



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Resource Stewardship

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations
Consideration of Main Estimates

Wednesday, March 20, 2013
8:01 a.m.

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First Session**

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

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Anglin, Joe, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W), Deputy Chair

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Smith, Danielle, Highwood (W)
Wilson, Jeff, Calgary-Shaw (W)

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Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Participant

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations
Hon. Robin Campbell, Minister

8:01 a.m.

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

[Ms Kennedy-Glans in the chair]

**Ministry of Aboriginal Relations
Consideration of Main Estimates**

The Chair: Folks, I think we're going to start. Good morning. It is the first day of spring, so let's take that positively. We're looking at the estimates for the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014.

Just a reminder that the mikes are managed by *Hansard*, and if you've got a phone, please put it under the table.

I'll go around the room and invite introductions. Minister, I would invite you to introduce your full complement.

Mr. Anglin, I'll start with you.

Mr. Anglin: Joe Anglin, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Sandhu: Good morning. Peter Sandhu, Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Kubinec: Good morning. Happy spring. Maureen Kubinec, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. Webber: Len Webber, Calgary-Foothills.

Ms L. Johnson: Linda Johnson, Calgary-Glenmore.

Mr. Khan: Good morning. Stephen Khan, MLA, St. Albert.

Mr. Bilous: Good morning. Deron Bilous, MLA, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Donovan: Good morning. Ian Donovan, MLA, Little Bow riding.

Mr. Campbell: Minister Robin Campbell, West Yellowhead. I'll introduce my staff in my speech, Madam Chair, if that's okay.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Mr. Wilson: Hi. Jeff Wilson, Calgary-Shaw.

Ms Smith: Danielle Smith, Highwood.

Mr. Barnes: Drew Barnes, Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Dr. Swann: Good morning, everyone. David Swann, Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Calahasen: Pearl Calahasen, Lesser Slave Lake.

Ms Fenske: Jacquie Fenske, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mr. Hale: Jason Hale, Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Casey: Ron Casey, Banff-Cochrane.

The Chair: Thank you.

All right. I'll just go through the rules. We have to do this for every committee. You know that there have been amendments to the standing orders that affect the main estimates. Before we start, I would just like to go through the speaking rotation, in particular.

Standing Order 59.01(6) provides that the minister or member of the Executive Council acting on the minister's behalf may make opening comments not to exceed seven minutes. We are only in a two-hour meeting, so that's quite short. For the 40 minutes that follow, members of the Official Opposition and the

minister or the member of the Executive Council acting on the minister's behalf may speak. For the next 14 minutes the members of the third party and the minister or the member of the Executive Council acting on the minister's behalf may speak. For the next 14 minutes the member of the fourth party and the minister or the member of the Executive Council acting on the minister's behalf may speak. For the next 14 minutes private members of the government caucus and the minister or the member of the Executive Council acting on the minister's behalf may speak. Any member may speak thereafter.

Members may speak more than once; however, speaking times are limited to 10 minutes at any one time. A minister and a member may combine their time for a total of 14 minutes. Members are asked to advise the chair at the beginning of their speech if they plan to combine their time with the minister's time.

Once the specified rotation between caucuses is complete and we move to the portion of the meeting where any member may speak, the speaking times are reduced to five minutes at one time. Once again, a minister and a member may combine their speaking time for a maximum total of 10 minutes, and members are asked to advise the chair at the beginning of their speech if they wish to combine their time with the minister's time.

Again, some general notes. Two hours have been scheduled to consider the estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations. I will not be calling a break unless somebody deems it urgent.

Committee members, ministers, and other members who are not committee members may participate. Members' staff and ministry officials may be present, and at the direction of the minister officials from the ministry may address the committee.

If debate is exhausted prior to two hours, the ministry's estimates are deemed to have been considered for the time allotted in the schedule, and we will adjourn; otherwise, we will adjourn at 10.

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

Any written material provided in response to questions raised during the main estimates should be tabled in the Assembly for the benefit of all members.

Vote on the estimates is deferred until consideration of all ministry estimates has concluded and will occur in Committee of Supply on April 22, 2013.

I have not received any amendments.

With that, I would invite the minister's opening remarks.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Chair, and good morning, committee members. It's a pleasure to be here, and I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to present the Aboriginal Relations 2013-14 spending estimates as well as the ministry's 2013-2016 business plan.

Before I begin, I want to introduce my chief of staff, Jonathan Koehli, and my press secretary, Kevin Zahara, and members of the Aboriginal Relations department staff. To my right is my deputy minister, Bill Werry; the assistant deputy minister of First Nations and Métis relations, Clay Buchanan; the assistant deputy minister of corporate services, Lorne Harvey; the assistant deputy minister of consultation and land claims, Stan Rutwind; the executive director of policy and planning, Cameron Henry; and the executive director and senior financial officer of corporate services, Howard Wong.

With a quarter-million people who claim aboriginal ancestry, Alberta is home to one of the largest and fastest growing aboriginal populations in Canada. Aboriginal cultures and communities are interwoven into Alberta's history, and they are an integral part of this province's identity. Aboriginal people also

play a vital role in Alberta's future, and the government is committed to working with the various communities to build on the progress we have made together in the areas of education, employment, and economic development.

The role of Aboriginal Relations is to build strong relationships with and between aboriginal communities, other levels of government, industry, and other stakeholders. The ministry's budget and business plan ensure we continue with this work as they are closely tied to Premier Redford's priorities of investing in families and communities, securing Alberta's economic future, and responsible resource development.

However, before I get into what the ministry will do to help move the province forward, I want to touch on what we have accomplished this past year. As I said, building strong relationships is key for the work Aboriginal Relations does, and as minister this has been my focus from day one. Since taking on the portfolio last May, I've gone to all eight Métis settlements and toured more than half of the 48 First Nations in the province. These meetings have been invaluable opportunities to talk to community members one-on-one where they live to learn about their best practices and what works best in their communities.

Relationship building was also the reason we hosted the Alberta First Nations Opportunities Forum here in Edmonton in December. The forum brought together Premier Redford, cabinet, and First Nations leaders for discussions on finding new ways of working together to fulfill the aspirations of First Nations people in Alberta. I received a lot of feedback from the chiefs, who said that the discussions we had were positive and very important. These discussions, however, were just the first steps, and we have made it very clear to First Nations that we want to continue working with them to address key issues, including economic development and education.

One of the ministry's business plan's goals is co-ordinating and strengthening Alberta's approach to aboriginal consultation and land claims to enhance resource development certainty. We are in the final stages of our review of Alberta's consultation policy and anticipate a new policy will be approved or released later this year. The review has included collaboration with other ministries and significant input from First Nations, industry, and municipalities. We have worked hard to ensure the proposed consultation process is consistent, fair, effective, and clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of all parties. Underlying all this work is the government's commitment to meet our duty to consult with First Nations on any development of Crown land that may adversely impact treaty rights. Improvement to the consultation process is key to properly fulfilling this obligation. It's also key to fostering improved relationships between First Nations, industry, and government, which in turn will deliver stronger economic outcomes for Alberta.

We have worked closely with the Metis Settlements General Council and the province's Métis settlements to finalize long-term governance and funding arrangements. Alberta is the only province in Canada with a dedicated land base for Métis people, and that is the eight Métis settlements. The people living on these settlements deserve social and economic opportunities and essential services on par with other Alberta communities. After all, strong and resilient Métis communities will contribute to the continued success of the province and benefit all Albertans.

The long-term arrangements agreement provides direction and financial resources for the settlements to reach their potential and become self-sustainable. The agreement, which I signed with Premier Redford and the president of the Metis Settlements General Council on March 12, establishes a new fiscal relationship between Alberta and the Métis settlements similar to what

Alberta has with other local governments. This relationship will be achieved through a 10-year targeted funding beginning with the \$10 million in 2013-14 that I'm asking for in this ministry's budget. Finalizing the agreement also means that the \$10 million replaces the \$3 million that had been set aside for essential services for Métis settlements in 2012-2013.

8:10

Looking at our budget, \$37 million of the ministry's proposed \$167 million budget for the upcoming year is slated for ministry programs and services. The remaining \$129.5 million flows through the ministry to the First Nations development fund, which is the FNDF, which supports social and economic and community development projects in First Nations communities in Alberta.

At first glance the ministry budget has grown by \$13.8 million, or 9 per cent from last year. Part of this increase is due to the projected \$9.5 million increase in First Nations development funds flowing through the ministry. As I'm sure many of you know, the FNDF is not funded out of general government revenues; rather, it represents 40 per cent of the net proceeds from government-owned slot machines at the five First Nation casinos across the province.

Aboriginal Relations' 2013-14 budget also reflects the Premier's commitment to balancing smart decision-making with ensuring Alberta's long-term success. We have a \$5.7 million reduction in operational spending, including a \$1.4 million general adjustment. We have also saved \$700,000 from the closure of the office of the Métis settlements ombudsman, a decision supported by the Métis Settlements General Council. In addition, we've saved \$593,000 from the expiration of the funding for policing on Métis settlements, which is a service that now will be extended under the long-term arrangements.

The ministry, through these reductions, has sought a balanced approach while maintaining its capacity to respond to issues and pressures and fulfill our business goals. The ministry has made great progress this year, but there's lots of work left to do to ensure First Nations and Métis people are able to take advantage of the social and economic opportunities in this province and reach their full potential. With your support of the ministry's budget we will continue building on our successes.

What I've shared with you is a broad overview, so I'll be happy to go into more detail and answer any questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. That was really close to the time. Wonderful.

Ms Smith, you're going to lead for the Wildrose caucus. Do you want to combine your time with the minister?

Ms Smith: Well, we'll go for the first 20 minutes with combined time. I'm wanting to get through a lot of questions. If the minister indulges me with short answers and I ask short questions, then we can perhaps stick with that, but check back with me in 20 minutes to see whether we might do it differently.

The Chair: I will. Please proceed.

Ms Smith: Fantastic. Thank you, Minister. Nice to see you this morning. Nice to be able to sit and talk with you about your ministry, Aboriginal Relations. I've been enjoying my role as critic for Aboriginal Relations, also travelling the province visiting Métis settlements, visiting First Nations reserves, visiting friendship centres, speaking with those members of the Métis Nation of Alberta Association as well, as you have. I have to say that most of the people that I've talked to have been quite delighted that the government has gone back to having a stand-

alone Aboriginal Relations office. They think that sends a good signal. I just wanted to give you that feedback, that the feedback I'm getting is that people look at it as being quite positive.

I did just want to start off by asking you about some high-level principle-type approaches that you're taking to your ministry just to get an understanding for the context of the estimates, which I do want to walk through in a little bit more detail. One of the issues, as you probably know, that's come up again and again as I visited First Nations is this issue of Jordan's principle. For the benefit of the group I'll just read into the record what Jordan's principle states. I'd like to get some feedback from you on what your government's opinion of that is.

Jordan's principle, of course, is a child-first principle named in memory of Jordan River Anderson. Jordan was a First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba. Born with complex medical needs, Jordan spent more than two years unnecessarily in hospital while the province of Manitoba and the federal government argued over who should pay for his home care. Jordan died in the hospital at the age of five years, never having spent a day in a family home.

Now, we know that these payment disputes between provincial and federal jurisdictions are ongoing in a whole range of areas. We hear from First Nations that there are issues, including education, health, child care, recreation, culture, language. The notion of Jordan's principle is to call on the government of first contact to pay for the services and then to seek reimbursement later so that the child does not get tragically caught in the middle of government red tape. I have not seen evidence that that is the approach that the provincial government of Alberta takes, but I would like you to comment on that, Minister.

Mr. Campbell: Okay. Thanks. I think it's a very important question, and I thank you for it. I think that our approach has been that we are going to look after First Nations people and Métis people in the province. The approach that I've taken since day one is that I have on a continual basis stated that we're all Albertans, and we're all entitled to the benefits and the socioeconomic opportunities that this province provides.

When I first laid out that message to the chiefs, there was some push-back. The push-back was: well, we're a sovereign nation, and we work government to government. But I can say that as we continue to have our dialogue and continue to visit communities and talk about the opportunities that are out there, it's now becoming more evident to me that the chiefs in their dialogue are talking about how they are Albertans. So we are making progress in the sense that in the past the chiefs have always seen their relationship with the Crown, but they've always seen the Crown as the federal government. I would suggest that that's starting to change.

One of the things that came out of the meeting in December with the Premier and the cabinet ministers – and it's the first time that's happened, I was told, since about 1976. We brought all of the chiefs together, not just the grand chiefs but all the chiefs and cabinet. It was the first time that a number of them sat down and actually got to know each other and actually talked about some of the priorities that they have within their communities. I could say that personally I'm very pleased that my colleagues have reached out, and we have set up a number of different meetings and have a number of different dialogues going on right now about the province working more closely with First Nations.

The other thing I believe in very strongly is that it is about the children. As we move this province forward, looking at some of

the statistics on First Nations and Métis children in this province, we have to change those. Again, our Premier has made it very clear and I've made it clear in my discussions with the chiefs that as our province moves forward, aboriginal people have to be at the table.

Education is a prime example, where we have an MOU, a memorandum of understanding, between the federal government, the First Nations, and the province. We've got eight subtables going on right now. We have 40 commitments. We met with the national chief, Shawn Atleo, I'm going to say two weeks ago now – I lose track of time; it might have been three weeks – and the grand chiefs and the Premier and the Minister of Education, Jeff Johnson, and we committed to a six-month time frame where we're going to do some things in education on-reserve and off-reserve.

My personal opinion is that we're all Albertans, and I've said to the chiefs that we're going to blur the lines because we want to get results. We want to make sure that First Nations communities and Métis settlements are prospering. The challenge is that we have the treaty rights. We have to be very careful. I mean, as we're trying to build relationships and looking at building trust and respect from both sides, we have to be very careful that we're not seen as trying to take away treaty rights.

Ms Smith: I understand that.

Minister, can I get you to maybe make some more specific comments related to what you said? I'm encouraged by what you said because I think you and I were at an education conference where you would have heard me make similar statements that I believe we're all Albertans.

I think one of the issues that we face is the issue of the funding shortfall for aboriginal students. We know that the federal government does not fund aboriginal students on the same per-student basis that we do here, and in some cases that differential is as high as \$4,000 or \$5,000. Now, the issue for the First Nations I've spoken with is that if they moved completely off-reserve and sent their child to a nonaboriginal school, we'd pay a hundred per cent of the cost. If they choose to stay on-reserve and send their child to a nonaboriginal school, then they would have to pay the difference somehow, either through the reserve or through the family paying, essentially, a tuition rate to go to public school.

I guess the way that the First Nations I speak to look at that is as an implicit policy that is trying to encourage First Nations to move off-reserve. You can understand why they would see it that way. If you go off-reserve, you're fully funded. If you stay on-reserve but send your child off-reserve, you're penalized. Keeping in mind Jordan's principle, the idea that first contact with the government would be the one that would pay and then you'd duke it out with the feds later, are you committed to doing that, to acting as an advocate on behalf of those families who send their kids to schools off-reserve and then working it out with your federal counterpart to see whether or not they would make up the funding shortfall?

8:20

Mr. Campbell: We're working on that right now with the Department of Education. It's one of the discussions we're having at the table with the MOU. Funding is one part of it.

The other part of it is curriculum. We have to make sure that when we put a curriculum in place – again, I talk about language, history, and culture every place I go. I talk about language because you should be proud of who you are. I talk about history because

you should know where you came from and where you're going and what the future holds. I look at culture because it's a celebration of who you are.

I've worked very closely with the Minister of Education in the sense of developing a curriculum for First Nations both on-reserve and off-reserve because I'm promoting that we build strong communities on-reserve. I would like to see these communities be structured and be very successful. Again, I'm a little frustrated in the sense that we're not moving as quickly as I would like to move. That's a combination of everybody. I can't point a finger at one group or the other, but I like to get things done, and we struggle a little bit sometimes.

It goes back to building the relationships, right? I mean, we have a 250-year history in this country. We're not going to change it overnight. There's some mistrust there, and some of it's for good reason. So we continue to build the relationships. We continue to put the ideas forward. I continue to talk about education with the chiefs.

We're looking at some different models. One is the Greater Strides Hockey Academy that Treaty 7 is promoting. You know, hockey is the hook to get the students to stay in school, but at the end of the day we're going to put out first-class education and have first-class students graduating out of that academy. We're looking at different projects like that.

Ms Smith: Yeah. I agree with you. There are some terrific, terrific things taking place on reserves. I've visited many, many First Nations schools. You've heard me speak as well about the Sunchild reserve, where, to compliment your government as well, through employment and immigration they had worked out partnerships with postsecondary institutes. That's I think an example of how well your government on occasion has worked with First Nations.

I am a bit disappointed to hear that it sounds like this is just starting. It sounds like the relationship building is just starting. I mean, your government has been in power for 42 years. I guess I would have expected that the relationship with our First Nations would be somewhat more advanced than having the first-ever meeting that you'd suggested had occurred in December. I guess, be that as it may, the best time to have started may have been a couple of decades ago, and the second-best time is December.

I did want to get to the issue of the actual estimates and get your comment on a few of the items that I had some issues with or concerns about. We can probably go through this fairly quickly just so that I can get some clarification. About the amount of capital, \$25,000, would you mind telling me what that capital expense would be? It's on page 15.

Mr. Campbell: That's just computer equipment that's capitalized, IT.

Ms Smith: That's computer and IT? I notice that that is separated out now as capital. I guess my understanding from hearing your Finance minister talk about capital – I had sort of thought he was talking about it in terms of large infrastructure projects that would be amortized over a long period of time. I'm a bit surprised to see IT and software in a capital line. Shouldn't that really more properly be treated as an expense under operating?

Mr. Campbell: Anything over \$5,000 is treated as capital, but then anything over \$5 million is treated, as you said, for the amortization over a number of years.

Ms Smith: Would there be borrowing for something as small as \$25,000?

Mr. Campbell: No.

Ms Smith: Okay. Thank you for that.

On the operating expenses. I think we can deal with the lines under number 1, ministry support services, all at once. It is essentially the same question. As I've been looking at the minister's office, the deputy minister's office, communications, and corporate services for your department versus all the other departments, it seems to be quite variable across the board about what your staffing complement is for each of those offices, which surprises me. I guess I kind of expected that I would see that there would be some uniformity in how our ministers were staffed and our deputy ministers were staffed. To give you some idea of the variation, you're right in the middle on the minister's office at \$638 million. There's a low of \$495 million in Energy.

Mr. Campbell: It's \$638,000. I wish I had \$638 million. We could fix a lot of problems. That's just a dream, okay?

Ms Smith: Sorry. You know, I've been making that mistake lots as I've looked at your budget cuts because the numbers are so small. Thank you for correcting me.

Yours is \$638,000. There's a low of \$495,000 in Energy and a high of \$937,000 in Environment. Then when you go to the deputy minister's office, same thing, you're kind of right in the middle. For Energy it's \$495,000. They have the same amount for both of those, interestingly enough. It goes as high as \$1.3 million, though, for Justice. I wonder on those two lines if you could maybe provide some insight about why it is that your budget is so much different than your colleagues for what appears to me to be essentially the same kind of services?

Mr. Campbell: We're basically a lean fighting machine, okay? No. I mean, I looked at our staff, in talking to my deputy, and I looked at our department. If you look at our department, I think we have 114 people overall. One of the things that we have impressed upon our department is change, being very flexible, being nimble, being able to react because, again, we're building relationships and looking at what's going on with other departments in the sense that we open up a lot of doors. In our department, while you might be in Métis relations, that's not to say that some of your work might not be in First Nations. I give a lot of credit to our staff that they've embraced that idea.

I would suggest that we do run pretty lean. When I look at my staff in my office, there's myself, my chief of staff. I've got a scheduler, I've got a special assistant that actually also serves as my secretary on our ministerial working groups, and I have my press secretary. We run a very small office, but we have very good staff. I think we've accomplished a lot. Again, it's a credit to my deputy and my assistant deputies and the executive team that we have, the job that we've done with our first-line people in buying into the work that we have to do and the importance of the work.

I mean, one of the things about our department is that people are there because they care. I want to put that on the record. People in Aboriginal Relations are there because they care about the issue. They could be in other departments. I have people that have turned down promotions because they like the work they're doing in Aboriginal Relations.

Ms Smith: I can understand that. It does also give us some places to look in other departments for when we propose our amendments to reduce, so I'm glad that you're as lean as you are because it certainly gives some nice targets in other departments.

Mr. Campbell: Well, I'd appreciate it if you didn't say that to other ministries.

Ms Smith: Same thing on communications. I'll just make note that you're actually one of the lowest: \$280,000 for your communications staff. Of course, the Executive Council is \$14.5 million, and Health, which you might expect, is \$3.3 million. Again, quite interesting, the variation.

If you could also explain for me corporate services. I'm trying to understand because this is really all over the map in different departments. You're among the lowest at \$2.5 million – I got the million right there – but this is as high as \$42.9 million in Environment. So I'm not quite sure what you decide to group under corporate services in your department that's different than others. Maybe you can shed some light on that.

Mr. Campbell: One of the reasons that we're at \$2.5 million is that we also share our corporate services with IIR and an HR department with IIR. As you remember, prior to the Premier changing cabinet in May of last year, IIR and Aboriginal Relations were one department, under one ministry. As we split them out, we still do share a number of service with IIR. Again, it's efficient, and it makes sense.

Ms Smith: Okay. Maybe you could also provide some perspective for me on this because, as you know, in our Wildrose financial recovery plan one of the issues that we raised was that there do seem to be an awful lot of people with a manager role or a manager title.

As I look through Aboriginal Relations, there's obviously a deputy minister. There's a director of business integration and strategy. There's an assistant director under communications, an assistant deputy minister under consultation and land claims, a financial accountability and issues manager. Under land claims there's a director as well as a manager of negotiation support. Under aboriginal consultation there are an executive director as well as a senior manager of consultation policy and regional land issues, a director of aboriginal consultation, and four consultation managers.

Then under First Nations and Métis relations there's an assistant deputy minister, a manager of divisional operations and co-ordination. Under aboriginal economic partnership we've got a director, a manager of economic partnerships. Under aboriginal community initiatives we've got a director. Métis relations: an executive director and a director of Métis relations, actually two of them. Under First Nation relations: an executive director, director of First Nations and urban initiatives, manager of organizational liaison, manager of urban initiatives, manager of aboriginal initiatives, manager of events and protocol. First Nations development fund, we've got a director. First Nations policy and planning: executive director, director of planning and research, senior manager, manager of statistics and research.

Now, I do recognize that you do have a small staff complement of 114, but my quick count says that there are about 30 managers. So if you could provide some perspective about that manager to front-line worker ratio for me.

8:30

Mr. Campbell: I would suggest that while they might have the title of manager, we all do the same work. When I travel to First Nation communities, I might have an ADM with me or I might have a front-line worker with me. We all do the same job when we get out there. That's what I said earlier. One of the things that I like about our department is that we are flexible. You know, I'll tour First Nations communities, and I might have the ADM, Mr.

Buchanan, with me, and he'll take the notes and do things. Maybe on another trip I might have Wendy Twin with me.

We understand the essence of being a small department. As I said earlier, we're very flexible; we're very nimble. We're continuing to make sure that we become more efficient, understanding that the job we do is very important, moving forward with the Premier's agenda, moving forward, again, in closing the socioeconomic gap for aboriginal people in the province.

Ms Smith: There's no question about that. I just wonder why everybody needs to have a manager title because, of course, managers carry a higher pay scale. They also qualify for bonuses when they're paid out. So when we're looking at ways in which we might be able to restrain the cost of government, especially growing year over year, it would seem to me that if they're doing those kinds of front-line services, do they really need the manager title, manager pay, and manager bonuses?

Mr. Campbell: Well, I mean, again, there's a pay grid within the public sector. If they meet that requirement, then they're entitled. I look at the job that our ministry does. I look at the jobs that all of our people do. You know, it's a recognition for them. It's important.

I think the other thing that's important, too, is that when you look at meeting with the chiefs, the chiefs don't want to meet with front-line workers. They want to meet with senior officials. So while the jobs are similar, I can suggest to you that if I were to say to the chiefs, "I want you to come and meet with my deputy minister," they might say, "Yes, I'll do that," but they'd be a little reluctant because they'd want to meet with the minister. If I was to say, "You're going to come and meet with my ADMs," they'd send their technicians. So titles are important in dealing with our clients, too.

You know, it sounds a little bit silly, but in dealing with building relationships and showing respect to the chiefs, they see themselves as . . . [A timer sounded] Am I done?

The Chair: You're not done, but you are done for this moment.

Mr. Campbell: I just heard the buzzer. I thought maybe we were on *Jeopardy!* or something.

The Chair: Ms Smith, do you want to continue with the back and forth?

Ms Smith: Yes. I'm quite happy with the way the minister has been keeping his answers tight, so I'm more than happy to continue this way.

Well, thank you for that perspective. I appreciate it. I may disagree about the need for all those managers and all those titles, but I appreciate your answer.

I did want to ask a question about the First Nations and Métis relations. This, I guess, is where the additional amount for the Métis settlements, that was just announced a couple of days ago or maybe last week, comes through in the additional allocation. I do want to hopefully have you provide me some perspective. If I do my math right on this – and, as you know, I've already missed a few zeroes, so I'm happy to be corrected if I'm looking at this the wrong way – \$85 million over 10 years with the population they have works out to roughly around a thousand dollars per person that's on that settlement. If you say that you're moving the settlements towards a model of funding that you would be inclined to do for municipalities, if I calculate that out for municipalities with a 3.4 million or so population, you'd have to be spending

\$3.4 billion per year to be able to get the same level of support for municipalities. I'm just wondering what formula you're working on to be able to get to that number.

I recognize that settlements have additional services that they provide in coadministration with the provincial government, but I can tell you that I've already had a couple of municipal leaders say that if they were to get funded at an equivalent level for infrastructure, all of their infrastructure worries would be over. What would you like me to tell them about how you came up with that formula?

Mr. Campbell: I think, first, that this is a long-term process. This started years ago. In 1990 the provincial government signed a 17-year agreement with the Métis settlements, so some of the infrastructure work has been done already. But as we move forward, looking at education – again, remember that some of these communities are very remote. So when we look at the essential services, we look at issues such as water and sewer, housing, policing, and health care, and this is something that we've agreed to with the settlements as a figure.

The other thing that's very important about this agreement is that there are benchmarks in place. This is also a working document. We will have benchmarks in place, and if the Métis settlements don't meet certain benchmarks moving forward, there will be no funding. This isn't just that we're handing over \$10 million and away you go; you can spend where you want. We're looking at governance issues, making sure that we have a code of conduct in place, you know, things that we take for granted sometimes. These are important steps that the Métis Settlements General Council is taking. You know, I'm very proud of the fact that they've stepped out of their comfort zone and that they have said to us: "Listen. We want to be big boys. We want to be treated like other people. We want to run our government like other governments do. We're not looking for any more handouts. We want a hand up to move forward." We're pretty happy about that, actually.

Ms Smith: As you develop that formula, are you prepared to make your assumptions public so that we can compare that with how municipalities are funded, also keeping in mind that they are doing other services? Are you going to make that public?

Mr. Campbell: You'll see that in their audited statements. I mean, every settlement is audited. Every year they'll have an audited statement, and you'll be able to see the work that's done, and you'll see the money that went in.

Again, what we're looking at is working towards, you know, self-sustaining communities. The settlements suffer the same challenges as the reserves do in the sense that we want to make them self-sustaining and we want to provide economic opportunities. So depending on where your settlement is, just as to reserves are in this province, you might have to leave your settlement or leave your reserve to find work, okay? What we want to do is to have settlements where people want to live. They might go work in other parts of the province, but they will come back to their community.

Ms Smith: Yeah. I agree. It's an excellent objective. I guess I just want to be aware of what the actual formula is so that we can see whether it's consistent with how we fund municipalities.

Plus, as you know, there are funding issues that First Nations face. There are funding issues that our urban populations of aboriginals as well our urban populations of Métis face. I think they would like to know what the actual parameters are that

you've put together to develop those dollars as they consider their future negotiations with your government. So I'll just put that out there.

On the issue of the First Nations development fund – a very quick question – I have not yet seen the annual report for 2011-12. I just have 2010-11. In addition, I might as well mention that for the First Nations economic partnership we don't have last year's report, 2011-12, just 2010-11. When might that be produced?

Mr. Campbell: It'll be out in due course as soon as we have it ready to go.

Ms Smith: It does seem a bit unusual, though, for it to be so long. I mean, I understand why you wouldn't have 2012-13 since we're not done that budget year yet. But that is a pretty long delay coming into estimates for next year, and we don't even have anything to compare with from two years ago. Is this a normal delay? What can you tell me about the explanation for that?

Mr. Campbell: One of the challenges we have is that we depend on the information coming back from First Nations. Sometimes they're a little slow in the auditing process. As a matter of fact, I can tell you that we have actually sent people out to help some First Nations with their funding and making sure that we have audited statements. We have some very strict guidelines within the First Nations development fund and how that money is allocated.

Ms Smith: Well, there are such great news stories in there. It's nice to actually read it. Thank you for that. I'll look forward to seeing that.

Mr. Campbell: We'll make sure it gets out to you in due course.

Ms Smith: Perfect.

The Métis settlements ombudsman. I've had some members of the Métis community ask me where they're going to be able to go now that there is not an ombudsman office if they've got issues on settlements about a variety of concerns with governance. I know we've had them before. I know the former minister was dealing with an issue at Elizabeth as well. I wonder if you might be able to tell me: who's taking on that role of being able to deal with issues of our Métis populations? Did you consult with Métis community members or just with the councils when you made the decision to eliminate this office?

8:40

Mr. Campbell: First of all, on the first part of your question, there are three different areas that a Métis person can go if they have an issue. One is the Alberta Ombudsman's office. The second is that they can go to their council or the Métis Settlements General Council. The third is that we are in the process of revamping the Métis Settlements Appeal Tribunal. That tribunal, we felt, looking at the sort of applications that were coming forward, is a council that could actually handle those quite well. We're spending \$1.2 million a year on that council. We've got seven full-time members. We see that as an opportunity. Also, the department, if we feel that there is a need for an investigation, has the right to hire an investigator and have them move forward on that investigation.

Ms Smith: Okay. When you say that you might move some of this over to the Métis Settlements Appeal Tribunal, I noticed that that budget has not gone up. Are you just not expecting there to be

a higher volume of cases? Maybe you can tell us about the volume of cases that you're seeing before that appeal tribunal right now.

Mr. Campbell: I think the tribunal could be more efficient with their time. When I look at the volume that's in front of them and I look at the volume that was in front of the ombudsman, I think that the tribunal will be able to handle that volume. Again, I would look at it from a purely financial point of view: \$1.2 million versus \$700,000. I think that we're better served with the \$1.2 million in the broad scope of things.

I mean, in our department we have phone calls from Métis settlement members all the time, where they'll phone in and ask about something. Again, I think it's important to look at what most of the – you know, we have a lot of land claim issues, and we also have a lot of issues with treaty cards. If you're holding a treaty card, you're not entitled to live in a Métis settlement. We're having to work with the federal government right now because they've decided to shut that portion of their department down where we could get that information on a need-to-know basis. Now we're trying to work with them to get that.

I can tell you that for appeals under the appeal tribunal in 2010 we had 22 appeals, in 2011 we had 27, and in 2012 we had 27. As far as membership we had four, three, and seven. Land disputes: 10, 18, and 17. You can see that our biggest disputes are over land, over who actually owns the land.

Again, in talking to the general council and in talking to all of the council members of the different Métis settlements, they agreed that this was the best way to move forward. They want to take responsibility for their activities. They want to do a good job of governing, they want to do a good job with their code of ethics, and they want to do a good job of representing their people. I'm very comfortable with the work that MSAT does now and that with a little bit of training they'll be able to handle the responsibilities quite well.

Ms Smith: Do you know how many complaints there were before the ombudsman last year? You gave me numbers for the appeals, but do you know how many complaints went to the ombudsman?

Mr. Campbell: I'm not sure. We'll get it for you. I don't think it was that many.

Ms Smith: That would be terrific. Okay. That would be helpful. We'll see how this goes.

Mr. Campbell: Yeah. I'll find out for you.

Ms Smith: Great.

Just in our remaining time together I wanted to get into a couple of the strategic priorities that you have. And I commend you. I don't disagree with the priorities that you've identified:

- 1.1 Work with Aboriginal, government and industry partners to increase Aboriginal participation in the workforce and the economy.
- 1.2 Support Aboriginal economic development through dialogue and engagement . . .

The concern that I have as I look through previous reports is the performance measures. I guess maybe a better way to put it is the lack of performance measures. This is not just a problem for your department this year; it seems to be an ongoing problem. The only performance measure in this area is the number of Aboriginal strategic economic development initiatives, partnerships, and capacity-building projects.

The first thing I would note is that if these have now become your top two priorities, it does seem strange to me that we would

have the same 34 projects funded going from not only '11-12 but through this year and next year and the following year. That doesn't seem to indicate that you're putting your resources where your priorities are. It would seem to me that if you were actually making those your top priorities, we would actually see more of those partnerships and capacity-building projects going forward.

The other thing I would say on the issue of measurables is that when I went and listened to Chief Clarence Louie speak at the Palliser teachers' association meeting a couple of weeks ago, one of the things that he said – and it was very interesting; he was there even though it was the day of band council elections. That's how confident he was that he was going to win. I think he was on his 15th year in office. What he said was: "I have a very simple campaign slogan. It's: vote for me because I will create more jobs than anyone else."

If that's the measure that our First Nations communities, especially our successful ones, are using to measure success, it would seem to me that's the kind of data that the provincial government and your department in particular should be collecting, things like the number of jobs, the number of businesses that have been established on reserves and settlements, the unemployment rate or, on the other side, workplace participation rate, the local GDP. How much local economy is actually being generated on reserves and settlements?

Infrastructure issues. As we know, infrastructure is key to being able to develop capacity locally. What do they have for water and sewage, for electricity and heating, for Internet access, for roads, schools, health centres, housing, seniors' centres? Just a measure of core infrastructure.

On the education side you'd expect to see graduation rates as well as the number who have gone on to school and achieved degrees, including postsecondary degrees.

Can you explain why you don't include any of these as performance measures when these seem to be right in keeping with your top two priority initiatives?

Mr. Campbell: Well, on the performance measures we show 34 each year. I can tell you that in 2013-14 we're going to be above that. We're above that right now. We're actually at about 47. We'll continue at that number. We'll continue to grow.

Again, the challenge that we face as a province is that a number of the things that you talked about are under federal jurisdiction: education, health care, infrastructure. As we move forward as a province, as we try to break down those barriers of jurisdiction, we will, I think, have a better handle on our success. I can say to you right now that depending on where you are in the province, the GDP numbers fluctuate. For example, you look at the Tsuu T'ina. They would tell you that they put probably \$750 million a year into the Calgary economy. If you go down to the Blood tribe, the numbers are similar when you look at what they're doing in Lethbridge. But then you get into the smaller northern communities, where you've got less population and more remoteness, and those numbers drop a bit.

The other thing, too, that we find is that, you know, it's very hard for us to get information out of First Nations. They're not very forthcoming with information. We ask for numbers. They might give you a generalization, but to say, "Could you put that in writing for us, and can you send us the stats?": depending on who you're talking to, it's a real issue to get that done.

One of the things that we talk about in consultation that's important to us and First Nations in a lot of different reports is capacity issues. A lot of First Nations lack the capacity to do a good job when it comes to reporting. One of the things that we want to work towards, working with the Nations and, again,

working with the Métis settlements – it will be part of the long-term agreement – is that we want to build that capacity so that First Nations have people within their communities that can do a better job of reporting, that can do a better job of keeping statistics.

You know, one of the things that I am happy about is that we finished the final mile on the SuperNet. I'm happy about it because I was involved in that in 1991, back when we had the Premier's council on science and technology. Fred Stewart was the minister at the time, and we actually started that concept, the brainstorming, of moving that forward. I'm very happy that we're at that point now that we will be able to provide Internet services right across this province and actually hit a lot of our remote First Nations communities.

Ms Smith: That's important. I liked the last part of your answer better than the first part. That's why I started our conversation about Jordan's principle. I just don't think it's helpful for us to say that it's not our problem, that it's the federal government's problem. That's why I'm glad you sort of revised your answer.

Mr. Campbell: I'm not saying that. I'm saying that the message that I've brought forward to First Nations, that the Premier supports me on and that my colleagues in cabinet support me on, is that we're all Albertans. It's our problem. We can pay now, or we can pay later.

Ms Smith: Agreed.

Mr. Campbell: I'm pushing that we pay now. So when I look at education, I look at health care; I look at infrastructure; I look at housing. I say that as a province we have a responsibility to take those matters on. However, understand that I'm not prepared to let the federal government off the hook either.

8:50

Ms Smith: Nor should you. I think that Jordan's principle says that we help our First Nations, and then we take it up with the feds after. So thank you for clarifying that.

Just in our last couple of minutes I want to raise the other goal, 2, that you have. On 2.1, implementing the revised First Nations consultation policy on land management and resource development to increase the effectiveness of the consultation process, again, your performance measure is to get to 30 per cent of the geomap developed by this year, then 60 per cent in 2014-15, and then in 2015-16, 90 per cent. That is a very slow time scale. When I'm talking with our energy sector and they're talking about the need for the responsible energy act – it was very interesting. Every single energy-sector organization I spoke with said that the reason we need this is because we need some certainty around First Nations, and, as you know, Bill 2 has nothing to do with First Nations. It's specifically excluded from the act.

I was disappointed to see that you began a consultation process about how to consult, and that seems to have gone off the rails. The news reports suggest you're going to restart it in the spring. Okay. The news reports may be incorrect. But this may feel like *Groundhog Day* for a number of members of the committee because I went back and looked at the 2010 estimates, and Ms Notley was asking at that time when we were going to have a policy on consultation because it was supposed to have been done the previous year. So it seems to me like we're heading around in

circles, but it's now getting to a point of a very crucial problem for our industry.

Our industry is now finding that when they're trying to do development on lands off reserve, they have no idea who they're supposed to be talking to because there are unsettled land claims. There are disputes over traditional territory and hunting and trapping and fishing lands. To have an individual company have to deal with three or four or five bands, not knowing which ones or in which order or how to go about doing it, is causing chaos.

So, Minister, I would love to know what the actual process is going to be here and just implore you to get to that 90 per cent or 100 per cent sooner rather than later. I think 2015-16 is way too late.

Mr. Campbell: Well, there are mapping projects out there that are ongoing right now, but First Nations will not share that with the provincial government, so that's an issue. Again, it goes back to relationships. It goes back to trust. I mean, they've done the mapping. Actually, industry has worked with First Nations and supplied the money for the First Nations to do the mapping. We've requested that mapping to work with them and industry, and they've said no. They want to use that to their own benefit.

Our targets. We're saying 30 per cent. I will suggest that that could be higher.

As far as the consultation process, we are full steam ahead. We are on schedule with what we said that we'd do last fall. We put out the discussion paper. We met with First Nations individually. I met with industry individually. On February 1 we brought 151 people together from industry, First Nations, and municipalities to talk about what the discussion paper looked like, and from that we are now drafting our consultation policy. That policy will go out the first week of April. We will give 45 days' notice to again discuss that. We will then meet with First Nations individually. We will meet with industry. [Mr. Campbell's speaking time expired] Could I just finish this? This is important. Do you mind, Madam Chair?

The Chair: Quickly, please.

Mr. Campbell: Okay. We will do the same thing with the consultation paper as we do with the discussion paper, and we will have, hopefully, a consultation paper ready to release later this spring. So any comments that we have restarted or we are rethinking: that's totally false. Don't believe everything you read in the paper.

Ms Smith: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Okay. Dr. Swann, you've got 14 minutes here. Do you want to go back and forth, or do you want to do block time?

Dr. Swann: Back and forth. Thanks, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Swann: Thank you to the minister and staff for joining us today. I have a couple of questions mostly related to funding but also related to policy.

In this past year the federal omnibus bills C-38 and C-45 somewhat changed the relationship between the federal government and the navigable waters act and the Fisheries Act. Two Alberta First Nations launched a lawsuit in January against the federal government pursuant to protecting fish habitat and their right to be consulted over development on their lands. The

bills actually limit the federal government involvement over environmental assessment, their powers to protect fish habitat, and their authority to regulate construction of works on navigable waters. Most of these responsibilities now rest on the Alberta government's shoulders. What are the costs you estimate to be associated with these extra responsibilities? How will we ensure that First Nations lands in Alberta continue to be protected, and how are First Nations rights to be preserved?

Mr. Campbell: Well, I don't see any costs to our ministry increasing, David. I mean, we get out and talk about the consultation policy, we talk about socioeconomic opportunities, and we talk about treaty rights. You know, I can say to you that water has been in those discussions. The chiefs have been very candid about that. We have passed on those discussions to Minister McQueen. I know that Deputy Werry has talked to her deputy. I know that we've talked about the water conversation in our ministerial working group.

Water is not just a First Nations issue. I mean, we all need water, right? Without water none of us are going to be here. I look at that dialogue as being a lot larger than just the First Nations. Again, understanding the treaties and understanding the rights that they have, we'll make sure that they are at the table and involved fully in that dialogue. They have to be.

You know, C-38 and C-45 caused me a little heartache, to be honest with you. I mean, I'm out there trying to build relationships, and I'm trying to build trust and respect. You know, the last thing anybody wants to hear is: hey, we're from government; we're here to help. Right? I'm trying to build relationships with First Nations. The First Nations do get confused between the province and the federal government when it comes to policy and legislation. It does cause me some grief out there. In some places I almost want to wear a tag saying: I'm with the provincial government, not the federal government.

Again, we will work with First Nations and Métis settlements and the MNA. Again, when I look at the water issue, I see it as an issue that's important to all Albertans.

Dr. Swann: I can see how it might create some consternation between you and your department and First Nations.

How much consultation did the federal government have with the province over these changes?

Mr. Campbell: None with me. I don't know if other ministers had any discussions with my colleagues, but I can say that I had no discussions with the federal government before they brought in Bill C-45.

Dr. Swann: Do you know of any comment from this Alberta government in relation to these bills? I haven't seen any public discussion. We certainly haven't heard it in the Legislature at all. Is there any intention to even discuss this as an issue?

Mr. Campbell: Again, David, I look at it that as a province we're building relationships with First Nations. As I said earlier to the opposition leader Ms Smith, I look at us all as Albertans. In my discussions I'm building relationships with First Nations and Métis people to make sure that we're closing the socioeconomic gaps in this province. I want to make sure that First Nations have the same opportunity that any Albertan does in this province to be able to enjoy in the successes that we have as we move forward. In some cases the feds are going to do what the feds are going to do, but we're going to do what we think is right by all of our

people in this province in moving the province forward. In some way, like I said, it causes me some heartache in some senses, but in the other sense the Premier has made it very clear that we're going to respect treaty rights and that all First Nations and Métis people need to be at the table moving forward. I'm happy with that.

Dr. Swann: Is it possible to move forward without an open, public, honest consultation about these issues?

Mr. Campbell: Which issues?

Dr. Swann: Bills C-38 and C-45.

Mr. Campbell: Well, those are federal jurisdictional issues, David.

Dr. Swann: But they're obviously affecting you and your relationship with First Nation. I guess I'm asking: what is the responsibility of the provincial government to talk about the issues that are affecting First Nations, whether they are from the federal or from the provincial level, and our responsibility as Albertans to address these issues?

Mr. Campbell: Well, we have a first ministers' meeting in April in Winnipeg. I would suggest that some of that might come up at that meeting. We'll have all the ministers from across Canada talking about aboriginal issues. I know one issue that will be on the table is aboriginal women. When I was in Winnipeg last year we talked about that.

In talking to National Chief Atleo a couple of weeks ago, we've come to agreement on education, for example, and he's going to be an advocate for us in Ottawa in helping to push the feds. I mean, I've talked to – unfortunately, the minister is not there anymore; he resigned. You know, we pushed very hard with the federal government on the education file, for example. We have the MOU. As I said earlier, we want to see that move more quickly. Even though we have the MOU in place, we agreed with the national chief and the grand chiefs in Alberta that we are going to put a six-month time frame in place to move that education agenda forward.

Again, I wish the feds would move a little quicker sometimes, but we're going to continue to do the work we have to do. It's frustrating, but it's not going to stop us from moving forward and having that discussion. With the chiefs it might be a five- or 10-minute discussion, but then once we get past that and get down to the issues with Alberta, our meetings are actually quite fruitful.

9:00

Dr. Swann: Well, I won't belabour the issue, but it's obviously created enough of a stir among First Nations, and many of them have been rallying for months about the issue. I guess my final question to you is: why the silence?

The Chair: Can I just interrupt to make sure we stay on track with the estimates? Maybe, Dr. Swann, if you can tie your questions to the estimates, that would be wonderful.

Dr. Swann: I don't see any accommodation in the estimates for the increased cost that's coming to the province over these unilateral, unconsulted decisions from the federal government, and I see nothing but silence in the government about that.

Mr. Campbell: Again, we see no cost to our ministry. The water conversation, I would suggest, will have cost to ESRD, but again I'm not the minister to ask that. Your question should be directed

to Minister McQueen. When I look at the monitoring, again that's ESRD.

Our role is to open doors for First Nations and Métis people in this province to be able to talk to government, and that's what we're doing. Again, one of the things I've said to the chiefs – and I've been very clear to them – was that we have the expertise to help you and assist you, but they need to be your ideas. I'm not going to come up with ideas and go to the chiefs and say: listen, this is what we think you should do. That's never worked in the past. I'm pressing the chiefs hard on this. "I want to know what your ideas are to move forward. What can we do to assist you, not tell you but to assist you? It's your community?" It's not my community. It's their community. It's their people that they're representing.

We're working very hard with them. We've set up different committees. For example, I'm meeting with all the economic development officers in Treaty 7, and they're coming to me with ideas that they want to look at moving forward to develop economic opportunities in the south. What I do, then, is that I go to the different ministries, and we set up the meetings and say: "The chiefs have brought this idea forward. Do we have any research on it? If we don't, can you help us find out what we need as far as bringing expertise forward?"

I can say to you that I'm very happy with the progress we're making, again a credit to my department and a credit to my colleagues, you know, for opening up their doors and allowing my department to work with them to push this agenda forward.

Dr. Swann: My final question, then, if I may: what is the new money in education being reserved to enhance aboriginal student literacy and numeracy?

Mr. Campbell: Can you say that again? Sorry; I didn't get the first part of it, David.

Dr. Swann: I don't see any new money for the education initiative that you've talked about to enhance aboriginal literacy and numeracy.

Mr. Campbell: Again, that would be money that would come from education. As I said earlier to Ms Smith, we're not going to let the feds off the hook. I mean, they have a responsibility. When you look at the formula at the federal level that they pay to First Nations, it's very complicated. While we can sit here and say that we believe that they're funding about \$3,000 less per student than the province, the feds will say: no, we're not.

There's a lot of work to be done between us and the feds just working out what the formula is and understanding what that formula is because they just take a bunch of money and give it to the First Nations. Again, getting reporting back from the First Nations on what they're doing with the funding they get isn't the easiest thing also. There are a lot of different things that we still have to work out as we move forward, but again that's going to be built on trust and respect, and it's going to be built on showing results, that we are serious about what we say we're going to do.

Dr. Swann: Well, I appreciate that. I hope that those of us who are not so intimately involved with the figures and the formulas will have some hope of understanding them as well. I mean, how many years have we been at this game and we still don't know how we're measuring the federal-provincial contributions to First Nations? It's long overdue.

Mr. Campbell: I agree with you. I have no issue with that.

The Chair: Are you finished?

Dr. Swann: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Swann.

Mr. Bilous, you have 14 minutes. Do you wish to go back and forth with the minister?

Mr. Bilous: Yes, please.

Thank you, Minister, for coming. I've got an overwhelming number of questions. We probably won't get through all of them, but we're going to try and get through many.

Mr. Campbell: You can always come and see me.

Mr. Bilous: I appreciate that.

I'm going to open with some questions on consultation policy. Then we'll talk a little bit about the internal core review, the protocol agreement, the memorandum of understanding for education, children and youth in care, and the office of the Métis settlements ombudsman if we have time to get to it all.

First and foremost, back in 2005 First Nations opposed the government's consultation policy on land management and resource development. In September 2010 Treaty 6 submitted a draft consultation policy to your department, Aboriginal Relations. The December 2012 draft consultation policy from the department, which was, interestingly, subsequently pulled, still did not include the recommendations from First Nations themselves. In my experience speaking with different chiefs and aboriginal groups around the province, they are frustrated and believe that the consultation system currently is broken. A question for you: why has the government rejected at least 15 recommendations for a revised consultation policy that were submitted in September 2010 by the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations?

Mr. Campbell: Well, again, when we look at the consultation policy and with the discussion paper that we're looking at right now, there are multiple stakeholders at the table. We understand that we have a duty to consult, and there has to be an adequacy part to that, that the Supreme Court has touched on. So when our new policy discussion paper, our new draft policy, comes out – as I said earlier, I think we've been very thoughtful about it – we want to make sure that it addresses the needs of all of our stakeholders.

The other thing that's important, too, I think, is to understand that this is about consultation. One of the things is that First Nations will put everything on the table as far as consultation. Everything is consultation to them. When we talk about the consultation policy, we're going to be talking about consultation for First Nations on reserve lands when we look at extraction of natural resources, but we'll have other consultations, whether it be in health care, education, infrastructure. This is one piece of the puzzle.

I can suggest to you that everybody is going to be a little upset with us.

Mr. Bilous: You said First Nations. Is there a plan to come up with a consultation paper dealing with other aboriginal groups?

Mr. Campbell: Yes.

Mr. Bilous: Especially looking at the high percentage of Métis people who don't live on a settlement – I think there's only 10 per cent of Métis in Alberta that live on one of the eight settlements; 90 per cent of Métis people live throughout the cities and throughout the province – the question is: what steps is your

department going to do moving forward to ensure that there is consultation with all groups throughout the province?

Mr. Campbell: We've had discussions with the MNA, the Métis Nation of Alberta, and the Métis settlements, and we'll be putting out a discussion paper sometime this fall for the Métis people, and we'll go through the same process that we've done with First Nations. In the meantime industry is already consulting with Métis communities, especially in northern Alberta. We look at the 25 historic communities across the province as being whom you would consult with. Again, we will have a policy, like I said, a draft discussion, in the fall. I'd like to be in the position to bring forward a consultation paper or a policy to the House sometime next spring for the MNA and the Métis settlements.

Again, understand that there are going to be some issues there. What is considered Métis? In this province we look at Métis as: you've got to meet the Powley test. We've been very frank with the president of the MNA, and we know we've got some challenges there. We want to make sure that we're talking about the right people that the consultation policy will include, and we want to make sure that industry and the Métis are onboard, that the policy that we put in place makes sense, and that it's workable.

That's one of the things that we want to make sure of coming out of the First Nations consultations. We want a policy that's workable. Again, one of the things that we know – and industry and First Nations have both said this – is that they lack the capacity to do a good job, so we're going to build that capacity into this policy. It's about consultation. It's not about writing a cheque to have industry go on the land and do things. This is about a consultation policy.

Mr. Bilous: I agree with you a hundred per cent, Minister. The groups have to be at the table from day one as partners.

Mr. Campbell: And they have been.

9:10

Mr. Bilous: A quick question. The consultation process matrix that was referred to in the draft consultation paper: has that been written?

Mr. Campbell: We're developing it right now. As I say, we had 60 written submissions from First Nations and industry, which was actually fairly decent, I thought, so we're taking all that into consideration. I can say to you that one of the things I'd like to do is that in the setting up of the consultation office I'd like the First Nations and industry involved. I also want First Nations and industry involved in setting what the matrix is going to look like.

Mr. Bilous: Do you have a date or a projected time when the matrix will be written? Is that this fall as well?

Mr. Campbell: No, no. I'm hoping to have it out for discussion the first week of April. We won't do April 1 but maybe April 2.

Mr. Bilous: That's probably a good thing.

I'm going to move along to the internal core review. The Minister of Aboriginal Relations in 2011 said that an internal core review was in progress. This review sought to ascertain the degree to which many of the key ministries are able to properly address aboriginal issues because so many ministries provide programming for aboriginal peoples. First question: has this internal core review been completed?

Mr. Campbell: I can say to you that that's an ongoing discussion. I mean, this is a working document. One of the things that we

have done – and I want to commend the former minister, sitting right there, for raising this – is that I think we have a very good working relationship with all of our colleagues at the deputy minister table, at the ADM table, and at the cabinet table, where we understand that while Aboriginal Relations doesn't fund the programs, we have a very key role in providing advice to different ministries as to whether or not programs are working. I hope we get to some of the things you want to talk about. One of them that's very important is children in care, for example.

I think we're doing a very admirable job of ministries working together. Again I give credit to my colleagues. Different cabinet ministers have come with me on tours to First Nations communities. I've asked different ministers to come with me. Chiefs have said: can you bring a certain minister? For example, I had Minister Horne down in Siksika to look at their health care centre in the fall. I've had Minister Hancock out.

Mr. Bilous: Minister, if I can interrupt – sorry – with all due respect, I appreciate the value of it, but I'm just curious as far as a date. Will this document be made public when it's completed?

Mr. Campbell: As I say, it's a work-in-progress. It'll be a working document. We will continue to work on this on a day-to-day basis, depending on the issues that come forward.

Mr. Bilous: Okay. Just to touch on something that fits with this, I've been visiting native friendship centres around the province, as have some of my colleagues. There are at least 20 of them in municipalities across Alberta that receive very little funding from the provincial government. In fact, it's about \$25,000 a year compared to the nearly \$200,000 a year from the federal government. Does funding for native friendship centres come from the Aboriginal Relations department or a different department? They have met with some of the ministers from other departments.

Mr. Campbell: I think we spend \$735,000 a year in this department on Alberta friendship centres around the province. Again, the friendship centres are a federal initiative. We work with the friendship centres. I've attended a number of their meetings now. We're having a pretty open dialogue right now with them. I've actually engaged a couple of the MPs in the Edmonton area to bring forward some issues on their behalf and some of the ideas that we have. They do a very valuable job in the province. You know, you talk about urban aboriginals. I mean, they're very key.

Mr. Bilous: My next question kind of jumps on that. We're looking at safe communities. In 2010-11 14 safe communities innovation fund supported projects were implemented, addressing the needs of aboriginal people, families, and communities. The projects received investments totalling more than \$8.5 million from SCIF. Native Counselling Services of Alberta is having to shut down its Pohna antigang program, which was a partnership with the Edmonton Police Service, because of provincial budget cuts. It was funded through the safe communities innovation fund. How many aboriginal organizations' initiatives have been eliminated as a result of the safe communities and other grant initiative cuts across departments?

Mr. Campbell: I'll have to get that in writing for you, Deron. I don't know the figure off the top of my head.

Mr. Bilous: Okay. I will come back to the protocol agreement.

I will jump to the children and youth in care. The Child and Youth Advocate pointed out with dismay in his 2012 report that there's a terribly disproportionate number of indigenous youth and young people in provincial care. My questions are: is there a tangible strategy to address this terrible situation, and is there a strategy to address the fact that only 22 per cent of First Nations children have access to early childhood programs?

Mr. Campbell: We are working very closely with Human Services right now on a strategy. I can say to you that in the last couple of months it's been an issue that a number of different chiefs have raised on my visits, that they want to bring their children home. We are working at the ADM level right now with my department and Human Services to come up with a strategy that makes the most sense. Again, at the end of the day we'd like to see more aboriginal people go back to their communities, but we also have to be very clear that the safety of the child is of the utmost importance to us.

Mr. Bilous: So at the moment there isn't a tangible strategy in place. I mean, you're working with other ministries, but as far as . . .

Mr. Campbell: And working with the chiefs. Again, it's easy to say that we're going to send these children home, but where are you going to send them? I mean, you know, looking at infrastructure needs is going to be very important, providing homes. Like I say, the numbers are pretty dismal when you look at the number of First Nation and Métis children that are in care, and we're going to do everything we can to try and fix that.

Mr. Bilous: Okay. Moving on to education, or the MOU. We just celebrated the third anniversary a couple of weeks ago since the MOU was signed. What indicators and evidence do you have that progress is being made?

Mr. Campbell: I myself and the Minister of Education have met with them. We have 40 commitments. Again, we have impressed on the federal government the need to move quicker on this. In the meantime, the Minister of Education and I have sat down with our departments. As I said, we just met with National Chief Atleo and the grand chiefs. We are going to be very aggressive in pushing forward a curriculum both on- and off-reserve that talks about language, history, and culture.

Mr. Bilous: Would it be possible to get the indicators and progress, commitment by commitment, sent in writing from your department with the MOU?

Mr. Campbell: Yeah. We'll follow up with where the MOU is at. We'll get the information to you.

Mr. Bilous: The only other point I want to raise is that, you know, in the MOU – I'm in 2(2) – it talks about: "The Parties agree to continue work on a comparative analysis of federal funding for First Nation education (including Band-operated schools and provincial tuition) with provincial funding for education." I know that the Leader of the Official Opposition raised the question as far as that funding differential for young people.

What I find interesting is that the province of Manitoba, while continuing to put pressure on the federal government, has in fact stepped up, and they pay the tuition differential so that families aren't being saddled with a cost for their aboriginal children to go to school. Is that something that the province of Alberta would consider doing?

Mr. Campbell: We're looking at that. You know, I can only speak for myself as long as I've been in the ministry and from my discussions with the First Nations. We've come a long way in the relationship building in the sense that they actually want to talk to the province. As I said before, they see themselves as a sovereign nation, so they see nation-to-nation building, and they see themselves on par with the federal government.

We've done a lot of work as a government. It's not that we've been sitting idly by and not addressing First Nation issues in this province, but it's taken time for First Nations to come to the table and actually want to engage with us.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Okay. Now it's the turn of the PC caucus, and I understand Pearl Calahasen will start and that you plan to share the questions among a few of you.

Ms Calahasen: I do.

The Chair: Maureen Kubinec and Jacquie Fenske. I'll just let that naturally go, so you will have to do back and forth.

Ms Calahasen: I'll just indicate to Maureen that it's her turn. Thank you very much.

Minister, first of all, I'm very glad that you're here. You've got great staff. I know how hard they work, so congratulations on some of the outcomes that you've been able to achieve.

I just want to make a correction. I think this is really important. The opposition leader asked whether or not we have developed any kind of relationship. We've been in power for a long time. I wanted to say that the relationship building was begun by Peter Lougheed. He was one of the few individuals who actually included aboriginal people in the political process, and I happen to be one of those. I think that relationship building has been happening for a long, long time.

That relationship building, I think, was also started by making sure that there was an aboriginal ministry, but it was always embedded within other ministries. It was only in 1999 that the first aboriginal minister was ever assigned to deal with aboriginal affairs. I think those are very, very important when we're talking about relationship building, that the minister has been trying to ensure we continue to do.

9:20

I was looking at your numbers, Minister, and I salivate when I look at the number of dollars that you have received. When I was minister and, I'm sure, when Len was minister, we used to just wish that we'd get the kind of money that you have, so I'm just so happy to see that you've been so successful in that respect.

Of course, looking at some of the initiatives that you have, crossministry initiatives have been so useful and so well used, and I see that you have also started that process. I know that some of my colleagues have been asking about various ministries that are impacted. I know aboriginal affairs have impacted upon that. If you want to just very briefly talk about that, I wouldn't mind, but I'll just continue.

The intellectual indigenous knowledge, the mapping: I think that has to stay with First Nations. That is their knowledge. It's not anybody else's knowledge. I made that commitment many years ago, that that's their knowledge.

The development of the Métis consultation policy and legislation. Thank you for carrying through with that commitment. That is a commitment that has been made by this government, and

I'm so happy to see that you're carrying it through. So congratulations.

Employment training, Connecting the Dots. My question is: where are you with respect to that in terms of your estimates? I see some of it there, but I don't see the implementation of the results of Connecting the Dots.

Now I'm going to pass it on to Maureen, and she'll ask the questions that she does have, Minister.

Mr. Campbell: Do you want me to answer?

Ms Calahasen: Sure. Okay.

Mr. Campbell: Okay. Well, thanks for the comments, Pearl. Again, Peter Lougheed, Ralph Klein, Don Getty: all premiers that did very good jobs and were very well respected by the First Nations. I give full credit to our Premier for setting the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations on its own. She's given me a very solid mandate moving forward.

I look at Connecting the Dots, and I look at the work that we're doing within our ministry and collaborating with other ministries in the field of providing economic opportunities. On behalf of Human Services we just presented \$1.6 million to the Trade Winds school last week, again a joint effort with the federal government, where they presented \$1.9 million, and industry – I forget how much money industry put in. Quite a bit of money. Again, 300 aboriginal students are going to be able to get into the trades. I can tell you, seeing their faces at that ceremony, how proud they were to be involved in that.

Thanks to the chair we visited Women Building Futures just down the street from here. In seven years I think they've put 900 women into nontraditional trades. These are women, a lot of them single mothers, that have come from the school of hard knocks and have been given a second opportunity and have taken full advantage of that. They are going to be strong pillars of their communities because they're going to be successful.

We just partnered with the Alberta Chamber of Resources and industry, where we're seeking to get aboriginal youth involved.

Again, I've talked to some chiefs and have asked them to come together. I want to look at economic opportunities in this province. I am not going to get all 48 chiefs to agree on anything. I am not going to get three treaty organizations to agree on anything. What we will do, though, is move forward with the chiefs that want to move forward, and we will work with them to help provide opportunities. I was just up in Loon River and had a very good meeting with Chief Noskey. There's an individual that basically has zero unemployment in his nation. You know, they've built that. We were at Peerless Trout, one of our newest First Nations. We'll work with Chief Alook and the people up there to provide those opportunities. Again, as we move forward, we'll continue to do those things.

Ms Calahasen: Thank you.

Go ahead, Maureen.

Ms Kubinec: Thank you. I also want to compliment you on the work that you and your department are doing. It's an exciting time in Alberta. I think you're carrying on the good work that's been done, and one of the people that was passionate about it was my predecessor Ken Kowalski. He had a special relationship with the First Nations.

More and more aboriginal people are coming to the cities from reserves and Métis settlements than ever before. I think there is about 60 per cent of the aboriginal population now living in Alberta cities. I'm wondering if you can tell me what other

ministries you're working with and what programs you're trying to put in place to deal with that.

Mr. Campbell: Well, we work with a broad cross-section of ministries. First of all, let me just take a step back. Let's talk about the municipalities first. We are about to sign an MOU with the city of Edmonton. Again, it was supposed to be a tripartite MOU. The federal government for some reason is dragging their feet, so as a province we're going to sign the MOU with the city of Edmonton because it's the right thing to do. Edmonton is now the second-largest city in Canada for aboriginal population. We'll probably be number one when we redo the census. Calgary is number five. So we understand the importance of working with the city and with aboriginal people and providing those opportunities. We're going to continue to do that.

Right now I'm working very closely with Education. My thought process – and my ministry has supported me so far; they haven't rebelled yet. When I look at all the issues around the province that we're dealing with, education is the key. Again, it goes back to making sure that we're not going to lose the generation of young people coming forward. We're very focused on providing educational opportunities, and out of those educational opportunities will come the economic opportunities. We have different demographics. We have, you know, the K to 12, which is important, but we also have a group of people that I will say are postsecondary age, and we have to help them and provide some training and tools to be able to provide them with some opportunities.

Again, working with Minister Horne in health care, I see some tremendous opportunities in some of our nations as far as providing real good health care, which they do now. Some of them need a little bit more help, so we're going to work with Minister Horne on that.

We're working with Minister Hancock in Human Services: of course, employment, immigration, children in care. Personally, children in care is a real priority for me. I'd really like to see us do something there.

We're working with Tourism, Parks and Recreation. Again, opportunities for First Nations. You go down south, and with all the historic sites down there that are already in place, we need to work on a tourism strategy to get people down there and actually provide some expertise to get a better bang for our dollar at some of those wonderful sites.

Advanced Education. I mean, we basically touch all ministries, so my deputy is a pretty busy guy.

Ms Kubinec: Thank you.

Now, this is changing gears a little bit, but can you tell me what the status is of the Métis harvesting agreement, that was actually terminated in 2007? Will it resume? Where is that at?

Mr. Campbell: Unfortunately, it's still in the courts. I would like to negotiate a resolution to that, and I think we can. I've had some discussions with my ministry and with Justice. But right now, again, if you meet the Powley test, you can hunt within 160 kilometres of the settlements. There is some of that going on right now. You know, it's unfortunate that there are misconceptions out there that if you allowed Métis harvesting, all of a sudden every animal on the face of Alberta would disappear. We know that's not true. We have some stigmas that we have to overcome. If we can get the MNA to meet the Powley test, I think we can move some things forward.

Ms Kubinec: Okay. I'll turn it over to Jacquie.

Ms Fenske: Thank you, Maureen.

Minister, in your ministry business plan on page 6 there's a performance measure that indicates the number of aboriginal strategic economic development initiatives. You've been speaking at some length on economic opportunities. I'm wondering why those targets remain the same from 2011 to 2016.

Mr. Campbell: Because my ministry is being conservative, and sometimes they don't like to take credit for things they do. As I said earlier, we are going to be higher than that this year. I would suggest that we're probably at 47 already. Again, as we continue to be out in the province, as we continue to meet with the communities, we're always coming up with new ideas. Of course, that's why I bring a number of my staff with me. I give them the work to do.

9:30

I can say that there is a willingness out there and, I would suggest, a very cautious optimism by First Nations that we are headed in the right direction. Again, it's a matter of opening up the doors. It's a matter of providing some expertise. It's a matter in some cases of some of the First Nations overcoming their shyness and coming forward and saying: listen; we want to do some things with you.

As I say, looking at Treaty 7, I've met with all the economic development officers, sat down with them three times now. We're meeting again in April. They're coming to the table with ideas, and we're bringing those forward to the different ministries. For example, I can tell you that in the south I'll be working very closely with Minister Olson on some agricultural initiatives, especially down in the Blood Tribe. You know, they're doing some great things now, but there are also some great opportunities down there where we can work with them and just, again, provide more economic opportunities for them.

Ms Fenske: I appreciate that, and I know you're damned if you do and damned if you don't put those levels at a different figure because if you don't meet the target, then someone is going to be on your case. But I think it's a very good-news story, and it certainly would be great to reflect it in those target numbers.

You mentioned that of the 114 people in your department everyone shares the load. I'm wondering: in your department do you make a conscious attempt to ensure that you have a strong aboriginal component as far as your employees?

Mr. Campbell: We have some aboriginal people working in the department. Again, you know, it's actually a very timely question because I met with our executive team this week, and one of the things that we talked about was becoming more proactive and providing opportunities for aboriginal people throughout government in general, not just our department. So we're going to be working with that. Bill is going to take that on at the deputy minister level, and our ADMs are going to be looking at more opportunities right across the board.

One of the things that we also talked about is that I'd like to bring some young interns on. Again, funding is going to be an issue, but if I can bring on some young interns of First Nation or Métis descent and then get them into government and into seeing what the process is about, I think that will go a long way in helping us also.

Ms Fenske: Well, I applaud you for that. I have a friend who has worked with several of the nations, and he said: "Jacquie, they are called nations for a reason. Each one needs to be dealt with differently."

Mr. Campbell: That's very true.

Ms Fenske: All right. I'm not sure what the time allotment is.

The Chair: You have five seconds.

Ms Fenske: Okay. I'll stop there. Very good. Thank you.

The Chair: All right, folks. We're at the time in the meeting where we turn to members' questions, not caucus questions. I guess what I'd ask as chair is: who's got some questions? I know, Mr. Bilous, you've got some questions. Dr. Swann.

Okay. All right. What I am going to do is start with the Leader of the Official Opposition. It's a five and five.

Do you want to go back and forth with the minister?

Ms Smith: Sure, I'll go back and forth. But I would like to do as the PCs just did and share my time.

The Chair: At this stage we can't do that. You can only do that in the first part, the sets of questions as caucus. At this stage it's now individual members.

Ms Smith: I see. All right. Well, I'll try to be quick so hopefully we can get to somebody else, then.

Minister, a phrase was going through my head as I heard your colleague speak, and it's: effort is admirable, but achievement is valuable. I guess from everything that you have said today, it does sound like you are starting from square one notwithstanding all of the effort that had been done by your predecessors.

I guess I'm a bit concerned, as well, the more you speak about your relationship with the federal government, because I think we all recognize that agreements do require all three parties to be at the table, but you've said that they're not signing the MOU with Edmonton. You told Dr. Swann that you had no consultation with them on some major legislation, in particular with the issues about water. I can tell you that First Nations have raised that with me as well. It sounds like First Nations and industry won't be sharing information with you on this geomapping, which I guess is concerning. I would have thought the feds could help out with that.

I think it goes to the question of why it is that you do have a difficult relationship with the First Nations. I would like you to comment on a few of the things they've raised with me. I think that perhaps the difficulty is because of some of the decisions that your government has made. I know, for instance, that when I met with First Nations, I was surprised to hear that their biggest concerns about consultation were not with the federal government. They were at the time with your government over the land-use framework, the impact that's going to have on a whole range of provincial landscapes.

Of course, under the Natural Resources Transfer Act there is a requirement that as land claims get settled, the province must give up Crown land to be able to meet those settlements, so they do have an interest in knowing how it is that you're going to be regulating Crown land because of that connection.

Also, the dealings with Tsuu T'ina over the past, I guess, 55 years on the issue of the ring road: we have gotten very close to agreements. It sounds to me, as well, like the federal government was called in at the last minute last time, which may have had something to do with how difficult those negotiations have been. But it seems like it's a no-brainer, a win-win. The road gets built; they're able to do additional development. Not getting that to the

finish line, I think, is again something that your government has to wear.

In addition, the River Cree casino, with Chief Morin at the head of that Enoch band: I guess there are a couple of concerns here. Number one, they almost failed to get their bond refloated because of some issues with the First Nations development fund not giving them their allocation in a timely way. I wonder what your ministry has learned from that, and maybe you can reflect on that.

There is also officially no moratorium on casino licences, yet I do know of at least one band that's trying to get a casino and has been unsuccessful in being able to get those conversations started, so I think, once again, an issue your provincial government has to deal with.

Finally, I would say that the Alberta First Nations refinery proposal, which got to a pretty far, advanced stage in discussions and then got kiboshed by your Energy minister and your Premier when you chose a new leader for your party – I think that has gone a long way towards souring relationships with our First Nations people.

The Chair: Excuse me. If you can just tie that back to the estimates, okay?

Ms Smith: Yeah. For sure. I was going to go there with my next point.

I think the important part is that what you're now seeing – and this was just announced a couple of weeks ago with Chief Morin – is the indication that they're going to launch a challenge to the provincial government's natural resources transfer act with the idea that there should be some kind of revenue sharing arrangement with the provincial government on resource revenues on developed lands.

I guess what I'm seeing is that the more your government drops the ball on some pretty key issues, the more it's creating problems and an attitude, I think, of, "Well, I guess we'll just go to the courts to solve it," which, of course, ends up costing us all money, whether it's on the land claims, whether it's on hiring lawyers for litigation. I know I've thrown a lot at you there, but I think that trying to suggest that everything is rosy and always has been and your government isn't responsible for it might be just rewriting history a little bit. If you wouldn't mind commenting on those, I'd be grateful.

Mr. Campbell: Well, you know, first of all, I would suggest that I have a fairly good relationship with the First Nations. I can sit down and talk to any chief at any time. I'm welcome in all the communities, and I'm always invited to the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs. I attend them all, and I think that we're headed in the right direction. I know that past ministers had good relationships.

When I look at where we're at on the different negotiations – I mean, the chiefs are going to say what the chiefs are going to say because, again, they're politicians, and they have a responsibility to their constituents just like we have a responsibility to our constituents.

When I look at Tsuu T'ina, when you talk about the ring road, it's going to be up to the membership of Tsuu T'ina to decide whether or not they want to build that ring road. Whether the province is involved, whether the feds are involved, the members of that nation are going to make a decision. They have a process to go through, and we will honour and respect that process. We are not going to do anything to bully them or to say that they have to move in a more expedient manner. They have a way of doing business, and if we are going to respect them as a people and we're going to respect them as a nation, then we have to respect

the process they're going through. The ring road will get built when the membership of Tsuu T'ina feels fit, that they're ready to move forward on that. I can say to you that it's not about money. They have some concerns as a nation, and we'll deal with that at the appropriate time.

9:40

When I look at the casino at Enoch and I look at the First Nations development fund, we have a very good program in place. I believe we have put \$750 million into First Nation communities over the last 10 years, and we've done some good things with that money. Enoch is a very profitable casino – they do very well – probably one of the most profitable casinos anywhere in Canada if not North America.

You know, I've had numerous discussions with Chief Morin. I respect the chief. He's a very astute businessperson, but again he has his politics that he has to deal with on nation, as every chief does.

I think that going forward, understand that who you're talking with today might not be the person you're talking with a year from now when it comes to First Nation politics. That's why it's important to get into the community. That's why it's important to build strength in the community so that you actually have a structure in place. You're helping to build a culture, so to speak, of engagement of community members. We'll continue to work on that.

Again, I'm always prepared to sit down and talk to the chiefs about anything. If the chiefs of different nations or treaty organizations decide that they want to go to the courts to test something, that's unfortunate, in my mind. I think that we can always sit down and come to some sort of resolve. But it's their money. It's their nations. It's their communities. If they feel that that's the direction they have to take, I respect that although I'd rather be able to sit down and have a dialogue to see if we can come to some resolve on a number of different issues. I've spent 35 years of my life doing that. I would like to be able to continue that, working with the chiefs and the First Nations in a positive manner.

Ms Smith: There was no mention of your relationship with the federal government. Are you going to try to collaborate with them to get the geomapping done? Maybe you can tell us what's wrong there.

Mr. Campbell: Well, I mean, again, as Ms Calahasen said, the mapping belongs to the First Nations. If they want to share it – some have; some haven't. But I would disagree with the statement that because they aren't sharing the mapping, industry is having a hard time dealing with them. I can say to you that industry is very involved in those communities. From my days in the coal industry I've been talking to the different First Nations that we dealt with out in my area. There's no issue with industry going in and sitting down with nations and having those conversations. I mean, the mapping would help in some areas, but it is what it is.

As far as the federal government I've got a conference call set up with the new minister this week. We're going to sit down in the near future and have a discussion with him. You know, he's got a pretty busy job. I look at my time frame and my workload for one province. Ten provinces and three territories? He's a busy man. All 10 provinces are different. I look at 48 First Nations in this province. You look at 400 different First Nations in B.C., for

example. I mean, there are a lot of issues to work out and a lot of meetings to be had.

So we'll continue to work with the feds. We'll work with them on children in care. We'll work with them on income supports. I would just like to see them come to the table a little quicker. That's all.

The Chair: Okay. Folks, we've got about a little under 18 minutes left. Here's what my speakers' list looks like. Everybody who's on the list has a chance for a five and a five, but if you take less time, we might get through the list. Ms Calahasen, Dr. Swann, Mr. Bilous, Mr. Wilson. So let's carry on.

Ms Calahasen, do you want to do a back and forth?

Ms Calahasen: Yeah, if we can. Then if I get done – I just have a few questions, Minister. First of all, I'd like to say that you're really doing a great job answering the questions. I'm just very proud of what you guys do all the time.

The question I do have has to do with land claims. It's on your page 8, consultation and land claims. I see that the amount that has been expended in 2012-2013 to what is being estimated in 2013-2014 is way less, by approximately a million dollars. We have a few more land claims to take care of. I know part of that is consultation, but we do have some more land claims that are outstanding. I'm just wondering how you're going to deal with those that eventually come on stream. Do you have emergent kinds of dollars that are associated somewhere? I know it's negotiated.

Mr. Campbell: Well, the reduction you're seeing is actually from consultation. It's not from the land claims part. Again, as you say, we have some land claims. Well, one that comes to mind right now is the Lubicon. A new chief and council have been elected. The federal government has – what's the word? – stamped that election as being valid, so I'm sure that there will be some discussions going on there. We're working with Peerless Trout right now. That land claim has been done, but we're still waiting for the surveying from the federal government for the actual land mass. The Bigstone Cree was just done a little while ago.

Ms Calahasen: In terms of the outstanding land claims that we do have, which are the Bigstone Cree Nation as well as the Peerless Trout, can you tell me how long it will take before we start to see the fruits of that labour that has been happening and negotiated?

Mr. Campbell: I won't even venture a guess. I couldn't tell you, Pearl. I couldn't venture a guess. I'd like to say a couple of years, but that would just be a . . .

Ms Calahasen: We don't know how long that'll take in terms of the land transfer?

Mr. Campbell: No. When I talked to Chief James, he told me that it was going to be two years before they finished the surveying. [interjection] Oh, I'm being told now between three and six years.

Ms Calahasen: Thank you.

Now I want to go to the policy and planning. I see that there's been an increase from 2011-12 to 2012-13, and the estimate for 2013-14 is now less. Can you tell me why that would be? First there was a big jump, and now there is less. Is that because you're not doing any policy and planning anymore?

Mr. Campbell: No. Actually, policy and planning are pretty important. It's just that, again, with the numbers that we are given

to work with, every department sort of took a little bit of a haircut. Our policy and planning are very important, especially the fact of working with the other ministries. Our policy and planning people are going to play a very key role in co-ordinating with the other ministries what has to happen, whether it's human resources, education, or health care, whatever. As we look at moving forward with a lot of our different agenda items, policy and planning will play a key role in helping us move forward. I wasn't happy that we even cut them at all, but we had to do what we had to do.

Ms Calahasen: Going back now to land and legal settlements, I see that in the 2015-2016 target you have a certain amount there. I'm just wondering: what does that entail in terms of having that as a target?

Mr. Campbell: Well, we don't have any land claims right now that are coming to a close. That's why you don't see anything for this year. Again, that would be an estimate, Pearl, for Peerless Trout. Also, for 2015-16 we're looking at schools for the Bigstone settlement, so some of that money will come out of there. When we were at Peerless, you'll remember the discussion that we had with the chief. There were two public schools and a high school, I believe, that we were going to build. I think we are on the hook for the two public schools, and the federal government is on for the high school if I remember correctly.

Ms Calahasen: Okay. In terms of outcomes for your department I know it's always been very difficult to be able to – like, whenever we've had to deal with performance measures and outcomes, there were very soft ways for us to be able to deal with it because we didn't have any baseline studies done. Has there been any improvement in terms of the baseline studies that could be used to be able to measure the outcomes of the various initiatives that you do have?

Mr. Campbell: No. Again, Pearl, we still struggle a bit there, and basically it's because we have a hard time getting the information from First Nations as to some of the outcomes. Again, as we work through the relationship and, I think, as we get a little more active with some of our economic development opportunities, we'll have harder numbers to base our success on.

9:50

Ms Calahasen: Another question. I see that you have "work with Aboriginal, government and industry partners to increase Aboriginal participation in the workforce and the economy" as well as looking at how you can ensure that there are going to be educational opportunities for aboriginal people. Can you tell me: how are you working with those aboriginal, or First Nations, colleges that are out there that are having some issues relative to funding?

Mr. Campbell: Well, we've just met with them. I met with all of the colleges I'm going to say a month ago, maybe two months ago as an initial meeting. We've planned to get back together towards the end of April. I've asked them to come back with some harder numbers for me. We will have some discussions with Advanced Education and with Human Services and see if there are some things that we can work on together to help them. You know, they do play a pretty key role, especially in the communities. I mean, there's some good work being done in Advanced Education. They do a lot of work in upgrading and training. We're going to work

with Advanced Education and Human Services to see what we can do to provide opportunities for that to continue.

Ms Calahasen: Now I'm going to switch gears a little just so I can get a perspective from Aboriginal Relations. As you know, Aboriginal Relations normally does not provide program services of that nature. I see that you have some, but most of the time it's policy development and making sure that you become advisers to government generally. How does this Results-based Budgeting Act impact Aboriginal Relations in terms of making sure that you still stay relevant and still deal with the initiatives that you have started, Minister?

Mr. Campbell: I think that under the Results-based Budgeting Act we'll play a very key role with other departments. I mean, a lot of other departments provide funding and programs for First Nations and Métis people. So I guess that in some cases we'll almost be cheerleaders in a sense. You know, as different departments look at whether or not the programs are working, we'll play a very key role in that discussion in the sense that on the ground we actually see the results. That's not to say that other departments don't also.

Again, as we work with the relationship with our communities and spend more time out in the communities, we'll be able to bring that feedback to the department and say, "Listen, these programs are working" or "They're not working" or "It would make sense maybe to put dollars this way because this is what we're seeing from the communities." We'll play an active role in making sure that if departments do decide to reduce First Nations funding for different programs, we want to know why, and we want to make sure that's being done for the right reasons.

Ms Calahasen: You are the chair of the working group – right? – that would be able to ensure that some of the stuff can permeate to the various departments?

Mr. Campbell: Well, I'm on Treasury Board, but I haven't chaired results-based budgeting. I also chair the ministerial working group on resource and energy. Bill and I both sit on the families and communities group. We have a wide range of people to talk to to make sure that First Nations issues are being raised.

Ms Calahasen: Very good.
Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Okay. Dr. Swann. Just to be clear at the beginning, are you going to go back and forth?

Dr. Swann: Yes.

It's clear that the role of the ombudsman is central to having an important accountability in the Métis leadership. It appears on the surface that the elimination of the ombudsman and appeal tribunal obviously saved some money, but did it increase independence?

Mr. Campbell: We didn't cut the appeals tribunal.

Dr. Swann: Just the ombudsman's office.

Mr. Campbell: Just the ombudsman's office.

Dr. Swann: Have you increased or decreased the independence of the role of the ombudsman . . .

Mr. Campbell: Well, we don't have an ombudsman now.

Dr. Swann: . . . and the ability for people to have their voices heard in an unprejudiced way before the council?

Mr. Campbell: As I said earlier, Dr. Swann, I think that the Metis Settlements Appeal Tribunal can fulfill that role. Again, people have the ability to phone our department, which they do on a regular basis, and people within Métis relations deal with those issues. If an issue is serious enough and our department flags that, we can always hire an investigator to go out and do that investigation. We think that the money would be better spent that way.

Again, the Métis council – and I'm talking about all of the communities and all of their councillors – were very supportive of the direction that we're headed in. They want to also take upon themselves the responsibility of having good governance and a good code of conduct within the Métis settlements, so this gives them the opportunity to do that. Again, when I look at the fact that we have the tribunal in place and that it does a good job now, that we can enhance its role with the support of the settlements, I think we're headed in the right direction.

Dr. Swann: How do you evaluate the role of the tribunal?

Mr. Campbell: Well, again, we look at the number of cases that come in, and we look at the decisions that go out. We've had no complaints from individuals about those decisions going out. I read them all. They all come to my office. Thankfully, there are not a lot of them because I don't have all that much time to read. You know, I've met with the tribunal, and I'm very happy with the work they do. Let's say that we have seven full-time people that come from the settlements, and they do very good work.

Dr. Swann: Okay. Thank you.

In relation to your vision for a more collaborative health initiative within First Nations I really appreciate that vision because health and people have to come first regardless of jurisdictions. I don't see the new money for health in the current budget. Is this just a vision? Where's the money going to come from?

Mr. Campbell: Again, I don't control Health's budget, but I can say to you that Minister Horne is very interested in what we're doing. He sees some very real potential. I've met with Dr. Eagle from AHS, and we talked about aboriginal issues. As a matter of fact, AHS has put together a wisdom council of elders to address aboriginal issues in health care. Dr. Eagle and I are going to meet again. In my own mind I have some distinct ideas that I think we can move forward on that wouldn't cost any more money than is already within the Health budget, so we're going to continue to pursue that. Right now I'm just sort of waiting till we get through this whole budget process, and then we can get on with some more work here. I'm looking towards late April.

Dr. Swann: Just quickly, if I may, Madam Chair, looking at the complaints received from the ombudsman's own initiative: 162 complaints from the ombudsman's own initiative; only 43 were nonjurisdictional complaints. It suggests that eliminating the ombudsman is going to eliminate two-thirds of the complaints coming forward. How do you respond to that?

Mr. Campbell: I don't know if it will eliminate two-thirds of the complaints or not. I mean, again, we have the Alberta Ombudsman that they can go to if they have an issue, we've got

the Métis general council that they can go to if they have issues, we've got the Metis Settlements Appeal Tribunal if they have issues, and we also have the department if they have issues. We have four different outlays that members of the Métis settlements can go to if they have issues, so I think that we can do a very good job of dealing with those complaints under the structure we have.

Dr. Swann: The fact that it's one-fourth the number of complaints outside the ombudsman's office does raise concerns for me. I want to be on the record with that.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have a little over two minutes. Mr. Bilous, you can ask a question and give the minister an opportunity to answer.

Mr. Bilous: Sure. Very briefly, the protocol agreement came into play on May 22, 2008, and expires on March 31 of this year. Part of the preamble states, "Chiefs of the First Nations of Alberta and the Government of Alberta need to strengthen their government to government relationship." However, I've heard concerns that this protocol is not truly a protocol on government-to-government relations because the various meetings are held between the government and the grand chiefs rather than the chiefs, who are actually the heads of their government and their governance structure. Because it expires in 11 days, are discussions occurring to extend it or to renegotiate it? Again, does the minister understand that this agreement is effectively between the grand chiefs and what is needed? What I'm hearing from chiefs around the province is a protocol agreement with each of the chiefs, who are the actual heads of government.

10:00

Mr. Campbell: The protocol agreement will be extended. The chiefs have already agreed to that, so we're going to extend it till June. We will have discussions with the chiefs as to what the new protocol agreement should have in it. As I've said at different meetings, I want it to have some teeth in it. The protocol agreement will be a benchmark so that when we sign the new one in June, a year from now, we can also have that discussion.

The other thing that we've done is that the meeting with the Premier and cabinet ministers will happen on a yearly basis. We will invite all the chiefs to that meeting. So while the protocol agreement is a high-level agreement, the chiefs still have the

ability to meet with cabinet and the Premier once a year. The chiefs have the ability to meet with me or any cabinet minister they want to meet with at any time. All they have to do is phone. We've had a number of meetings already where chiefs have taken us up on that. We've had very good dialogue, and I think it's going to lead to some concrete results.

Mr. Bilous: Lastly, just to comment on the ombudsman, what's interesting to note is that the number of complaints in ombudsman-initiated investigations jumped 40 per cent between 2010-11 and 2011-12. The other thing that's interesting is that the ombudsman in his last report had criticized the lack of independence, impartiality, and confidentiality in the government's relationship with his office. He identified conflicts of interest in this relationship and protested his reliance upon Alberta Justice.

The Chair: That's the end. Thanks, folks.

Mr. Campbell: Is that going to be in the record? I have some real issue with some of the statements that he's making.

The Chair: Quickly.

Mr. Campbell: Well, first of all, understand that this was the ombudsman's second kick at the cat. What we did with the ombudsman's office was from his recommendations the first time he was ombudsman. He wanted all the people put into the public sector because he wanted them to have some security, so we did that. I can say to you that I met with the ombudsman three times: when I was first made minister, when I golfed with him at a Métis tribunal golf tournament, and when he came to talk to me about the fact that he might be leaving. So for the ombudsman to say that there was any interference or that he didn't have independence in his office is not true at all.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. Thanks to everyone.

We have had a few follow-ups required, and I'll ask the minister to make those tablings in advance of the April 22 vote.

I'd also like to remind everybody that we meet tonight in room A to consider the estimates for the Ministry of Transportation.

The time allocated for this business has concluded. The meeting is adjourned. Thanks.

[The committee adjourned at 10:03 a.m.]

