



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
Fourth Session

Standing Committee
on
Resources and Environment

Department of International and Intergovernmental Relations
Consideration of Main Estimates

Tuesday, March 1, 2011
6:30 p.m.

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Fourth Session**

Standing Committee on Resources and Environment

Prins, Ray, Lacombe-Ponoka (PC), Chair
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL), Deputy Chair

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McQueen, Diana, Drayton Valley-Calmar (PC)
Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat (PC)
VanderBurg, George, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne (PC)

Department of International and Intergovernmental Relations Participant

Hon. Iris Evans Minister

Also in Attendance

Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (AL)

Support Staff

W.J. David McNeil	Clerk
Shannon Dean	Senior Parliamentary Counsel/ Director of House Services
Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Law Clerk/Director of Interparliamentary Relations
Micheline S. Gravel	Manager – House Proceedings
Corinne Dacyshyn	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications and Broadcast Services
Melanie Friesacher	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Philip Massolin	Committee Research Co-ordinator
Stephanie LeBlanc	Legal Research Officer
Diana Staley	Research Officer
Rachel Stein	Research Officer
Liz Sim	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 1, 2011

[Mr. Prins in the chair]

**Department of International and Intergovernmental Relations
Consideration of Main Estimates**

The Chair: Well, good evening, everyone. We'd like to call to order tonight the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment for March 1, 2011. We would like to remind everyone that the usual rules regarding electronic devices and food and beverages in the Chamber continue to apply.

Members and staff should be aware that all the proceedings of the policy field committees in their consideration of the budget estimates are being video streamed. The minister whose department estimates are under review is seated in the designated location. All other members wishing to speak must do so from their assigned seat in the Chamber. Any official or staff member seated in the chair of a member must yield the seat immediately should a member wish to occupy his or her seat.

This evening the committee has under consideration the estimates of the Department of International and Intergovernmental Relations for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012. The speaking order and times are prescribed by the standing orders and Government Motion 5, passed on February 23, 2011, and are as follows: (a) the minister may make opening comments not to exceed 10 minutes; (b) for the hour that follows, members of the Official Opposition and the minister may speak; (c) for the next 20 minutes the members of the third party, if any, and the minister may speak; (d) for the next 20 minutes the members of the fourth party, if any, and the minister may speak; (e) for the next 20 minutes the members of any other party represented in the Assembly and any independent members and the minister may speak; (f) any member may speak thereafter, alternating between government and opposition members. Within this sequence members may speak more than once; however, speaking time is limited to 10 minutes at a time.

A minister and a member may combine their time for a total of 20 minutes. I would ask the members to advise the chair at the beginning of their speech if they plan to combine their time with the minister's time.

Committee members, ministers, and other members who are not committee members may participate. Department officials and staff members may be present but may not address the committee.

Three hours have been scheduled to consider the estimates of the Department of International and Intergovernmental Relations. If debate is exhausted prior to three hours, the department's estimates are deemed to have been considered for the time allotted in the schedule, and we will adjourn. Otherwise, we'll adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

Points of order will be dealt with as they arise, and the clock will continue to run.

Votes on the estimates will be deferred until Committee of Supply on April 20, 2011.

Regarding amendments, written amendments must be reviewed by Parliamentary Counsel no later than 6 p.m. on the day that they are to be moved. An amendment to the estimates cannot seek to increase the amount of the estimates being considered, change the destination of a grant, or change the destination or purpose of a subsidy. An amendment may be proposed to reduce an estimate, but the amendment cannot propose to reduce the estimate by its full amount. Voting on amendments is also deferred until Committee of Supply, April 20, 2011. Twenty-five copies of

amendments must be provided at the meeting for committee members and staff.

A written response by the office of the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations to questions deferred during the course of the meeting can be tabled in the Assembly by the minister or through the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for the benefit of all MLAs.

At this point I would invite the hon. minister of the Department of International and Intergovernmental Relations to begin her remarks. Thank you.

Ms Evans: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment. Ladies and gentlemen, let me please begin by first of all introducing the staff that have done such yeoman service in providing, once again, timely information for me in order to present this budget to you this evening: to my immediate right, Deputy Paul Whittaker, fresh from Washington, as I am, having been up very early this morning to fly from Toronto – I'm going to my best to keep him awake, at least – to his right, Lorne Harvey, who is the assistant deputy minister in charge of corporate services, who looks after corporate services in IIR as well as aboriginal relations. You'll see him here tomorrow night with my colleague Mr. Webber as he comes in. He's been responsible with his staff for preparing two budgets. To his immediate right is a young gentleman who has done so much to make sure that all the numbers and everything that you see are correct, Howard Wong. We're very privileged to have Howard in our ministry. He does a great job for us.

To my immediate left is John Cotton, very experienced in international relations, assistant deputy minister in that portfolio. No stranger to anybody in the Legislative Assembly is Garry Pocock, who has long served in International and Intergovernmental Relations and has negotiated things with the TILMA agreement but also takes care of many of our agreements across Canada. It's predominantly his role to make sure that we work well together with our neighbouring provinces and the federal government.

The new budget is a carbon copy of last year's. It's exactly the same thing. We've neither had an increase nor a reduction from the \$23.9 million budget we had over the past year. These budgets, both last year's budget and this year's budget, are the smallest in government. It was a challenge last year because immediately we had a reduction of 7.7 per cent of our budget, lost 8 per cent of our workforce, a total of 13 staff positions, and that's still being felt. At the same time, though, demands on our ministry grew. We needed to do more with less, and we did, and there are several ways that I can identify that. We had at least 46 international missions, hosting U.S. Senators, EU parliamentarians, hosting people that hoped to fly under the radar from other governments as they came in and learned more about what we were doing in Alberta, people who wanted to make successful trade and investment missions, and we also organized those kinds of missions for Premier Stelmach and our offices, myself, and MLAs.

Last year really laid the foundation for this year, and for that I'm really optimistic about what this ministry can and will achieve. Let me be clear. In government I've never seen a time when Alberta has been so much in the spotlight, where this ministry is so much about building relationships with other governments, with industries, and with the many people who have demands on our ministry. What we accomplished over this past year makes me, indeed, quite proud. I'm proud of our ability to carry out the mandate but never more than this weekend, while I was in Washington and observed the way that we're received by people who use on a first-name basis the names of our staff when

they meet them. These are governors. The equivalent of our Premier walks into a room and is immediately taken because they recognize our staff, recognize Alberta, applaud Alberta.

We continue to ensure that Alberta's interests are well represented in the federation. We protect our interests in the global arena and demonstrate to the world the leadership that's become synonymous with Alberta. With no increase in our budget but with increased costs we have to be more resourceful, innovative, and cost-effective. Our three goals centre around how we compete globally, how we market ourselves globally, and how we establish policies for competition. My department is responsible for maximizing the success of Alberta's trade policies, and sometimes that means stepping into the ring to be sure that we're treated fairly.

For example, last year we successfully challenged Ontario over its protectionist policy that restricted Alberta vegetable oil producers and refiners from selling in Ontario. Yes, it's an agriculture policy, but it's up to our group to deal with the litigation and preparation of these policies and agreements and to fight the good fight. That was an important win not just for Alberta but for other provinces because regaining access to Ontario could create a market of an estimated \$225 million within Canada for dairy and vegetable oil products.

One of our core activities is relationship building, and we did that on many occasions. This ministry was integral in the planning for the Ontario mission this year, where we worked on strengthening the understanding of people across Canada, particularly in Ontario, about the kinds of things that we provide not only with our significant resources but in co-operation with the government of America in terms of trading relationships.

America, Mr. Chairman, is still a priority, but we've found it very clear that we need to examine our partnerships overseas, and the new Asia Advisory Council Act builds on just that, the new markets that we must in fact gain access to. Earlier today I said that in the last two years we've had some \$20 billion worth of investment from Asian companies here, and the opportunity we have to build on this new market is significant. We believe the council could include 10 members and, as I referenced earlier today, a cross-section of people and organizations with interests in business, culture, and academia. We're going to do this and build on this framework without expecting to gain more dollars from our foreign offices but to reposition and re-emphasize the duties of the people that are working right within our ministry and that you see here today. We're going to work on enhancing Alberta's competitiveness. We're going to work on fostering our international trade.

6:40

I'm not sure if any of you noted this, but I count us so fortunate to have had the relationships we've had with many of our key partners, not the least of which was our very own dean of the consular corps, Yasuo Minemura, who, introduced with his wife last week, wept when they left, in large part because they have been so well treated by the people here, the MLAs here, having a great relationship with John Cotton, who has worked with them extensively, and I've had a great privilege in working with them as well.

Our support for the Premier and the MLAs that accompanied him to India last year laid the groundwork for a Canada-India trade agreement, which could mean enormous trade opportunities. One of the other things we're doing within this year's budget, again, is repositioning our dollars to do that.

We will support the Premier as he advances priorities in Canada at the Western Premiers' Conference and the Council of the Federation, for example.

We're still involved in negotiating with the EU on the comprehensive economic trade agreement, the CETA agreement. You've read some of that in the media lately, what might make a deal and what might break a deal, but certainly our group is working integrally, with Alberta providing significant leadership on the policies for agricultural products; beef, wheat, and pork, for example. When I was in London last month, I met investors and business leaders who were there, anxious to talk about EU trade and advocating that we could even do more. They're supportive of our advocacy for oil sands, and I think they really believe this is a top priority for this government. Of course, we've supported Minister Liepert's recent trip to the EU and other trips that have been taken by other ministers.

Partnering to open the Shanghai office, again with the Premiers of B.C. and Saskatchewan, the new trade offices there: you wonder how we're doing it. Well, we're sharing with other ministries. The Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology has been in shared partnership in the development of that ministry, critically important because we believe that the technology and the advancement of the innovation agenda that Advanced Education and Technology has lends itself to having that kind of partnership.

Mr. Chairman, I'm almost finished. The New West Partnership is part of our mandate, and we will be working with the newly elected Premier in British Columbia and Premier Brad Wall to see that we retain our position in the global marketplace, with initiatives like, let me just add, sending a letter about that from the Premiers to the Prime Minister of Canada and to the political parties. It's the kind of thing that we do when we protest the kind of treatment we do or don't get.

I should say that over here to my immediate left is Marika Giesen. Many of you are familiar with Marika in my office, and she's joining us here this evening as well.

With that, I'm at your pleasure.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Evans.

I think we'll go directly to the opposition. The opposition has one hour to make comments and ask questions, and I think we'll break it into 20-minute sections. I believe you'll alternate your questions.

Ms Pastoor, please rise.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With the indulgence of Madam Minister, I think that if we're going to exchange back and forth, we may as well just stay sitting as we speak to each other. Is that acceptable or not?

The Chair: It might be okay, but for the video I don't know how they do this. It's live-streaming video.

Ms Pastoor: Okay.

Thank you, Madam Minister. Your remarks have certainly fit into some of the questions that I want to ask. I want to stay on the big picture of what your department is because, in my mind, it is probably one of the most important departments we have. It may have a small budget, but I think that it has a very big impact in the global world, which we're all trying to struggle to become a part of.

Just a couple of comments before I sort of get into questions. Again, this is a constituent who has a company that it took me probably a month to learn how to pronounce. It's called Iunctus, and they have satellites that go over and can photograph everything. I've been through the place. It's absolutely amazing. They explained everything to me, and as I walked out of there, I realized that probably the only thing I really understood was that one shouldn't sunbathe nude in their backyard. That was what I

learned from my little trip to Iunctus. However, Ryan Johnson, who is the president of that company, was thrilled with his ability to go on that trade mission. It was very, very successful for him. I just thought I'd like to pass that on to you, that that Indian trip was very, very successful for someone from my constituency.

One other notation that I'd like to make is that we talk about competitiveness, we talk about global, and I think that one of the more important things – and I realize that this is not your bailiwick necessarily. However, I honestly believe that we have to start Mandarin in kindergarten in this province. It is clearly going to be the language of the future. It may cost money, but I think that in the end the long-term results that we would get from educating our students in Mandarin right from the get-go would be immeasurable.

With those few remarks I will get on to the ministry goals: that Alberta is a leader in building key strategy and economic relationships, including relationships at the international and federal levels as well as New West Partnership, which you have also alluded to; that Albertans compete successfully in Canadian and global markets; and that Alberta's interests are co-ordinated and advanced.

I think what I'm going to do is just go and do it by topic headings if I may. The first thing is the Asia Advisory Council Act. It's Bill 1, so clearly it's very important to the Premier as well as to Albertans. Just a couple of questions on that. What line item in the estimates reflects the travel expenses and the administrative costs expected to be associated with the new council once it's established under Bill 1, which is the Asia Advisory Council Act? If the costs are not included in the estimates, how will the expenses associated with the council once it's operational be paid for? Whose budget will it be coming out of? When was the decision made to have the Asia Advisory Council Act as Bill 1? Was it made after the estimates were completed, which would then probably explain why it isn't in your projected spending plan? Perhaps we could just work on that.

Ms Evans: Thank you. First of all, there are no defined costs because the members are not going to be expected to be paid anything. They're not actually going to be expected to be paid for trips that they may take to Asia because that will be part of what they do in the normal course of business. So a lot of the people that we invite to submit their applications will be people who are already, out of their own pocket, out of their own corporate mission going back and forth on their own. There may be people that have never travelled to Asia – I'm not saying that there wouldn't be – but in this budget and right within our administrative area the deputy will find some money. No doubt John Cotton will find some money, but we'll pool that to select.

This year will be about selecting the members. We'll be identifying a budget. We'll be doing more to advance this. It's going to take a period of time at the conclusion of this bill to actually get all of those things in place. I would hope that by the fall we would have the 10 chosen, but getting the bill passed was our first priority.

We knew we had to do this and any initiative like the Shanghai office and the New West Partnership with no additional dollars. But we have dollars. You talk about alliances, and you mention them. We've got several alliances with America. You're aware that some of the colleagues here – the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, for example, has been part of Ports-to-Plains and the Border Trade Alliance, and we have alliances with the Western Governors' Association and so on. We've got all of those particular alliances, but the Asia advisory council this year really does not have a line and will just have to come out of the other dollars, and I expect it to be predominantly administrative.

6:50

I'm going to rely and lean heavily not only on the people that are in our foreign offices to help us with the knowledge base that we need for that but our consul generals, the appointments from Japan and China, Madam Liu, obviously, in Calgary as well as our honorary consuls that will help us, and organizations like the Korean community association here in Edmonton. We'll be reaching out to all of those types of agencies across Alberta to get recommendations as we develop the terms of reference and also how we appoint the membership.

Right now in this year's budget it'll be a time of anticipating what the needs will be and tailoring the activities of the council to fill the capacity that we have to bring. We have to also balance it with the desire many of our members have to follow up on reports that have been done in terms of bringing other partners on stream; for example, having a representative in India, which we don't have. We don't have a foreign office in India. So we'll have to take a look at where our best priorities can be used to spend that, but this year will be about defining it. Then if there's a great amount of enthusiasm, obviously, in this term of office with a new leader, there may be in next year's budget more of a definition. I think, if I may, that would be how I'd respond.

I just can't resist this. You mentioned Iunctus. Ryan's dad and I were boyfriend and girlfriend in grade 3 together in dear Stavely, Alberta, with my father as principal and a great hunting buddy of his father. They used to hunt and fish together. So I was thrilled to meet Bob again at Ryan's office. I, too, toured that place, and we've got a group in Thailand that we met with when we were there in January that want to do some work with Iunctus and who have made very valuable linkages. It's not clear yet how that partnership will evolve, but they've been looking at ways of funding things. The exciting work they do with satellite imagery, yes, would assure that you not only don't want to sunbathe; you just don't want to streak anywhere. You'll be caught.

I agree with you on Mandarin. When we were visiting the Chinese consul in Washington on Saturday night – they are producing books now for a starting curriculum for those who might want to start learning Mandarin, and I brought one back. I wanted to have a conversation with my colleague in Education. As you know, it is a part of some of the schools. I believe that in both Calgary and Edmonton Mandarin is being taught, but I think you're quite far sighted to see it as an opportunity for the future.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms Pastoor.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. Just a quick follow-up on that. I don't know whether you have this, you know, sort of cast yet, but I would suspect that terms of office for this particular council should be short so that you're getting – I mean, this is only me – a lot of different kinds of people that have that kind of Asian experience so that someone doesn't sit there too long.

Ms Evans: I'd like that, but, you know, when people are really good, you tend to want them longer than others. We'll take that under advisement because I think what is really important is getting more people to participate.

I also think that what is really important is participation across the province. There are a lot of people in the Japanese community in southern Alberta that we don't tend to see so frequently, but at the reception that Yasuo Minemura held in Calgary, there were quite a few people from Lethbridge representing the college and so on, so that blend of academia is really important as well and to kind of keep in touch.

I will ask, if you wouldn't mind submitting it to me, for maybe a suggestion of the turnover that you might think would be a useful engagement. I think having people for at least two years and then staggering terms would be a very useful way as well so that we keep getting changes in groupings.

The Chair: Thank you.
Ms Pastoor, please.

Ms Pastoor: Yes. Thank you for that. You've mentioned the Japanese in southern Alberta. I think we know that they were moved from the west coast, but the majority of them, their language skills are excellent. We still have many, many, many even younger people that have Japanese speaking skills. That's great.

I'll go on to the international strategy. The government aims to boost the province's profile: international offices, expanding business presence abroad, which you have certainly referred to in many ways. The priority initiative 3.1, page 82 of the business plan, is to advance Alberta's interests by implementing an international strategy. Through what means does the ministry plan to implement the new international strategy? Would it be primarily the responsibility of the international offices? What's the timeline for full implementation, and what will the associated costs be? What line item will this be reflected in? I'm actually really more interested in how you're going to do this.

I think this is very exciting. I've been fortunate in my life to have travelled a great deal at a very young age and realized what it means to go beyond your own borders and outside of your own box, so I think this is very important. I know that when I sat on the senate at the University of Lethbridge, one of the things that I always wanted to see was that at the third year level we had exchanges. It could be a straight exchange or however they want to do it. I just don't think that we have enough exchange with all of the different countries that we work with in the world.

Ms Evans: A large part of it has evolved because of the participation and the evolving of the capacity of the Washington office, which has become more active in policy advocacy, taking a stronger stand on what Alberta can do here for its resource-based economy.

I think that when you look at our international strategy, there are a couple of things in mind: hiring the right people and giving them the right direction and resources in the international office; partnering, where it's possible, with other ministries like Advanced Education, Agriculture, Employment and Immigration to make sure there are robust supports for that advocacy, especially dealing with what they want. For example, in the Middle East they really don't worry much about our environment, but if you're going to the EU, they do worry about our environment. The negotiations there rely heavily on the expertise from Environment as well and our energy and clean energy strategy.

The policy per se is going to set the framework for doing things like the New West Partnership, where we've got the Shanghai office with co-location to save dollars but maximize resources. I see us using the consuls general in a more integrated fashion. I also see us taking a look at the successes that we may achieve from the Shanghai office for other templates, maybe even looking at people who are expats in some countries. I'm particularly fond of the idea that materially happened after Thailand had the huge tsunami. There were honorary consuls general there from Germany and other countries that started to become links back to their mother country, if you will, to get extra support for those people on the ground that were hurting and homeless.

I think there are a number of ways we can do it. One of the most successful things this ministry has done is to work very successfully with the international diplomats. I see a real change over the last 10 years. Ambassador Gary Doer, Ambassador Ross Hornby, and High Commissioner Jim Wright in Britain really worked to understand the oil sands. We tutor them on the oil sands, and we work on the international strategy, being part of building up our partners as well.

That paper that we approved earlier this year and released as a strategy is something that we're using to build on with the various things that I've just outlined, practical ways of making it happen.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you for that, Madam Minister. You mentioned expats. I'm not sure how they would be useful necessarily at the upper levels, but we have a tremendous amount of young Albertans who actually married when they went over to teach English in Thailand, Malaysia, and the Middle East countries. There are a lot of young people out there that speak the language and really understand the culture and have now become part of it because they're living there. There may be something there to be able to tap into.

Strategy 1 of the international strategy is also to harness international efforts of stakeholders and partners through collaboration. You have mentioned some. I'm just wondering: how much do we work with the Canadian government? We seem to be sort of off on our own. When people are out there, are they seen as Albertans, or are they seen as Albertan/Canadians or Canadian/Albertans? How is that sort of looking to the international community?

7:00

Ms Evans: When we're not under the gun, it's the Canadian oil sands; when we're under the gun, it's Alberta oil sands. It's the best way I can define it. Frankly, we are claimed by everywhere else in the country when things are going well here, and that seemed to be the case in Washington this weekend.

You look at things like our Council of State Governments; the national council; the midwestern council; the Pacific North West Economic Region, which is PNWER, which was very successful last year thanks to the Member for Calgary-Bow with other members that are here this evening negotiating and making that program work well; the Ports-to-Plains; the Western Governors' Association. In large part it's some tough sledding by people like David Kettles and Marvin Schneider in our office, that do a lot of the work to keep those fences mended between the various staff and the alliances.

There are some pretty modest fees. For example, the PNWER fee at \$40,000 is really the largest fee, but it gives us membership, it gives us partnerships in the conferences, and then people network back and forth.

How are we seen? I think Alberta is seen as a very privileged class of people because we live in a resource-based economy. I want to tell you how we're seen in Canada sometimes. This morning on the airplane the stewardess said: I'd like you to let my people who are coming from the east to work in the oil sands off the plane first. There must have been 30 of them that got off the plane first, running to catch a plane to Fort McMurray. When you talk to those kinds of people – Paul had a good conversation with someone coming to work at Suncor, because all of our flights were in such a problem – those people look at us as lunch-bucket money to send home to their families. I think that to a large extent it's sort of collaborative, where people, the workforce, are coming back here. They're liking that participation in Canada.

The people across the border have recognized that we mean 343,000 jobs between 2011 and 2015, and with the possible ex-

ception of Nebraska, who's a little skittish about the routing of the Keystone pipeline, people want those jobs. They want to know that the 250 businesses along the perimeter of that pipeline are going to get to pay their salaries as well. So I think that's how it's built.

Overseas a lot of the work that I think has been done by the people in the U.K. office, for example, relates to networking investors together. It's a different kind of climate, making sure that the banks and the other financial institutions – Lloyd's of London sent their people to visit me when I first got in this ministry. They're looking at trying to understand better what we're doing. They want to understand our provincial energy strategy, our oil sands secretariat work, the work we're doing right now in the ministerial working group on energy and the environment to make sure that we're fitting their energy strategies, the work that Garry and others are doing to negotiate the EU agreement. Those things all have a play back and forth across the pond. Even though they're not directly being negotiated by any of the foreign offices, they pay attention.

The Chair: That is the first 20 minutes. If you're finished, then we'll go back to Ms Pastoor, and we'll set the clock for another 20 minutes.

Go ahead, please.

Ms Pastoor: Yes. Thank you. With the collaboration of some of these larger governments or whatever, is there going to be a cost-sharing factor that may come into these collaborations, and if so, does the minister expect to see spending decreased as a result of the collaboration? If there would be cost sharing and cost savings, what line item in the estimates would the decrease be reflected in, line 3.1 or 3.2? It's fairly obtuse because all it says is international relations and international offices. There's a fairly large amount of money there, and I'm sure there are lots of little details that aren't really on that page.

Ms Evans: In fact, that's a very good observation because although our costs in the department are roughly \$5.9 million, I could stand corrected on our foreign offices. The foreign office budgets are supplemented by other ministries who pay to have their support there, so there is ministerial support. We are exploring a DRI or a type of a policy that would enable people who look at participation with us on a trade fair, for example, to provide some dollars for that participation, when we get industrial partners to come, for example, to a trade show in Munich on something. That's a very new participation.

Our co-location in Shanghai is the best example. That office is costing us less than \$150,000. We could never do that on our own or put one person there on our own. It would cost two or two and a half times as much. But we're sharing real estate. We're sharing procurements so that they can bid for a larger sum for paper and office supplies, the lights, telephones, et cetera. We can stand alone within those offices. That's an example of the kind of co-location.

When we umbrella it under our international strategy, we usually think of Shanghai, but that's really because it's a first. I'd like to see us co-locate in Brussels and be able to give some kind of opportunity in Brussels because of the 753 parliamentarians in the EU. In Washington that's just a stellar example, where we've got Environment helping us with the cost there. We have always negotiated with the federal government for our piece of space, and that's more easily done there, perhaps, than in Japan, where the space is very expensive space because that's just the way it is in Japan. The real estate is more expensive. Sometimes it's more

successful than others. Those are the kinds of partnerships that the staff go out and negotiate.

I'll never be satisfied entirely until we get more people recognizing the importance of the partnership. I'll give you Japan as an ideal example. At least four of the nine staff are probably working on agriculture policies, policies for the beekeepers in Sapporo, for example, marketing our honey to those folks and to the suppliers as well, and policies where we're trying to integrate the transfer of our food products to needy markets in Japan. This June, if our efforts bear fruit, we'll have people here from the Middle East to come and see how we can transfer lots more than just cereal grains to a place that without the water really needs the capacity that we've got for value-added food processing. So we've got some of those kinds of ventures.

Mexico: I could look at the work that we've done there to educate their firefighters because of participation with SRD, but that kind of co-operative partnership sometimes starts with a mission that the Premier or ministers have made that branches out to other departments. Those other departments get involved and sometimes take over the whole project, but we keep networking with either our international staff or the foreign office staff members.

The Chair: Thank you.
Ms Pastoor, please.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Madam Minister. What are the projected costs associated with the implementation of strategy 2 of the international strategy? It's mentioned on page 8 of the international strategy document.

Ms Evans: I'm not sitting with the international strategy document here, but we can certainly break those out and let you know what they are. On the international missions I can talk to you about the purposes, the various costs of the various missions that we've had, but in terms of the overall projected costs, if I'm understanding, you want to have over and above the existing costs the international strategy might bear out? It's really to some degree rolled up in both the hosting of international visits, and it's also identified as part of, for example, the international trade fairs that we offer supports for.

7:10

In fact, this year we have a year with no global petroleum show in Calgary in June. It happens every other year. But it's going to be in next year's budget and that attracts 66,000 people, so we have peaks and valleys. For example, this year we'll have 50,000-plus, closer to 100,000, for trade fair booths in Doha, where we're going to be able to do a fair amount of work in December. Staff will certainly go. Whether or not there are elected officials that take part in it – we certainly hope there are. The Premier has spoken in Doha previously, but that's one of the biggest in the entire world for oil and gas and the technology side.

Some years you have those trade fairs that cost more than others: the Petrotech exhibition in New Delhi that we participated in this year, the Abu Dhabi international petroleum exhibition and show. So if it's in the out-of-country budget, it's in with the international division. So that would be within John's. We can just look and give you a little tally on that.

Ms Pastoor: That'd be great. Thanks.

Strategy 3 is to strengthen Alberta's international profile. How much of the strategy is tied directly to the promotion of Alberta's "clean energy story." I think probably the point of that question is: is the international and intergovernmental money being used as a

part of the \$25 million sort of PR profile that's been going on for the last year?

Ms Evans: There would be a small piece of it. We've had supports for the activities in Washington. The Waxman-Markey bill, for example, netted out some additional supports that came in the form of consultants in Washington that helped us with the legislators. So we have expended that, and that would be the budget from the bureau, but we've had some support for that.

We've done some advertisements as well relative to that. It's a very interesting thing to do a profile because the Environment minister, obviously, is integrally involved, the Energy minister is very involved, and when I go and market Alberta, we're very involved, so the costs of some of our activities, both in the travel and engagement with officials at the local level, will be in part out of our budget where we are talking about the strategies, the policies, and so on, not developing those policies but discussing the strides we've made and keeping an eye on the foreign relations.

I think in last year's budget there was probably about \$250,000 that was spent in the branding that was spent last year but nothing at all this year. So think of it as last year there were dollars that were spent underneath the branding in government, but this year there are no dollars for that. The dollars that are spent on that are spent as a result of us going places and marketing and doing things: giving speeches, distributing information.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. In Washington do we still have consultants on contract?

Ms Evans: There have been some consultants on contract. Not in this budget. It's not in our budget. From time to time there may be smaller consulting contracts for, let's say, \$10,000 released to help stage some sort of an event or something that might be done. Most of that, I can tell you, has been done by Gary Mar and his staff, who are busy doing set-up and teardown and delivery at the same time. My understanding is that if there is any further advocacy, it would be in the Public Affairs Bureau budget. That's where you could look for it.

Ms Pastoor: Okay. You have touched on this, but perhaps you might like to elaborate a little bit more. How do the efforts of the delegations and overseas offices differ in Asia versus Europe? I think you sort of touched on it in that Europe tends to require more on the environmental side, and with Asia the message is about security and the amount of supply. I had a question further on that would probably tie into that at this point. What is Alberta's stance on any kind of a moral obligation for human rights in China?

Ms Evans: Very interesting. When I had the previous ministry of employment, immigration and industry, we had a conversation about that. When I had Finance and Enterprise, in Norway we had a conversation about ethics in investments. That hasn't tended to come up with us, although I haven't been to China since that period when I was in employment, immigration and industry. So I'm not aware of anything current that's come up there.

What was the first part of your question? Let me just make sure I'm not delaying.

Ms Pastoor: The difference between Europe and Asia and what their different demands are.

Ms Evans: Generally speaking, in South Korea they won't ask you about the environment. You already know that they've made some investment, so they don't ask about the environment. They

want security of supply, so they'll come after that. In the EU they will want to know what you've done, how your performance measures are, what the ratings are. They'll want more information, more data, more scientific data.

When we had Chairman Bradbourn here and visited the oil sands, we gave them data not only from the government but from the Pembina Institute. They met them as well. We make available a selection that they choose themselves for other advocates. We make academia sources available for them as well. So there is certainly a difference.

When we were in Kuwait in January, they said: "You're in the right place at the right time. We want to invest in you. You've got a third of the energy supply for the world." While we watch what's happening in the Middle East, they were nervous while we were there because they were already seeing Tunisia. Now we've seen Egypt since, and we've got Libya and others, Yemen and Bahrain, some of these others that have become very on edge. You can see evidence of that in America, too. They are certainly not as anxious to take this for granted right now.

Ms Pastoor: What specifically will be involved in the ministry's plans to expand Alberta's presence in the Middle East? I think you've spoken about that.

California and Brazil: are you contemplating international offices in either California or Brazil? If so, what are the time frames that you would be looking at? Certainly, Brazil I think is going to be an interesting partner at some point in time.

Ms Evans: We have already one of our staff, Benigno, who has been doing so much work in Mexico, Spanish speaking, helping industrial groups that are doing work in Brazil. We have been asked by the governor in I believe it's Dos Campos in Brazil to get involved in a partnership. He has invited our Premier to come down, and I think that's the first move toward establishing something there. We've got a lot of common themes on the energy file.

California. You know, at one point there was an Alberta office in California. There's been some suggestions that there might be some wisdom in other parts of the States. Currently we do a lot of work with the consuls general that are placed there by the federal government. We brought them all up here this year to have an orientation on various things with the oil sands, to get them to tour the oil sands, listen to the experts, know what's going on. So we're tending to put our eggs in the basket of working through the Canadian offices right now. Will there be an office there someday? I think it has been contemplated, but we're focusing our efforts in Washington and making sure that the Washington office determines what's next. We were invited to a conference in Texas on April 5 and 6 by Governor Perry, and we'll be looking at sending some expert there, but we're tending to run things out of the Washington office.

As the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat could tell you, we are also seeing Denver as a bit of a hub and Idaho, places that we tend to focus on when they need speakers on things that relate to the energy industry. They're very concerned. Montana has been so very supportive with Governor Schweitzer that we're trying to keep that collaboration working. You know, right in Cardston, Bryce Jacobs' country, we spend time liaising with our partners from just south of the border in annual meetings to keep the home fires burning there.

Any further office at this time, hon. member, I don't think – we'd love to have the money to do more in the Middle East, Brazil, and India, so stay tuned. When we can, we'll be singing that song again.

7:20

The Chair: Thank you.
Ms Pastoor.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. Well, if Jerry Brown can come back a second time, so can Arnold. When he does, maybe we'll open an office, and I can meet Arnold.

On the overseas trade offices I think you did mention – yeah, you basically mentioned all of these: Munich, Seoul. The offices that are responsible for Alberta, so to speak, through the different cities in the world, advance advocacy, trade promotion, investment attraction, and other government of Alberta interests, including immigration, education, and culture. How do these offices differ in terms of a consulate or an embassy? That would be the Canadian consulate or Canadian embassy. How does the Alberta office work separately or with?

Ms Evans: Well, you know, there's obviously an individual role in advocating on behalf of Alberta, but because they are co-located, frequently Alberta has had an advantage that other provinces wouldn't have, so we've tried to be a little careful there.

How are they different? Some would be in the frequency and the hosting opportunities. Some would depend on their own economic advantages and where they are. We tend to watch things closely, too, politically. For example, when Gordon Brown was unseated last year, politically it was not the time to go over there until we could look at the new parliamentarians. But look at us right now. With the China office we're co-located. We're co-locating with Saskatchewan and B.C. in Shanghai. We're co-located in the German office. We stand alone in Hong Kong and Japan, and we're co-located in all other offices: Korea, Mexico, Taiwan. We're co-located in the U.K. and in the Washington office. It will serve us better in some places to be co-located. For example, Ambassador Doer is doing such a fine job in Washington. I can't imagine not being with him. He's a fantastic advocate. He's doing very well. I'd have to say that that's really important.

In offices like the Japan office there's such a fairly significant cost attached to that and a very defined agriculture message. There's just no other space or capacity for us to do anything so much in partnership with somebody else there. We've looked at other options in Korea, in South Korea. We're co-located with the Canadian office there. Sometimes they work on complementary agendas. When the G-8 was there, there were some conversations where our staff members were involved, and then there's a *quid pro quo* where they provide support back where we need it, physical space, and so on. Co-location in the Mexican office; they're shoehorned into a space there, and I suspect that that works well from some standpoint.

You know, anybody who thinks that my foreign managers are living in luxury should go and see what kind of conditions they have. They're doing a lot with very little. They're doing it because, in my view, they've got such completely dedicated staff. They're doing it under circumstances where they're on their own, really, a good part of the time, and we're just, I think, really blessed. The one real blessing that I've had in this office is knowing that I've got an A-team working right across the board.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That concludes the second 20-minute portion.

Go ahead, please, Ms Pastoor.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. Just to follow up on that, of those co-locations how many would be actually with the New West Partnership? Or are they all Alberta?

Ms Evans: No. They're just Alberta. The only co-location on the New West Partnership right now internationally is with the Shanghai office. That New West Partnership might expand to other places, but Shanghai is sort of our first dip into the pool together to see how it works. There's going to be tracking of dollars, effectiveness, performance measures. You might be surprised to know that we were the most frugal on our budget and our budget expectations for that office. I'd have to say that many other governments are spending considerably more on the kind of overtures they have in those offices. That's how we evaluate it: how much is it costing, and are we getting the best bang for our buck, and are they able to feel like they're doing their work unfettered unduly by somebody else's influence?

Ms Pastoor: Maybe I'd ask you to elaborate on that a little bit more because I'm not sure that I totally understand. What time frame do you need for an evaluation? Clearly, you can't send somebody over to an office, get it set up, get them to have a couple of cocktail parties, and evaluate it. I mean, that's just nonsense. You need probably, I'm thinking, a five-year window to actually see what the evaluation would be: has the money come back, and what does it cost us? What process does that evaluation take?

Ms Evans: Well, as you'll notice in our business plan, there's an evaluation or an evolution in developing our performance measures based on the new international strategy. A good part of it you get right from your customers: the kind of letters that you get, the kind of monthly activity reports that they do. They have to have an annual performance evaluation. They send a tracking of their activities every month. Those are checked by a person in the office and reported through to the assistant deputy minister.

Maybe I should clear up your business on wondering about co-location. Co-location is usually within the embassy of the Canadian government. You're familiar with that. Okay. I just wanted to be sure of that.

I think you can pretty well tell by the activity. It isn't very hard to see how keen these people are because they'll be reporting frequently. They do newsletters. They feed information back here. You get feedback from the people that are doing business with us. You know, we've only got one young man in South Korea, who has an administrative support. Yet KNOC, the work with the chamber of commerce when our staff go to visit and find out how he's doing or when I was there: just amazing linkages with people, with very important companies. You can't fake that. When you walk into an office, the familiarity that that staff have with that person really tells you: yes, he's there; he's there in the good times and in the bad times.

I don't know how many of you would have expected Gary Mar to make sure he got to Michigan, no matter how cold it was, for the inauguration of the governor. It was on New Year's Day, and he left his family. So there are a lot of those kinds of activities that are not really even reaching the reports that we get but just become part of how they reach out to serve other people in other spots.

There is a variety of things. If John could talk to you about it, he would tell you, because of the experience he has internationally, how successfully they're doing, what they say when they come for discussion of their problems. They come here every year to have a conversation, report back. We watch how they manage their budgets, and we watch how effectively they work with other ministries, other staff reports. It's a small enough shop that it can be agile in that.

Your question about how many years to evaluate whether the office is effective: five years, I suspect. There's so much work done in advance that they usually know whether it's going to be effective or not before we get there. If you put the right person in the right place, it will be effective. What we have to work on is making sure we rotate people, too, because they're not foreign diplomats. We don't expect them to be in the foreign service for a long time. We want them back here, too, to help here and then send new people to get that knowledge and test new personalities. Our new person in London, for example, was the dean at NAIT's school of business, and he had been working on mergers and acquisitions for Zedi. He's bringing a whole different skill set to that office than what we've had previously or in the immediate past. We keep looking at various changes in the environment and see what would be best.

Honestly, I think for the future, to Lethbridge-East, we're going to have to look very much at people being skilled at making presentations on oil and gas. I want to see them able to advocate so successfully that they manage and act like they'd been doing it for years because we need to be able to rely on them to do that kind of advocacy. We can't be everywhere. You'll find that they're usually very good at that.

7:30

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Madam Minister. I would like to perhaps point out, too, that we don't live on gas and oil. I think we have to make some presentations on agriculture from southern Alberta.

You didn't quite answer my question. I guess what I want to know is that after we've had the cocktail parties and we've made friends and we've done all of those kinds of things that lay the groundwork particularly – I know that's the prime importance within Asia. There's a whole culture you have to break through before you can even get invited in the door. I understand all of that. Yes, we've done all of this. We've spent this kind of money. I guess my question is: what's coming back to us? You know, what kind of dollars are coming back to us, or what are we sending over there?

Then just let me finish this off with another question. I know that sometimes we look at a balance of trade in terms of dollars. Okay; it's balanced out relatively well. But my question. We send exceptional goods over to foreign countries, and we often get back crateloads of stuff that end up in our dollar stores and two days later end up in our landfills. I'm not sure that the products that we're exchanging are exactly balanced.

Ms Evans: Well, I mentioned that with Asia over the last two years we've had \$20 billion come back in investments. Some of those are confidential; for example, investments in the Gateway pipeline. I can think of \$10 million from two different companies that want to be confidential, that don't want it highly profiled. There's a lot of that sort of thing that goes on.

Whether we're getting fair dollar value back on the imports people make, I'm not sure, but I can tell you that we watch very closely in our department the export-import stats. We go in and tell people: this is how we would expect to advance. For example, that's why we know that we need more agricultural agreements with places like the Middle East. There have been active negotiations in that, thanks to our Premier, with the folks in Abu Dhabi. I don't want to mislead you that we haven't been negotiating on agriculture. I mentioned earlier that we have at least four people in Japan that work 24/7 on that very stream because of the need for agriculture products.

We take a look at imports. We take a look at exports. But where private industries have done their own thing – it's a matter of im-

porting, for example, giftware or things like you referenced from a dollar store – we don't try to control that. We do try to work on the value-added. Food processing is a big part of it. The marketing of our technology is a huge part of it.

When we were in the Middle East, we found people that were – well, we actually talked to them in the U.K. They were marketing some of the technology on building control rooms. We opened Proclad Stream-Flo's operation when we were in Dubai. It's a massive warehouse with a lot of things that were developed right here in Alberta which have been imported over there. It's a manufacturing industry, if you will, where they're producing over there. There are a number of people that are taking their production to those places because they're near the oil and gas drilling. So that's the sort of thing we're doing.

Perhaps it might be useful – and I'll commit to doing this for all of the members – just to give you a rundown. We've got a table for imports-exports globally. We'll give that to you, and maybe that will help you. You know, if we can't get someplace with one stream, we'll go with another. Agriculture is one thing, but the aerospace industry in southern Alberta, in the southeast corner, is something we're always talking about, too: the use of drones, the development of those and the opportunity for those. We were speaking about that when we were in Kuwait, even the monitoring of various installations there that could be done by the kind of technology we're developing here.

We give them a smorgasbord. That's usually ferreted out by our staff that go on advanced missions, figure out what these people are looking at, what they're looking for, and who keep in touch with those companies. And I should say that there are not a whole lot of cocktail parties; there are a lot more cold calls to the door, especially in the Middle East, where there's not alcohol, as you know. That's not part of their culture, and that's not something that we would expect either. When you're in Japan, it's heavily agricultural as it is in Korea as well. They also want museums and our museum expertise, but that's just one other side of it.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you for that. Priority initiative 2.3 on page 82 of the business plan is, as we've talked about for the last hour, about expanding Alberta's traditional export markets and new market opportunities, et cetera. The government emphasizes the need to expand our export markets; however, we hear significantly less about diversification of our exports. I know that we've talked a lot about gas and oil, and I've brought up agriculture, but what specific steps is the ministry taking to ensure diversification of our exports?

Having said that, we have to, I believe, do a lot more work on the diversification of our own economy before we start exporting something that we don't have. One of the manufacturing strengths that we had in this province years ago was the recreational vehicle, and now it doesn't exist at all. If you could just perhaps address that. It's kind of backwards. We have to do it here first before we can export it.

Ms Evans: Well, in actual fact, you'd find that the REDAs are more involved with that, and that's under Finance and Enterprise. The regional economic development authorities are generally more into the development and the marketing of their products elsewhere. That's why frequently you'll find somebody that's collaborating with us that's from Edmonton or from Calgary. The Calgary economic development authority, Edmonton economic development authority get together and profile those things.

Another thing is often done directly with the consuls general of those various countries like China, Japan, South Korea, and so on, a good part of how they work on those product exchanges or the

profiling of those products. If you talk to Mayor Mandel, he'll often talk about filling up the rail cars that go back to China with other kinds of products. You could talk to my colleague Mel Knight about the fibre, too, that people talk to him about relative to the pine beetle residue, if you will, from the forests and the possible uses of that south of the border. Those are other conversations that happen thanks to PNWER and some of our linkages south of the border as well.

It's very hard to track, for example, our exports to Mexico because some of our exports go to America and then go on through to Mexico. We've often held the belief that we are more successful in Mexico than it actually shows because it's not what flies over America that's always part of the export package, but it's what goes through America, that lands there as well. If it goes via truck, we don't always track where it goes when it crosses the border. So a lot of that goes south of the border.

There are still challenges. I have to tell you that at a federal level we have challenges with visas. Visas get mentioned to us, places where the federal government chooses to charge. As you know, now there are visa charges for people that have special passports that don't happen for regular tourists. It was because of some of those policies and this North American security policy that they talk about that sometimes gets us into the quagmire on that.

Back to the import-exports. We'll send you sort of a summary of those. I've seen those stats before, but I didn't come with them tonight.

Ms Pastoor: That's fine. Thank you very much. Yes, I'd appreciate that.

On page 26 of the International Offices Activity Report there's an excerpt from the 2009-10 IIR annual report that effective 2009 Alberta reduced its operational involvement and, therefore, its financial expenditures for the CAPC office. It didn't work very well given that the CAPC office had overexpended by 105 per cent, which is \$105,000. You may have addressed that when you said that your budget remained the same. Somewhere there had to be something inside that budget that would have accounted for that overexpenditure.

7:40

Ms Evans: That may be where we rolled the function into the Beijing office. We had the CAPC office there. We've tried to accommodate some of those things within the Beijing office just strictly for cost-effectiveness and now also because we've got an office in Shanghai, which we hadn't had before. So we've been trying to consolidate our effectiveness there.

It's a very hard thing to do. I should tell you that from China and from our visit in Japan – we've got four offices effectively involved with China if you look at Hong Kong and Taipei and Shanghai and Beijing, but the country is so vast geographically to cover it all. Our twinning with Harbin and the other work we do with our deputy involved with PetroChina and some of the activities: it's just been very hard to get all of that in the right perspective. You find the same sense of frustration in America, too. It's just so big to put your arms around the whole thing. You have to just pick your spots, and we've had to pick our spots.

Ms Pastoor: I think I'm pretty close to the closing time, so I'd just like to thank the minister for her candid answers. I appreciate that. I happen to think this is a very important ministry. Again, I've had the privilege to be able to travel so much and realize that we're all in this game together, so we may as well all play nicely in the sandbox. I think making friends is one way to do it.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We'll go next to the third party. That is Mr. Boutilier, please.

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Welcome to everyone this evening.

The Chair: I would like to say first that you have 20 minutes. You'll probably go back and forth, so you can combine your time. Is that correct?

Mr. Boutilier: I'm not sure. I have a lot of questions, so I may just go for the 20 minutes.

The Chair: Okay. You have a maximum of 10 minutes.

Mr. Boutilier: I'm sorry?

The Chair: You have a maximum of 10 minutes at one time, but you can go back and forth if you like.

Mr. Boutilier: Okay. Sure. Thank you. Good evening to the minister and to her staff. Indeed, it's a pleasure to be on this side of the House to be asking questions of a ministry that I was once minister of. I have to ask the minister, first of all, though, about the fact that during the time that I was minister, there was another ministry on top of that, and that was the ministry of Aboriginal Relations. At the time I was getting paid \$130,000 for the two ministries in one. So I have to first of all ask you: how much is your salary as minister of this reduced ministry that you're in today?

Ms Evans: Well, certainly it's more, but I would remind the hon. member opposite that when I had Municipal Affairs, I had the equivalent of two and a half ministries in today's terms, and nobody paid me accordingly either. So we have some of those stories from the past that we could swap. I know that when I looked at what I was paid recently, it's less by at least \$9,300 because I've chosen not to take the insurance.

The Chair: Thank you. We'll stick to the estimates of the ministry.

Mr. Boutilier: Yeah. I know that in here it has the estimates for the entire budget, so obviously salaries are in there as well.

To the minister. I had looked at the budget, and I'd say, first of all, that I believe this ministry contributes valuably. Actually, I believe that for the most part it never gets its due credit for the excellent work of its many civil servants, that contribute so much from many parts of the world in the offices that, in fact, this ministry is responsible for.

As I look at the budget, I see the amounts, and before I go into the total amount of budget, I noticed that under performance measures – my grandfather used to often say that if it's not measured, it's not done, and I think that is reasonable.

The staff don't have to be turning to any budgets. Just relax. They don't have to be looking at any pages or anything. I'll certainly ask the minister the questions tonight and will not be asking, based on the rules, for the responses tonight.

I am thoroughly, I must admit, eager to ask the minister relative to performance measures because in the budget under the priorities in goal 2 it says that performance measures are under development. Of course, if they're under development, then obviously that means that presently they will not be measured. I was wondering and I'd be really eager for the minister to comment on what framework is being developed pertaining to client satisfaction, the development of these measurements that I know this

minister in previous ministries valued as important to be able to justify that to taxpayers. The fact that it's under development is what's caught my attention. I guess my first comment would be: why would this be under development at this stage in this ministry's life in light of the fact that it had always been measured in the past but is under development now?

Ms Evans: Thank you. May I just take a quick minute on the performance or benefit of international offices and development of that, maybe just to give it a little more rigorous frame than what I gave the Member for Lethbridge-East? At the start of each fiscal year each office works with our international relations division ADM and the Alberta international offices operation team to set performance targets for the coming year. The offices are responsible for tracking and reporting those and summarize quarterly to form the basis of a year-end.

The international office client satisfaction survey is conducted every second year. It's analyzed, with the research done on critical performance feedback, et cetera. Now, the new client satisfaction performance measures that are being developed indicate progress towards the goals in this plan and are referenced as being under development, in large part because of our new international policy, that we just approved.

That new international strategy, that was released I would believe now about November, had new standards. It does not have all the previous or the last actual results or targets for each fiscal year in the business plan, so the performance measures are considered under development. In other words, they're not documented from where they were to where we expect them to be. We identified new goals in this business plan. In accordance with the business plan standards, performance measures for each of the new goals were listed as under development. They're not remarkably different, hon. member, than they were previously. It's just to be coincidental with the new type of approach in giving our ministry business plan.

Given the service nature of the ministry – and you'd be very familiar with this – there is an inherent difficulty in measuring the building of the relationships, advancing interests. For example, for the period of time when we didn't have somebody in the U.K. office that was expected to do more of this international advocacy, there would be a gap this year on what we would expect to see next year. We also had a significant level of influence over client satisfaction. That changed a bit during the year when for the very first time – and you'd find this interesting – in over 30 years of being in politics, we actually had a major player in the oil and gas industry come and ask us for help in advocacy. That meant that we were off to Brussels and to the U.K. to deliberately target the people that were shareholders, who would want to know what we were doing on oil and gas. So those parts will be incorporated in the next year's business plan. They will be fully fleshed out in the new business plan format.

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the minister's comments relative to oil and gas. Of course, I'm very proud to be the member for and a former mayor and city councillor in the oil sands capital of the world. I do have an observation, though, and just some friendly advice. I find that often your ministry is, in fact, in my community on the international level. Having been the mayor and as the Member of the Legislative Assembly, duly elected by the people of Fort McMurray, I would say and I offer today that I am somewhat disappointed, Minister, that at no time did International Relations ever call and ask the MLA for Fort McMurray, which they used to do, in fact, when I was there be-

fore. I'm not sure why that is today, but I extend that invitation once again to you and to your officials.

When there are visitors international in nature coming to the oil sands capital of the world, after living in and calling Fort McMurray my home for over 35 years, I'd like to think that I'd bring some insight, no different than you as minister from the Sherwood Park area and as a former reeve and a councillor having insight that we bring from a local perspective. So I bring that as an offer in terms of promoting the oil sands. We may not agree on everything, but certainly we do have things in common when it comes to promoting an important resource, that Fort McMurray has been blessed with.

I'd like to move on for a moment to some other issues pertaining to your goals. As you know, I used to often say as the minister that my ministry, then with Aboriginal Relations, could keep health care going. As a former minister of health I think it was for less than an hour that we could keep the actual health care ministry going. I'm not sure what number it is today, but I'd be curious if, in fact, the minister as a former health minister would know how long she could keep the health ministry going based on what the budget is for International and Intergovernmental Relations. I was just wondering if, in fact, you know how long that would be.

7:50

Ms Evans: Less than a day.

Mr. Boutilier: Less than a day. Okay. I was in the hours, so it's less than a day.

Ms Evans: Probably about 18 hours and 32 minutes.

Mr. Boutilier: Having said that, I now move on to some important initiatives. On one of the initiatives – and I'm not sure where it is today – after I had taken over international, intergovernmental, and aboriginal relations, I asked the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, Ms Calahasen, to do an international report in terms of the BRIC countries: Brazil, Russia, India, and China. It was relative to the value of these emerging markets, that I know this minister had made comment on before, and I might add that the member, a part of the government and as a former minister herself, had done some excellent work on this report.

I must admit that I'm not sure where that report is today, and I would welcome in the frame of the budget estimates, in fact, the report, which talked about perhaps setting up an office in Mumbai as an emerging market, which is substantial, perhaps even considering moving an office from Beijing and Hong Kong, where there are offices, but also trying to attract Shanghai, which is really like Wall Street and Bay Street, where financial decisions are made. As you had rightly mentioned earlier, a lot of the trade investments and missions that go on are about the financial implications, and as much as we open doors politically in Beijing or in Hong Kong, the financial district in China is in Shanghai. Many in the report talked about perhaps having a satellite office in Shanghai. Is that, in fact, reflected in this estimate?

Ms Evans: Well, you know that we did open an office in Shanghai with B.C. and Saskatchewan earlier this year in the New West Partnership. In May the Premier went over there and opened that office, so there is a co-location. It's our first co-location in the New West Partnership with B.C. and Saskatchewan, and the individual that's been retained for that has a technology background and is supported by Advanced Education and Technology because of our belief that that is the portal, the window of opportunity on our technology marketing.

You mentioned Mumbai and Beijing. Yes, obviously our visits this year – and there were a lot of positives out of that report that was completed in 2008, done under your direction. It was done with the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake as well as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs on that committee visiting the other countries. I think they've brought a passion to reminding me of Brazil, Russia, India, and China and the other kinds of ways that we could reposition.

With Brazil – I mentioned it earlier – we have been using a staff member that's also liaising with Mexico to try and link with the companies that are working in Brazil. Today, with Russia, we're getting increased visits from the governors from various places. We met earlier this year in Sapporo, Japan, with the Russian delegation, that very much wanted us to link together with the Sakhalin territory of Russia on the natural affinity we have in oil and gas.

Thanks to the members that have roots in India. On this side of the House we had a tremendous delegation with the Premier that visited and signed a Canada-India agreement, really an advance agreement for where I think we'll go on several fronts, including education. So we're making some small moves. In all honesty, hon. member, if we had had the dollars that we'd had in 2008-09, I think we would have seen much more advancement on this front because there's nobody denying the need. It's just not having the dollars to do it.

Mr. Boutilier: Thank you to the minister. I appreciate that. Of course, as you rightly point out, the economics are where they are today. We must accept what they are, that some are beyond our control, but we try to manage what we do have control over.

A couple of final comments I would like to make. Just a simple question: have you invited any opposition members to travel within the ministry? I know that was a policy when I was the minister, where I'd invite opposition members. Now, as I sit over here, I don't recall that happening, so I'm assuming it doesn't happen today. I'd only ask the minister to consider that not only from the talent on your side but also from the opposition side. It's common in the House of Commons, where there are missions to different parts of the world that, in fact, are sometimes made up of what is referred to as an all-party mission. I know the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood would certainly support that. In particular, he has a few ideas where, I'm sure – well, maybe he doesn't support that, but I will leave that to his time.

Now that it is my time, I would ask this. As we, of course, now are in our third year since being elected, a question is often brought up. Actually, it was a question that was brought up with a former minister in this ministry that's no longer in it now, that he was travelling across the world because he wasn't running again. He wasn't running again, which ultimately meant – and this is the former minister of international relations who was the Deputy Premier and actually is now a Queen's Bench judge. The rumour was that he was simply travelling just to enjoy his swan song as a minister, and I really question the value. Pertaining to estimates here, I just want to be assured. As you know, the Premier has indicated that he's not running again, so I would be very interested to ensure that there are no dollars going to be spent on someone that is not running for office again.

Coming back to the issue of accountability pertaining to performance measures, it's really important to measure, and I would never want nor do I intimate that that would be case. I would not want to have happen what happened the previous time with the Member for Calgary-Glenmore, who decided to go for it and travel the world. That concerned me. I was questioning the value that we were receiving as Albertans for that. In fact, I'd asked for and

I'd certainly welcome the performance measures that were from all of these trips that were taken by him before he announced his resignation. That was concerning to me.

Equally concerning today, as we move towards summer, would be any priority relative to any travel, especially for those who are running again. I understand the continuation and the knowledge pool that are brought forward, but for those who are not, I think it's very critical that we avoid the situation that I described with the former minister. I only offer that as free advice relative to that because I think it's a performance measure in terms of the dollars that are spent. I've known this minister for many years as a reeve, as a councillor.

My final comments tonight are on the actual trips that were taken by you as minister. Of course, it is often said that all politics are local. I think we can all subscribe to that. In fact, wherever I spend a dollar, I always ask: could I spend it better somewhere else? Of course, the trips that were taken by this minister amounted to \$135,595.28 according to our calculation. These are trips to Asia and the Middle East which took place to January 30. That amounted to \$51,000. I believe that actually includes the cost of your executive assistant. Just for the full disclosure, as much as it says for the minister, that is also the minister's staff within her office. That is actually included. Recognizing that, it's probably half of that cost because of the fact that it's actually divided by two people. That was the \$51,000 for two, and in fairness that's \$25,500 each.

On the mission to Asia the question I ask is: were any ministry staff at the senior executive level on those trips as well, and what would be that associated cost? I do believe as a former minister that it's important to share the total cost of a mission. If, in fact, your deputy or assistant deputy or someone would have travelled, for Albertans there's only one pocket, so it's important to recognize that that one pocket is being paid out of by one taxpayer. So my question would be: on the \$51,000 does that in fact include the actual cost of civil servants at the senior level, or whatever level would have been included on that trip, or is that excluded from this \$51,000?

Thank you.

8:00

Ms Evans: I'm going to go back to where you began relative to some of your observations. Whether I would ever run or not run again, I have never, ever, ever spent money on the public dime that I would not be able to defend to God and to my country.

On the three weeks that we spent in Asia, I worked every day but one, and I am certainly not seeing this as a trip of satisfying myself but satisfying taxpayers. The trip to Bangkok, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Kuwait, Qatar, and U.K. accomplished the introduction of our U.K. person. It finished to some satisfactory conclusion the commitment on the agricultural agreement with Abu Dhabi, acknowledged the work we had done in Bangkok. Although it was originally listed at about \$51,000, we believe that it'll come in at about \$44,000. It included myself and for part of the trip my executive assistant.

For most of the trips that I took this year, my executive assistant didn't go. Why? Because she and I agreed that we would try and keep the money reduced to a minimum. So where we had Ports-to-Plains in Broomfield, Colorado, Len Mitzel and I travelled for three days at a final cost of less than \$3,000. The Washington missions that most of the MLAs were on, four MLAs travelled for \$10,000. The mission to Belgium and United Kingdom that I was on with my assistant was \$29,000; Ports-to-Plains congressional visit, \$2,700; \$33,000 for the Premier, Deputy Premier, and three staff members to go to Chicago, Illinois, and Washington.

The Chair: That'll conclude this section of the estimates, and we'll go to the fourth party. I might remind all members that we're talking about the budget estimates ending March 31, 2012.

Go ahead, please, Mr. Mason.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I actually knew that.

I would like to start by asking the minister . . .

The Chair: Mr. Mason, will you be combining the time again, going back and forth?

Mr. Mason: I think I'll just ask a question, sit down, let the minister answer. As long as she doesn't use most of the rest of the time, we can just keep doing it that way.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Mason: Okay. I want to ask about the international trade offices. There are now 10, and the question I have is about – you mentioned in answer to some earlier questions that there are some is it co-located offices? Just so I can start my questioning on that line, I wonder if the minister could identify, in case I missed it – she may have earlier mentioned – which ones are co-located, and who they are co-located with.

Ms Evans: There was a lot of enthusiasm about this. The ones that are co-located include Korea, Mexico, Taiwan, U.K., and Washington. Those are all with the government of Canada. The ones that stand alone are Hong Kong and Japan. Co-located in Germany is the government of Canada, then Shanghai is with B.C. and Saskatchewan, and China is co-located with the government of Canada in various kinds of accommodation. Mexico is just practically a closet in the suite of offices that Canada has.

Mr. Mason: Okay. So are these offices located, then, in the Canadian embassy as a rule?

Ms Evans: Yes.

Mr. Mason: Okay. That's interesting. In Ontario I know that they've followed this practice of co-locating with the federal government and have been able to save considerable amounts of costs.

The minister indicated in an earlier answer that other departments of this government contribute to the costs relative to these offices, and I'd like to know whether those contributions are included in their estimates or in these estimates. If they're located in the estimates of the other departments, how would we be able to find what the all-in number is for this?

Ms Evans: I can tell you that the all-in number is roughly \$8 million: \$5.9 million comes out of our budget, and you'd find slivers of other dollars in Agriculture, in Environment, for example. It might be very hard to find because it might be the price of a staff salaried member, where we're paying an intern, for example, in the Washington office. It might be the amount that's providing technology supports in the Shanghai office. In fact, that person is a Shanghai technology expert, an expert in helping us with Chinese technology. So you would see parts of that in the overall. I won't comment about the minister of advanced education's budget, but probably I would suspect in the kind of work sometimes that the universities are doing to network with the other partners as well. So I will alert him to the fact that that could be a question that you would ask: where those dollars come from to help support those offices?

We have in the past had more support from some of the offices. I'd like to get more of it again. For example, agriculture is a huge file, and we'd like to get more dollars there, but every budget has been constrained, so it's a little tougher than it used to be.

Mr. Mason: Thank you. I had a specific question relative to the Alberta-Taiwan office. It is the only one of our offices where there's not a staff member from here. It has two locally hired staff. I wonder why that is and how that works without having somebody from the department or who's appointed from Canada to staff that office.

Ms Evans: The staff member in Taiwan reports to David Wong in Beijing. It's not a fully developed office. It's sort of a partially developed office, a satellite if you will, to Beijing, and that individual is a member of our government staff. Shanghai would be the same.

Mr. Mason: I see. Okay. Thank you very much.

I'm looking at the list of performance measures that are used. It includes visits to websites, a number of reports, networking sessions. These are predominantly measures that measure sort of a pace of activity in the office rather than results, and I'm wondering how we could have some performance measures that actually measured either an increase in trade or an increase in investment in our province that had some actual economic outputs as measurable.

Ms Evans: It's pretty hard to draw a direct line on that, hon. member, because Economic Development Edmonton would say: "No. That's ours." I can tell you one instance where I went to a reception in Calgary, and they were praising to the skies the city of Calgary, and the city of Calgary had got all of that information, all of that support, all of the legwork done by our very own team in the international office. It was quite painful because I couldn't stand up and say: "Oh no, Mr. Mayor. We did that, and you're getting all the credit for it." But I guess as long as it's done, that's the important thing. I guess as long as you don't worry about who gets credit, good things can happen.

I think there's some confusion. If I may just quote from the government of Alberta's ministry business plan reference guide. It talks about performance measures that are not to be included in ministry business plans without sufficient consideration, analysis, and research. As I mentioned earlier, if they are under development for the three years and where we've had a new international strategy, we have to be able to show the benchmark and the return on investment.

You're never going to really be able to evaluate or contemplate whether it was us who wanted South Korea to invest in the Gateway pipeline or whether they saw it as energy security and came forward, whether it just happened to be the luck of the draw for the office involved or whether they took that onto themselves. So it is pretty hard to say that we've done all of that, but we can look at the investments over the last couple of years, and we see them as outstanding.

8:10

The ones I take the most satisfaction in are the overtures we're getting now where members of the White House senior staff come here and fly under the radar. They don't want to be known like the James Camerons. They fly under the radar. They contact our office, and our office guides them through a variety of offices so that they get the information they need. So we're getting some of that kind of thing that we never got before.

Remember, when you and I got here, Mpumalanga would be sitting up there, and that would be our international delegation for six months. Now I can't even begin to tell you the numbers that we've got. As I said before, I think before you arrived, we had at least 46 international delegations last year, predominantly from the U.S., which is what's keeping this crew busy. Activity is part of it.

Mr. Mason: Well, thank you. I think they've finally realized that we've got the oil and no terrorists. I think that's perhaps one of the reasons there.

I appreciate what you said about working away and you get some changes but you can't directly trace it back to the work you do. It's similar to the work we do in the opposition. You know, we know we have impacts on government policy, but there's no direct way to prove it unless the government is willing to admit it, and that's extremely rare. So I appreciate that, Minister.

I wonder why the report doesn't, you know, sort of track trade between Alberta and the places where we hold these – I'll tell you what I'm looking at. I'm looking at the activity report, and I don't see good statistics on changes in trade, whether import or export or investment activity and that sort of thing. It really seems to me that it would be more helpful if you had some more real economic data relative to the broader relationship.

Ms Evans: Well, they are in the GOA report. We'll bring them to you.

You know, one of the things you profiled for me – and I'm just going to state it right here. I really sincerely believe that the Enterprise division has a good part of that in Finance and Enterprise because I've had that portfolio. We have the international investment, but it's very hard to disengage both. We had offered earlier, thanks to the question from the Member for Lethbridge-East, to include an import-export table to all of you as a follow-up to this meeting, and we'll give you what we've got on the trade statistics. When I go into another country, believe me, I've got it cold and straight up on each individual country, but we'll try and give you that collaboratively.

Mr. Mason: Thank you to the minister, Mr. Chairman. I know the minister has a municipal background, so she's very familiar with twinning relationships. I wonder if she can give us some indication as to what the department's activity is with respect to that. Is it considered, you know, a worthwhile way of promoting relations and trade?

When I was involved in Edmonton city council, our economic development authority tended to completely discount twinning relationships as a way of promoting trade, yet Calgary was using them in, I think, a very successful way and perhaps other communities. Does the department play a role in that. Does it support a municipality's twinning relationships, and does it believe that it's an effective strategy for improving trade?

Ms Evans: Yes, yes, and yes. I mean, there's promotion. There's support. There's working with municipalities on that.

You know that this year we celebrated our 40th anniversary with the Alberta-Japan office and also the 40th anniversary with the twinning relationship with Hokkaido. We've got Heilongjiang and Harbin, 30 years of our relationships with China. The various relationships across Alberta are staggering in the twinning area.

What I think we'll see as an outgrowth from this Asia advisory council is a new level of twinning so that it's really more robust on trade relationships. If we pass Bill 1, we think we can work to evolve something that will build on twinning. So it's culture, it's academia, sort of the things that the universities are looking for as

well as some of the international investment opportunities. We've been asked to take a look at that and whether or not we can make that somewhat more robust than the traditional twinning.

Some of the twinning relationships, as you know, that we experienced between municipalities have literally gone nowhere. They've been nice-to-haves but boiled down to schoolchildren exchanging with schoolchildren. There have been some sad dissolutions of relationships, but just recently the outgoing consul general from Japan said that he'd like to see us reinstate some of those exchanges with students and fostering student exchanges. We have given monies to the Japan municipal twinning association, so we've been involved with that. [A cellphone rang]

The Chair: Go ahead, please.

Ms Evans: It just said that I should quit talking.

The Chair: No, no. That was somebody's phone that was not supposed to be going off. You can finish, or we'll go back to Mr. Mason.

Okay. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Mason: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask about TILMA. I want to know if the department continues to be responsible for the administration of that agreement and what expenditures in the budget there are relative to that, particularly the adjudication of disputes that might arise and whether or not there have been any and how they've been dealt with.

Ms Evans: As I mentioned earlier, the negotiation of TILMA and a lot of the agreements that are related to our New West Partnership have been done through the office of our assistant deputy minister of intergovernmental relations. Those costs are predominantly related to staff time. Of course, when we have joint cabinet meetings to deal with policy issues – those have been less frequent more recently, but we're hopeful that with the election of a new Premier in British Columbia we'll get on with those.

It would be predominantly staff time that you would find in that category, about \$4,792,000, ministry support services. Would that be where that figure is found, or would it be under intergovernmental relations? It's \$4,022,000 for the negotiations and work on over 150 agreements, including the softwood lumber agreement, TILMA, the budgets, and those things. That's where that is in the budget line. If you look at page 83 of the business plan, it's under intergovernmental, \$4,022,000.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Mason, please.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much. Under the legislation, as I recall, if there is a view by any economic participant, a company or whatever it might be, that provincial regulations, rules, interfere with free trade, they're allowed to challenge it. I'm wondering if that is something that has happened, what those costs have been, and whether it's proved effective.

Ms Evans: Yes. By the way, I should have pointed out that TILMA has become the NWPTA. Under this particular agreement people certified in almost all regulated occupations, including teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, et cetera, after being authorized to work in one of the three provinces, can now work elsewhere.

The challenges that you talked about. I referenced earlier the challenge we had with Ontario on a trade agreement dealing with the vegetable oils. That was part of my earlier dialogue with the

hon. Member for Lethbridge-East. We feel very good about the kinds of challenges that have been instituted by the people in our intergovernmental group. They've had some successes by getting into the ring and fighting it out with the other guys, especially that one with Ontario earlier this year. We'll now be able to sell our margarine in Quebec. Our oilseed producers are happy because they get access to Ontario's lucrative dairy market. We've been able to make some inroads and success.

8:20

Mr. Mason: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.
Go ahead, please.

Mr. Mason: The last question I have, Mr. Chairman, is a little bit more of a delicate question. It has to do with the current leadership race that's under way for the Progressive Conservative Party and the expected interest in that in one of your employees who's stationed in a foreign office. I want to know what steps have been taken to ensure that resources available to that office, you know, flights and any other resources, could not be used in a potential leadership bid.

Ms Evans: Let me comment from a policy perspective. If somebody wants to campaign for the leadership or any other political event, they will have to resign their portfolio before they can engage in any type of that activity. I know that that would be our expectation, and we believe that if that were to take place, there would be a resignation.

I think I know the gentleman in question that is being referenced, and having been spending about 18 hours a day with him in Washington, DC, I can tell you that there's no evidence that would have been presented to me that there's anything more than a very robust activity that's following through with that gentleman. He has, in fact, recently been presented to the House of Representatives, which was a very big honour that made him very aware of the value that he has there, and there have been energy delegations that are going this week. The Minister of SRD is going down to Washington, and he'll be accompanying him on some other very important discussions that we're having in Washington.

So if and when or if or when this person decides to enter the leadership race, I'm confident that he will do it without being fettered by any employment that he would have with us. We would expect his resignation, and I'm sure we would get it. Absolutely.

Your reference was to: are any things being used? I would have to say absolutely not. For one thing that whole office is in complete disarray because they are renovating that part of the embassy, so it would be pretty hard to find anything but the bathroom there right now.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Does that conclude your questioning?

Mr. Mason: I'd like to thank the minister for her answers tonight.

The Chair: I guess your time is up anyway.

That concludes the opposition questioning, so now we'll go to government members. Mr. George VanderBurg, please. You have 20 minutes.

Mr. VanderBurg: Thank you. And thank you, Minister, for all of the good work you do promoting Alberta. A little off topic. Some months ago you gave me some little cards that had details about, you know, the production of oil and some pretty interesting little

bits of information that I've shared and used ever since. I think of all of the communications pieces and all of the communications staff you have; that's one of the items that I've found very useful. I encourage you to keep those updated and pass them around because it's a good tool, especially when you're travelling outside the country, to show your new friends and talk about the importance of the Alberta economy and what we do not only in the oil and gas business but what we do each and every day.

Reading Budget 2011, the strategic plan is where I want to focus my questions, the strategic importance of Alberta's energy industry, whether it's here in Alberta, you know, or in this country or in the United States or in many parts of the world that you travel. I think we're getting the short end of the deal on the environmental press. It seems like we talk lots about the greenhouse gas emissions, how it's a percentage of a per cent, yet even in the coffee shops here in Alberta it seems like people think that we're a huge emitter. How come we're not getting through on that point? How in your strategic business plan do you think you can improve upon that image, that I think needs to be improved upon?

Ms Evans: Just a couple of observations. There are 753 parliamentarians in the EU, and they're not the brightest and best. Sometimes they keep the brightest and best at home. For example, in France their own parliament will be there, but then they'll ship other people off to be part of this EU parliamentary group, 753. When they change or when one group is involved – a sliver of 17 are involved with the Canadian delegation in Canadian issues. You've only got a very small fraction of everybody, and if they change, you're really hooped. It's a very big challenge to keep the message out front, and unfortunately the big, sexy things like ducks taking a bath in a tailing pond that become internationally important just tend to blow us right out of the water. Those would be some of the challenges.

The other thing, I think, that became a real challenge was the comments that Obama made about his promises to the environment protection organization that they were going to be, you know, clean, green, and not dependent on foreign oils. Well, they've taken us off the foreign oil list, and what I see that's changed things remarkably is that the need for jobs has so far outranked the environmental things, that the environmental things have not eroded right away, but they've certainly gone down in their sense of importance.

The other thing that's happened, that we learned just this weekend, is that Texas has just been told that feds want to come in and tell them how they should regulate their cumulative impacts on the environment. That kind of aggravation that hits an oil and gas producer like Texas really builds that awareness: "Oh, my God. Is this what you people are going through in terms of attacks by NGOs?"

Lush Cosmetics have come out again. They're after us on the EU. We thought we'd hammered them down. We had support from the ambassador in America, but we had also gone down ourselves. Paul, our deputy, met with some of the proponents of these industries to talk about it. We thought we had sort of pounded down all the nails, and they pop up again.

So how do we do it? I guess I think most of all that I would beg every oil and gas company in the world to focus on education, public education, and get in and tell the kids the right story in schools and balance the environmental-economic message. I don't think it's done well enough anywhere. I think that if you want to see oil as bad, you're going to see oil as bad. What we try to do is head off the ill-advised policy initiatives, challenge misinformation and misrepresentation. Often that's reactive as opposed to

proactive, and it's hard to get enough dollars out on the proactive side.

We talk about safe, secure energy so often that I could practically mutter those words in my sleep, establishing confidence as leading-edge regulator. You know, though, when you go to some countries, what they say to you? In fact, we had an ambassador come and have lunch with us at the Government House, and he said: well, of course, you've got the image of you killing seals and the oil sands. What are you going to say to that? Where are you? The ambassador for Canada in America talks about it as frozen statistics. It's like they learn these statistics 10 years ago, and they're still spouting them at you. So you've got to unlearn them.

I'm glad you liked our cards because our communications director, who wanted to be here tonight and isn't able to be here, did those, and I'm going to tell him about your personal appreciation. We did them in part for the Olympics, and we hand out tonnes of those.

To co-ordinated messaging and planning, to get that message out, I wish we could just get Alberta onside. I wish just Alberta would sing from the same chorus. If we could get that through to everybody, it would be a huge piece of business. Not all Albertans do it. I've had oil and gas people tell me their kids come home and say: aren't you ashamed? I said: well, you have to be ashamed if you're not going and challenging statistics that you know aren't right. So we have to do more of it.

I don't know all the answers here, George. I just know that we take what we can from that ministerial working group and from our policy approvals and funnel that stuff out there and through our foreign offices, and hopefully this international advocacy will help make some strides on that. I think the best news is when we get up with a planeload of people up there and they say: is that all there is? Then you realize you've made an impact.

8:30

Mr. VanderBurg: Probably by the time you started drafting your department objectives and strategies and the budget, I'm sure because of what's happening in Libya and the Middle East, there are new strategies that are going to be formed. You know, I hate to say that because of someone's misfortune it gives us an opportunity to really stress how safe the supply of oil and how friendly a neighbour like Canada is to the United States. Have we changed our strategy with dealing with both Ottawa and with Washington because of what's happened in the Middle East? Is this an opportunity that we need to double our efforts on here on this continent about the safe, secure supply of energy from this great province?

Ms Evans: You know, when I spoke publicly on that to the media, I said that we weren't trying to take advantage of somebody else's misfortune; we were always about a safe, secure source of supply. We keep saying that. But there's no doubt there's such an obvious warmth in Americans towards us right now. You can tell that they've figured it out. They've done the math. They know that they're not going to be able to get it. I mean, even in the Irving refinery in New Brunswick they're getting oil from Nigeria or, for instance, Venezuela. They're taking it even in Canada, on the eastern seaboard, from other sources. Americans are beginning to click that well to wheel our product is better off than many of their foreign sources of energy. They're beginning to get that, so it's beginning to come.

It hasn't hurt that we've got a whole houseful of Republicans in the House of Representatives. According to Gary Mar they're asking questions that shine the light on the importance of the fossil fuels coming from Canada. A close ally, close neighbour, close friend, and we're buying what they're exporting. For some of

those other countries that they're importing from, even though it's fewer quantities, they're not buying the same kind of product. It has been really interesting to see that kind of awakening.

Mr. VanderBurg: I guess my last and final point. This week, again, reading the papers and reading critics, they talk about what Sweden does, you know, with regard to resources and royalties. I keep reminding people, when they read those articles: you know, if we had the opportunity to keep what we send to Ottawa in this province, what a bag full of money we'd have as well.

I'd sure like you to hammer that point. I don't know who you need to hammer and what hammer you need, but I don't think that that point gets across to the press, to the opposition, to the critics of this government that we're a province. We're a part of a big country. The cash doesn't stay here; it flows to different taxing authorities. I'd like to see you come up with a strategy on that single point with your staff. You've got very smart people beside you, and you're a very smart, experienced minister. I think that we're losing that point, and I think that we need to hammer that with a little card just like you have at the Olympics, with your information card. I'd ask you to stress that point in your communications because I know we can do better.

Ms Evans: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That's it for your questioning? Then I'll go back to the opposition. Ms Pastoor.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was out of the House for a moment, but I was listening to the audio and was delighted that the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo brought up the fact that in the old days the opposition used to travel with the government members when they went off on trips. I recall asking for that last year, and you seemed receptive; however, I haven't had an invite. I'd like to place it a different way partly because I certainly can understand that although your budget looks big, I totally understand that with what you're doing, you really are working with nickels and dimes to work on a global scale. If the opposition paid its own way, would it be welcome? Just a question to leave with you, Madam Minister.

The people that I've spoken to – I mean, I'm sort of going back into history – who actually did those kinds of trips came away with a whole different view. You're speaking of our staff working in broom closets and small rooms and all of these sorts of things. I think that when the opposition stands up, it tends to be very negative. I think that things can come from a different angle, can actually be a positive question if the knowledge is there that perhaps sometimes is learned just by being able to travel. I certainly know from my own experience of being able to travel that your whole concept changes when you actually can see things for yourself.

I'll jump over to India right now. It's a new priority market for the government. As you've mentioned, the Premier was over there in November. Was that mission considered a success? If it was it a success, how was it measured? I think you've sort of alluded to how difficult it can be, depending on where the trade has gone in the meantime. But as a result of that trip that the Premier took, the fact that India still doesn't hit the top 20 export markets for Alberta: are we looking at increases in the next five years? Are you going to open up an office, and what sorts of costs would be involved? I think that we only have to look around to our colleagues in this House to realize that there actually is a presence in our House from India that is probably at our disposal.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Evans: One of my colleagues, after I spoke the last time about MLA travel, reminded me that two MLAs travelled to San Diego on their own dime. We've had a bit of that. We actually had on the Premier's mission to India considerable financial support from the members themselves, who did a lot of support at their own costs for the mission. But, you know, I would tell you that in the past when PNWER travel was something that was shared, it was very positive with opposition members, and I think we should look at that. There's been quite a bit of discussion around that over the last year because some people have talked to me about the fact that the Speaker is doing a lot with the various parties now for travel. So it's perhaps a policy that could be reviewed in that context because I know there's a lot of benefit from that. I don't take it lightly.

From India we felt that the Petrotech 2010 conference and exhibition was a huge success: our involvement there with a special corporate social responsibility session, the education and agriculture sector, MOU with the government of Punjab, the stronger cultural relations by the visits that were held to the Akshardham temple and the Sikh golden temples of the world. That became very evidenced when we got such huge playback from the Sikh and the Punjab commentary on the radio stations. The media here in Alberta that carry that carried overwhelming transcripts in local newspapers about the success of that mission, just huge support. If my colleagues were here tonight, they would tell you. The Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie as well as the other members would say how successful that was.

Then in the follow-up we had much more interest paid to the delegation that came with the deputy's level, coming from India to talk about some of the things. They can learn from us on the regulatory reform. We think that the overall energy sustainability and responsibility portions of the discussion had gone particularly well.

There were meetings with two ministers for petroleum and natural gas and discussions about co-operation in future ministries, and those contacts are still continuing with the three national oil companies equivalent to Crown corporations. All of those contacts were met: energy, petrochemical, environment, and manufacturing. Each one of the managing directors in India committed to sending a delegation here to explore opportunities for trade and investment.

8:40

The Premier was the first one to ever visit the temple in India. That was in New Delhi, and he participated in the traditional prayer for world peace. I think he had almost a hard time having

his feet touch the ground because, as I understand it, there were significant people that really wanted to touch and meet the leader.

We saw it as very positive linkage with Khalsa College and the discussions with the teaching staff. I see that as being very useful. The reciprocal group of Indians that I mentioned earlier was in Calgary last month, just so you know that they've been there, also talking to Alberta companies.

I think there are huge possibilities. I just wish we had a little bit more to make sure that that happened by a point person. I don't know if you know this, but Rahul Sharma, our man for India, has India, Thailand, Singapore, and he has Australia. Can you imagine? Periodically, he gets to come home.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. Again gas and oil, so I'd like to switch to agriculture. Certainly, our past mayor, Bob Tarleck, always spoke about Lethbridge being a smart city. We have two research stations down there. Many of our research people are from India. We have a good start, particularly on the academic side. I'd certainly like to see that expanded. There is a tremendous amount of research that needs to be done in agriculture. In southern Alberta there are some really innovative things going on, and that knowledge could be exported to India.

I'm not sure that really is a question. I think it was just more an observation to make sure that I have my southern Alberta agriculture out front and centre. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Any further comments needed on that? Do you have any further questions, Ms Pastoor?

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. I'm finished.

The Chair: Any other members wish to speak?

Seeing none, then the estimates of the Department of International and Intergovernmental Relations are deemed to have been considered for the time allotted in the schedule.

I would like to thank Minister Evans and her staff for doing an excellent job of answering all these questions. I'd like to thank all members and their staff for being present here and participating this evening.

I would like to remind committee members that we are scheduled to meet next on April 13, 2011, to consider the estimates of the Department of Sustainable Resource Development.

That is it. The meeting is adjourned for now. Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 8:43 p.m.]

