if you have somebody that wants to go.

The Acting Chair: Okay. Any more discussion on the amendment only? Are we ready to vote on George's amendment? Okay. All in favour? Opposed? The amendment is defeated.

So we're back to the motion.

Dr. Brown: I'd like to move another amendment.

The Acting Chair: Okay. Go ahead.

Dr. Brown: It follows with the sense of what Mr. Rogers was trying to achieve, but I think it's a little bit more specific. I think Mr. Webber's motion is that the chair and vice-chair would attend, and if they were unable to do so, there would be a lottery. My amendment would be to put after his motion: provided that preference would be given in such a lottery to a person of the same party as the chair or the vice-chair.

Mr. Danyluk: You're duplicating the amendment. You can't bring the same kind of amendment forward.

Dr. Brown: No.

The Acting Chair: Okay. Well, if you think it's different.

Dr. Brown: He said: of the opposite party. He said, "Of the opposition." His wording was "of the opposition." My motion is that if the chair or vice-chair would be unable to attend, preference would be given to someone of the same party as the person unable to attend.

The Acting Chair: Does everybody understand the amendment? Okay. On the amendment, all in favour? That is five. Opposed? That amendment carries.

Mr. Webber: That was the same amendment that we voted on before.

The Acting Chair: Well, it was slightly different. It was slightly different. I don't have a problem with it. It just passed. We're not discussing whether it passed or not.

Now we're voting on the entire amended motion, the motion as amended. Any more discussion? What does the motion read now?

Mrs. Dacyshyn: You're taxing my shorthand abilities here. All right. Mr. Webber's motion – and this will be the motion as amended then – is that in the event that the chair or vice-chair cannot

or will not attend the CCPAC conference, a lottery process be held so that individuals desiring to attend the conference can put their names in a draw provided that preference would be given in such a lottery to a person of the same party as the person unable to attend.

Dr. Brown: Right.

Mr. Rodney: I have a question. Is that only for the CCPAC conference? That's the way it's worded. Is this for conferences in the future?

Rev. Abbott: Len specifically said the Public Accounts conference.

Mrs. Dacyshyn: He said the Public Accounts conference.

Rev. Abbott: In other words, any conference to do with Public Accounts.

Mr. Rodney: So what is it then?

Mrs. Dacyshyn: It's the CCPAC conference.

Mr. Rodney: Okay. I just want to know what I'm voting on.

Mr. Danyluk: The motion is definitely in error if you say that it is a lottery and then you give a preference. You cannot have that in the same motion.

The Acting Chair: I think you can.

Mr. Danyluk: No, you can't.

Dr. Brown: If you draw somebody that wasn't of the same party, they would not be designated. You keep drawing until somebody of the correct party.

Mr. Danyluk: Then you don't have a lottery. You keep drawing one way until you get the other party. If you don't get a person from the other party, then what do you do? Do you draw again?

The Acting Chair: You know what it is? You have two hats. One is for the opposition.

Dr. Brown: If nobody of the other party was entered into the lottery, then obviously you'd have to take somebody of the same party back. Two hats. If there's nobody in the first hat, you'd default back. It's simple, Ray.

The Acting Chair: On the motion as amended, all in favour? Opposed? That carries.

Any further business today?

Mr. Rogers: A motion to adjourn.

The Acting Chair: Okay. All in favour? It's adjourned. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 3:50 p.m.]