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8:05 p.m.

[Mr. Tannas in the chair]

Subcom.B: Intergov. & Aborig. Affairs

Subcommittee B – Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs

Tannas, Don, Chairman
Laing, Bonnie, Deputy Chairman
Barrett, Pam
Blakeman, Laurie
Calahasen, Pearl
Dickson, Gary
Doerksen, Victor

Forsyth, Heather
Fritz, Yvonne
Graham, Marlene
Hancock, Dave
Havelock, Jon
Jonson, Halvar
Kryczka, Karen

McClellan, Shirley
Melchin, Greg
Olsen, Sue
Paszkowski, Walter
Sloan, Linda
Tarchuk, Janis

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the subcommittee to order. We have under consideration, then, the estimates of the Department of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs. I'd call on the minister to make some comments, and then we'll invite questions from the members.

Hon. minister.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening. In speaking to the estimates for Intergovernmental Affairs, I'll give a brief overview of the ministry's key activities at the international, national, and local levels, but first I'd like to acknowledge the presence in our gallery, such as it is, of officials from the department, who are here to observe the proceedings tonight: Mr. Ron Hicks, who's the Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs; Wayne Clifford, assistant deputy minister; Cliff Supernault, assistant deputy minister; Les Speakman; Glenn Luff; and my executive assistant, Betty Ann Hicks. I know there will be some good, detailed, and tough questions this evening, and I have with me people who are quite capable of hearing them and providing me with the responses.

Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs leads the development of governmentwide policies and strategies for Alberta's relations with other Canadian governments – federal, provincial, and aboriginal – with the aboriginal community and with international governments and organizations. Our ministry has three key goals:

1. To secure benefits for Alberta as an equal partner in a revitalized, united federation.
2. To enhance Alberta's relationship with Aboriginal people.
3. To secure benefits for Alberta from strengthened international relations.

These goals will be accomplished with a 1998-99 budget of \$34.3 million, of which \$11.8 million is for departmental activities and \$22.5 million is a transfer to the Métis settlements.

We are continuing our process of integrating and streamlining our business, and we intend to achieve new efficiencies in all areas. Our full-time staff complement will remain at 90. The ministry will continue to work closely with other departments and focus our activities on the priorities of the government, both emergency and ongoing.

International relations. The ministry co-ordinates Alberta's strategic relationship with governments outside of Canada. It carries out key activities in the areas of Team Canada missions, international governance projects, and twinning relationships. For example, in recent years international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency have aggressively begun to focus their development programs on the area of building countries' basic capacities to govern themselves. When the Alberta government began its own

process of restructuring, it broke new ground in many of the governance areas of interest to both the international financial institutions and to developing countries. The ministry is currently considering a number of requests from officials of the World Bank to become involved in projects in such countries as Estonia, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Chad.

While some of Alberta's international efforts come to fruition over a number of years, some yield results earlier. Such was the case in November 1997 when Alberta played host to the first-ever visit of Jiang Zemin, president of the People's Republic of China. An immediate and very positive outcome of this visit was the president's announcement of plans for the opening of a consulate in Calgary. The new consulate, the third Chinese consulate in Canada, will serve both Alberta and Saskatchewan. It's a solid example of the success of Alberta's international relations efforts and will provide an excellent resource for Alberta companies wanting to do business in China. The consulate will promote China's trade and tourism, assist Chinese nationals who may be visiting Alberta, and help Canadians arrange visas and other necessary travel documents for travel in China.

While managing Alberta's increasing role in international relations, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs also has important responsibilities in the area of trade policy. The ministry's role covers domestic and international trade and investment agreements and negotiations and disputes affecting Albertans. The ministry seeks to reduce trade and investment barriers and contributes expertise and advice on major trade agreements. We also have a leadership role on behalf of the province in dealing with the federal government on international trade issues. A brief outline of some of these areas will demonstrate the extent of our involvement in Alberta's trade policy.

The agreement on internal trade. Alberta continues to contribute leadership to the committee on internal trade. As Minister of International and Aboriginal Affairs I will serve as vice provincial co-chair and next year as incoming provincial co-chair. The ministry will continue its leadership in the national forum to improve and expand the operation of the agreement on internal trade to remove interprovincial trade barriers. Ministry officials will consult with relevant provincial interest groups on future expansion of the agreement on internal trade. Internal trade ministers will meet in June to discuss the next agenda for that committee.

The ministry will also work with Public Works, Supply and Services and Alberta ministries with MASH connections to advise MASH entities on their obligations on the completed MASH procurement arrangement, which becomes effective February 1999. This will include the development of information materials and provincewide regional information sessions for MASH-sector procurement professionals.

On the dispute side, Alberta is currently engaged in a dispute panel process concerning the ban on the gas line additive MMT.

Hearings on that dispute are scheduled for April. Many other disputes that have come up have been resolved either through negotiation or discussion at the preliminary stage. This dispute is, in fact, the first dispute under the internal trade agreement which has gone to a panel.

Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs will continue to work with the federal government on the MAI negotiations on how provinces may or may not be addressed within the agreement as well as to ensure that Alberta's interests are addressed in negotiations. We do have a number of concerns with MAI, specifically in the areas of environment and labour, which we've raised with the federal government and will continue to follow through on. The delays in negotiations allow us time to adequately address our concerns and consult with interested Albertans.

The ministry co-ordinates provincial input to the federal government on issues pertaining to the World Trade Organization. For example, ministry staff will work with Agriculture, Food and Rural Development on the agriculture negotiations scheduled for 1999. Work is also beginning on the Canadian market access negotiations for several countries attempting to enter the WTO.

The ministry will reinforce Alberta's priorities in the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation's liberalization initiatives. These include promoting Alberta positions in priority sectors. APEC trade ministers will meet in June 1998 to review progress on these initiatives, and implementation is expected in 1999.

We will also be working on Alberta's position on increased South American access prior to the Santiago summit April 18 and 19, 1998, with respect to the free trade of the Americas and on possible associate member status with Mercosur - Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay - on an expanded Canada/Israel agriculture agreement and an expanded information technology agreement.

The ministry's Canadian intergovernmental relations section reviews policies, programs, and legislation, participates in the negotiation of intergovernmental agreements, and offers advice and logistical support for annual Premiers' Conferences.

An initiative that will be the focus of considerable time and effort for the ministry in the coming months is the negotiation of the framework on Canada's social union. This important undertaking began at the first ministers' meeting in December 1997. When I say began there, it's the first time the Prime Minister and the federal government have agreed to engage in this discussion, which has been ongoing since the Premiers' Conference in Jasper in the summer of 1996. The ministers, with the exception of Quebec, agreed that designated ministers would begin negotiations on a framework for Canada's social union. The impetus for this framework came not from a provincial desire to increase authority or power but rather from a desire to clarify roles and responsibilities between the two levels of government.

Also, the framework will provide a means of resolving disputes so that Canadians are better served by our social programs. The objectives for negotiation defined by first ministers include a set of principles for social policy, a process for clarifying roles and responsibilities within various social policy sectors, collaborative approaches for the use of the federal spending power, appropriate dispute settlement mechanisms between governments, and ground rules for intergovernmental co-operation. The successful negotiation of the framework is a key element in achieving our ministry's goal of securing benefits for Alberta as an equal partner in a revitalized and united federation. The framework will reduce overlap and duplication and will be a strong signal to all Canadians of the flexibility of the federation.

One of the keys in the social policy framework process, in fact,

is recognizing that in many areas Canadians do want national standards. But in those areas where the responsibility is provincial, it's our view that those national standards should be developed by negotiation between the provinces and agreement between the provinces and the federal government rather than unilateral imposition by the federal government. My colleague the Hon. Lyle Oberg, as our province's representative on the council of social policy renewal, is Alberta's designated minister for the negotiations. He will be meeting with counterparts from across Canada on March 13 to kick off the negotiations. First ministers have asked that the framework be completed by July, so we can expect an intense period of negotiations over the coming few months.

8:15

The Canadian intergovernmental relations program area was also responsible for Alberta's successful national unity consultation last fall. As most provinces are expected to have ratified the Calgary declaration by the end of April, it's likely there will be further efforts on the national unity issue arising from that. Alberta will continue to pursue its goal of all provinces being equal partners in a revitalized and effective federation.

The ministry has an important role also in the negotiation and settlement of Indian land claims. For the 1998-99 fiscal year, just over \$1.5 million has been budgeted for Indian land claims. Of this total, \$700,000 will support the operations of the Indian land claim section of the ministry, a comparable figure to that approved last year. The remaining \$800,000 is new funding required for land claims litigation.

The government of Alberta is committed to settling Indian land claims that are fair and equitable to all parties as expeditiously as possible; for example, the Loon River Cree band settlement recently signed in principle. In 1999 Treaty No. 8, the last of the Alberta treaties to be signed, will be 100 years old. It's our hope and intention that real progress will be made in resolving all outstanding land claims or at least having significant progress on them within Treaty 8 by the anniversary date. We've already raised that target with the federal minister, alerted her to the possibility of some good progress happening in that area, and asked for her co-operation. In previous years legal costs associated with land claims were borne by the Department of Justice. During 1997-98 this responsibility was transferred to Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, hence the increase in the budget with respect to land claims litigation.

During the past fiscal year the aboriginal relations and aboriginal self-reliance initiatives program areas were reorganized within the industry to create a new unit responsible for working with other government departments, industry, and aboriginal peoples to build self-reliance in aboriginal communities. To this end the proposed Metis Settlements Statutes Amendment Act currently before the House, Bill 17, provides Métis settlements in Alberta with equivalent powers, rights, and duties as other forms of local governments. Bill 17 addresses the need for legislative changes to increase the ability of Métis settlements to function as local governments. It also streamlines administrative processes and increases the effectiveness of government funding arrangements.

The government has allocated \$22 million to Métis settlements in the 1998-99 fiscal year. This figure includes a \$10 million statutory payment established by the Metis Settlement Accord Implementation Act and an additional \$12 million for funding in such areas as settlement operations, the Métis Settlements Transition Commission, and development of an economic viability

strategy. The other major objective of the legislation is to streamline the administrative processes on Métis settlements. This will assist in the establishment of voting procedures and give the settlements authority to make bylaws.

The changes reflect the continuing evolution of settlement governments since the legislation was proclaimed in 1990. The ministry is working with the Métis Settlements Transition Commission in winding down operations. As settlements achieve self-reliance and are able to operate as local governments, the commission will be phased out. Alberta Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs has also been dealing with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report. We support the four principles for a renewed relationship with Canada's aboriginal peoples based on recognition, respect, sharing, and responsibility. Alberta recognizes that addressing aboriginal issues can only be achieved through co-operative efforts of all governments and aboriginal peoples, including the establishment of partnerships as recommended in the RCAP report. To this end the ministry, on behalf of the Alberta government, will be working with the federal government and with aboriginal people on a government-to-government discussion of the issues. If invited by Alberta-based aboriginal groups, Alberta is willing to enter into discussions on issues of mutual concern.

The Métis Settlements Appeal Tribunal, established in 1990, hears disputes in three main areas: membership, land allocation, and surface rights compensation. The tribunal offers a dispute resolution mechanism that is sensitive to the culture of the settlements and more accessible to settlement members, many of whom could not afford to pursue their grievances in court. The tribunal is one of the only fully functioning, quasi-judicial bodies in Canada directed toward dispute resolution in aboriginal communities. The ministry is working with the tribunal to help establish settlement-based mediation processes that will bring dispute resolution to the local level and involve the community in the process.

Alberta Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs has multilayered areas of responsibility, many of which are long in duration and dependent on the actions of other levels of government. Consequently, the ministry has developed a set of performance measures to monitor and assess our progress. A brief outline of those performance measures is as follows. Reports on ministry performance, such as annual reports and mission reports, to show progress on long-term outcomes, major conferences, trade negotiations, or missions. Comprehensive client satisfaction surveys are carried out to allow ministry clients to evaluate the ministry's contribution to specific initiatives. Project-specific client surveys or evaluations ask clients to evaluate the ministry's contribution to individual projects or initiatives. Measuring immediate outcomes is shown on the regular status reports on major projects which are prepared by the ministry, and secondary indicators such as macroeconomic trends or public opinion are tracked and reported by the ministry.

That would conclude my opening remarks, and I'd be pleased to try and answer as many questions as possible. We'll obviously respond in writing to those that we don't have time for or that I am unable to answer fully tonight.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Mr. Minister. I'm not sure whether this would be element 1.0.3 or 1.0.4. I had the privilege of being one of the Alberta delegates to the Parliamentary Conference of the Americas in Quebec City

last fall, and one of the things that was discussed there was the summit meeting in 1998. There'd been one summit meeting and then the parliamentary conference in 1997. My recollection is that that second summit conference – I don't know whether it's in Caracas, Venezuela, or another South American location – was scheduled to occur at the end of March or latter part of March. I'm asking, Mr. Minister, what input you and/or your department have had in terms of the agenda. The sense in Quebec City at the parliamentary conference was that this was going to be the make-or-break session in terms of whether we were going to in fact achieve that kind of hemispheric free trade that would go from Alaska to Argentina. So I'm interested in what input your department has had and what you understand the agenda to be for that conference.

Also on the international relations side – I expect this is probably element 1.0.4 – your department has identified in the past that trade with western Europe “remains an important export market for Alberta products and services.” Now, my concern there, Mr. Minister, is the fact that the European Union privacy directive continues to cause a great deal of uncertainty in terms of its impact on trading patterns. Right now Quebec is the only jurisdiction in North America that's fully compliant in terms of having legislated privacy protection in the nongovernmental sector. I'm particularly interested in what involvement your department, your office has had in discussions either with other Canadian provinces, the federal government, or U.S. jurisdictions in terms of how best to deal with that. I understand the Americans have been successful in negotiating a deferral in terms of the effective date of that agreement, so maybe it's postponed to 1999 or even 2000.

Lest anybody think this is a shameless self-promotion of my Bill 210, which would in fact ensure we had privacy protection, I'd just remind you, Mr. Minister, that that's about \$1.1 billion worth of exports in terms of both services and goods. So I'm interested in an update. I've raised this in the past with three different ministers, and I've got absolutely inconsistent responses in the past. I'm hopeful, Mr. Minister, that you've been able to bring your persuasive powers to bear and forge a consolidated approach on behalf of Albertans and the government of Alberta. So I'm looking forward to having you share that with us.

Now, in your opening remarks you said something interesting. I have closely been following, I guess since August of 1996, when the Premiers identified the need – this was in the context of the national health care system – for a dispute settlement mechanism. In your opening comments you talked about that in the context of social policy. Mr. Minister, in terms of that which was discussed at page 15 of your 24th annual report, dated March 31, 1997, in terms of a dispute settlement mechanism for problems presumably in the interpretation of the Canada Health Act, I need some clarification whether that has now been rolled into this broader dispute settlement mechanism, which presumably would apply to all kinds of social programs as well as the Canada Health Act and delivery of health care. I'd appreciate that clarification. If you have some explanation in terms of why it is that the Premiers discussed that in August 1996 and here we are well into 1998 and that dispute settlement mechanism still seems to be a goal, I'd be interested in your observations on that, Mr. Minister.

8:25

Let me focus on the operating expense from an administrative standpoint. This isn't the first time this has been raised by the opposition, Mr. Minister. With the size of the bureaucracy in your department, the question again has to be asked: why does such a small department need so many highly paid managers?

Albertans have noticed with interest that in British Columbia and Ontario, larger provinces than this one, the office of the Premier has been able to successfully have integrated into it the same functions that Intergovernmental Affairs here undertakes in a segregated, stand-alone department. I would be interested in your comments in terms of why we're not able to achieve some of the economies that one might assume would accrue in the kind of model used in British Columbia and Ontario. We would appreciate from you, Mr. Minister, a detailed breakdown in terms of staff members, including the number of managers working in each of the divisions in your department.

I'd ask you, Mr. Minister, to report specifically – you've given some general commentary, but I'd ask you to make some specific identification of benefits which accrue to Alberta as a consequence of our participation in the Russia/Canada collaborative federalism project. It's one of those things that sounds very nice, but taxpayers of course have a keen interest in knowing what tangible kinds of rewards accrue to Alberta business. If you could particularize that, we'd appreciate it.

Mr. Minister, I know you tabled in the House some material with respect to MAI this afternoon. I haven't had a chance to read that. Maybe one of my colleagues has, and they may come back on that.

With respect to element 1.0.4, trade policy, your past annual reports claim or certainly have suggested that your department has co-operated closely with Environmental Protection, for example, in negotiations that resulted in the Canada/U.S. agreement on softwood lumber. Mr. Minister, would you explain the specific role that the department of IAA played in those negotiations? For the uninitiated, you might share with us what particular expertise or specific knowledge your department provided that made it impossible for Environmental Protection to be able to act on its own behalf for the province of Alberta. In other words, what value-added service was furnished by your department in achieving that agreement?

There's a sharing of responsibility between your department and the Department of Economic Development, and if we look at the Premier's trade missions, particularly the most recent ones to Latin America and Asia, we see this sort of two-department sharing of responsibility. Perhaps you'd be good enough to tell us, Mr. Minister, why it is, when there's been such a single-minded, concerted effort on the part of your government to centralize, to streamline, and to consolidate, that we haven't done that here, why we still have two departments, two people trying to ride the same bicycle. It certainly invites criticism, so we're interested in that information from you. [interjection]

What I was doing was simply referring by way of example to the recent trade missions to Asia and to Latin America, where we see the involvement of both the Department of Economic Development and your department, Mr. Minister. The question is: why aren't we able to consolidate that so a single department has that responsibility rather than splitting it between the two departments? It seems like there would be some natural inefficiencies that go along with that, so until you disabuse us, that's a suspicion that I think some Albertans may have.

Also, it's interesting to note, if you look at the annual reports for your department and you compare and contrast those annual reports with reporting from Economic Development, that both departments claim hosting of business delegations from other nations, from other jurisdictions: on the face of it, another apparent example of overlap and duplication. I'd ask the minister to address once again why that's being split between two departments instead of consolidated into a single department.

I want to turn to your performance measures, Mr. Minister.

I'd just make the general observation, and perhaps don't expect you to agree, that performance measures in this department have to be, I'd suggest, much weaker and far more subjective than, for example, some of the objectives the Minister of Justice has brought into his department business plan. I think we'd want to hold all ministers to that same high standard in terms of ensuring that the standards are something that's usefully measurable. I'll give you some particular concerns.

If we look at the goals and performance measures which appear in the Budget '98 book on page 276, we see goal 3, "to secure benefits for Alberta from strengthened international relations." Under IAA client survey the second measurable outcome is: "record of key international achievements, including visits, missions and trade negotiations outcomes." It seems to me that's a bit soft, Mr. Minister. I'm looking at page 276 of the budget book. What consideration have you given or will you give to looking at things that more directly impact on the number of dollars in investment brought into this country? What would be the targets in terms of volume of sales of Alberta products, volume of sales of Alberta expertise and services? It just seems to me that we should be able to come up with something more useful than the items identified in your performance measures for this department.

I'll just go back, and in terms of Canadian intergovernmental relations, element 1.0.5, I had a couple of questions. It's interesting that the 1997-98 forecast for this division, Canadian intergovernmental relations, was a half million dollars more than the 1997-1998 estimate, so that would appear on the face of it to suggest that 33 percent more was spent than was budgeted. Can the overspending be fully accounted for by the work involved in managing, compiling, and reporting on the questionnaire about the Calgary declaration? I've had the benefit of reviewing *Hansard* from the supplementary estimates, Mr. Minister. I've seen that, and there was some discussion around the issue, but it didn't seem that this query had been fully answered. We had a very small response. I think it was about 5 percent, a relatively small number of households. I'd wonder what the minister's plan would be in terms of whether this would be the kind of consultation the minister would undertake again in the event that there was going to be another national unity type consultation. How would the minister propose to do it differently?

8:35

We're interested, Mr. Minister, in specific ways of marking progress in implementing the agreement on internal trade that came into effect July 1, '95. You've made comment on it, but it still seems to many Albertans that this is the thing we talk much about. This is the fifth year I've been an MLA, and I think virtually every round, when we're looking at this department's budget, the issue comes up about how are we doing on dismantling internal trade barriers. It seems like we're making frustratingly slow progress, so I'd appreciate your comments on that.

Still on element 1.0.5. Does your ministry plan on issuing a specific report in response to the Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform and Renewal report? That was issued in December 1995. I think it would be useful for Albertans who are tracking the progress of your department to see in some written form what kind of self-evaluation your department has done.

With respect to the Canada pension act, a matter of enormous interest to my constituents and I expect most Albertans, can you provide some particulars in terms of the role played by your department, the participation by your department in that review? Perhaps you could particularize for us what recommendations for

change Alberta's representatives advanced at those discussions and whether in fact they've been reflected in the federal government's approach. It would be a terrific way, Mr. Minister, of attempting to evaluate just how successful you and your department have been in persuading your colleagues in the other Canadian provinces and the federal government.

The department's annual report – that'd be '95-96 – indicated that your department had a role determining future options for the use of the land formerly used for CFB Calgary. I'm a bit confused by that, because I know that the Member for Calgary-Currie had been on a task force with a city of Calgary alderman. I know there's some federal government involvement. There was input on a number of suggestions in terms of use of that federal land. I'm a bit puzzled in terms of just what role your department had in those negotiations. So if you can particularize that, that would be appreciated.

You might give us an update as well, Mr. Minister, since in December our Legislative Assembly endorsed the Calgary declaration on national unity. If you can update us on the progress in other provincial jurisdictions in obtaining support for the same statement of principles. At the time we met in early December to debate and vote on that, there were representations that each other Canadian province had undertaken to similarly deal with that important issue. I think I've only heard of three provinces that have specifically addressed it. So if you can give us the last word on that, I'd appreciate it.

You might also clarify, Mr. Minister, if there have been further discussions with your counterparts, with other Canadian provinces, in terms of follow-up. What's going to be further done with the declaration? Does it simply sort of sit on the shelf in its inert form, or is it going to have some positive, dynamic role in the unfolding negotiations, discussions, or even confrontations around national unity? I'd be interested in that response.

I'd be interested, Mr. Minister, if you can address the role played by your department in ensuring that Alberta's priorities were reflected in the intergovernmental meetings, intergovernmental agreements surrounding the Kyoto Conference on Climate Change. I'd ask you if you can relate specifically what alternate strategies for controlling greenhouse gases were presented by this province to the federal government prior to the conference – not subsequent but prior to the Kyoto conference – because that isn't clear yet to Albertans.

Just a comment I can't resist. I note that the budget documents claim that your department is going to be responsible for negotiating the elimination of overlap and duplication between the provincial government and the federal government. Mr. Minister, given the fact that there seems to be some duplication within your ministry and some redundancy with your department, given what's going on in Economic Development and the Premier's office, people might well ask whether your department is the most appropriate one to be heading that up.

I look forward to your responses, Mr. Minister. Thanks.

MR. HANCOCK: Well, I'd be pleased to respond to some of the items. You'll pardon me, I'm sure, if in each case where you said particularize I take the opportunity to do that in a more detailed way, perhaps, at a later date.

One of the overarching issues that you've raised, I guess, is whether there's any justification for the department to exist at all, given Economic Development, the Premier's office, et cetera. The success that we have, I think, in terms of negotiation and our participation both at the international and at the national level speaks for itself. There's a clear delineation between Economic Development and Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs with

respect to two trade issues. Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs has a clear role and responsibility with respect to trade policy and trade policy negotiation and also with respect to what might be called the diplomatic front, whereas Economic Development's role is the promotion of trade. I think there's a clear distinction between those two and one that's useful to maintain in that trade policy negotiations are a distinct element. I mean, they're certainly involved in trade promotion, but they're two different fields entirely, and I think we've shown some success in that area and will continue to do so.

With respect to, for example, the Team Canada missions, you mentioned an overlap between Intergovernmental Affairs and Economic Development. In fact there are many departments involved in those missions, and there's a clear co-ordinating role required. That's a role which Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs plays with respect to those missions. Clearly, Economic Development is involved with the business community and, again, the trade promotion sides of it, but there's a co-ordinating role that needs to be played. Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is actively involved in those types of missions, as are other departments.

With respect to performance measures, we had this discussion at last year's estimates, and I'm sure we'll have them at next year's estimates. The nature of the department in itself is one which is difficult to measure on a finite basis. Specific measures are difficult to come up with which would show progress. We certainly agree with your concept that export measures and statistical measures of increased trade or that sort of thing are useful as secondary measures, but as primary measures it's difficult, particularly when you can only negotiate an agreement when both parties are at the table and you can only achieve success when all parties are assisting in achieving success. So really what we're talking about is progress on a continuum, quite often, and that's more difficult to fit into these types of performance measures. But as I said last year and will repeat this year, if you have any good suggestions about new and enlightening performance measures which would help us to help Albertans understand what the department is doing and to be able to measure its success in doing it, I'd certainly be open to those.

With respect to the national unity consultation – and in particular you raised the question about budget – I can confirm for you that the increase in the budget of approximately \$500,000 was all related to the national unity consultation. Of that \$500,000 we've expended so far approximately \$400,000. There may be some more to be expended, so we probably will not utilize that full supplementary estimate amount. That was utilized for – well, I won't repeat it here actually, because I did go into the details during supplementary estimates in terms of what it was spent on.

8:45

You asked about the success of the program. I quite frankly am getting really tired of people suggesting that we didn't have a good result. You used the number 5 percent. Five percent for anybody who's in a public consultation process asking for a return on a marketing process is a phenomenal return. Most marketers going out with that type of a process on a general mailing would be very, very happy if they got 3 percent. They'd be ecstatic with 3 percent. They'd be very happy with 1 and half percent. So a 5 percent response from Albertans was phenomenal.

When you measure it against the response that others across the country received, Ontario just finished their consultation process on February 28. I don't have the up-to-date numbers, but as of mid-February they'd received 65,000 responses. You'll agree, I think, that judicious notice might be given to the fact that their

population is significantly larger than our population.

So the return from Albertans and the interest of Albertans in this consultation process was really quite phenomenal. If there's anything in your questions tonight that I would take some umbrage at – and I really shouldn't – it's the question that Albertans weren't interested or involved in the national unity consultation process. They really were, and they were to a very high extent.

We also were able to conduct that consultation process on a basis that was quite efficient in terms of the amount of money that was spent. British Columbia has budgeted \$1.6 million for their process. They had a large committee of members which did some traveling. Quite frankly, again if you look at the documents from across the country, you'll find that many jurisdictions copied the Alberta document. We were the first ones to produce our document and get it out. Ontario, Saskatchewan, B.C., many of them, if you look at our consultation document, really adopted the format and the process that we used. But they're spending in B.C. about \$1.6 million, and they had 45,000 submissions, again with a population larger than Alberta's. Saskatchewan had a \$600,000 budget, and they had 21,000 submissions. Manitoba had about 13,000 submissions. Nova Scotia had 385 submissions. Prince Edward Island had 15 submissions.

Across the country there were different ways and different means of implementing the consultation strategy, but I think from looking at the numbers of the responses we had and the minimal amount of dollars, relatively speaking, that we spent, we had a fantastic process and we had a great engagement by the public of Alberta. So I just want to put that to rest, and hopefully this will be the last time you talk about the amount or the size of the return. If you want to measure it in terms of the percentage of Albertans participating or the percentage of people responding and try and diminish the value of what was accomplished last fall, I would really ask you to reconsider.

With respect to the social policy framework and the social policy process, in particular you mentioned the dispute resolution mechanism. What has been happening is that Alberta and other provinces have been working together on this whole question of the social policy framework, and that does include health policy. There's been significant good work done between the provinces and agreement between the provinces. In fact, a report was presented at the annual Premiers' Conference last summer, and there was unanimous agreement between the provinces and the territories with the exception of Quebec declining to sign on at that point in time. They indicated some fundamental agreement with the issues that were raised. Their concern about signing on to the agreement essentially was one of not agreeing that the federal government had any role to play in social policy, so they declined to agree to the overall report. But there's been significant progress over the last two years in that we now have the federal government engaged. In December at the First Ministers' Conference was the first time that the federal government has agreed to come to the table to talk about social policy issues and the interrelation between the federal and provincial governments relating to social policy issues.

The first time that the whole discussion of how we resolve disputes between provinces and between the provinces and the federal government is now at the federal/provincial table, so I take that as significant progress and look forward to some resolution of that, hopefully within the time frame that was set out by the Premiers and the Prime Minister, by July. That would be extreme progress compared to what we've seen in the past, but that's the time line that the Prime Minister and the Premier have set, and we're certainly ready, willing, and able to be at the table to try and achieve those.

Going back to the Calgary declaration, you asked what else would be done with the Calgary declaration and about what progress had been made. Most of the provinces have now dealt with the Calgary declaration. Ontario's process concluded at the end of February, and they will be reporting. They will likely have a resolution in their Legislature before the end of March. British Columbia's committee reported in mid-February, and again, they hope to have a resolution in the House in March or early April at the latest. Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, the territories all proceeded before us with their resolutions. Saskatchewan had a session after us in December and dealt with their resolution. So the process across the country is going ahead. Manitoba had their report, and their resolution will be going into their House in mid to late March. Nova Scotia will be slightly delayed, I guess. Their committee reported in mid-February, and now they're in the midst of an election, so it won't be until after the election. They likely will be the last jurisdiction to report.

I've had ongoing and constant discussions with Stéphane Dion, the federal minister, relative to the Calgary declaration process. It's my expectation, given what he said and not to pre-empt him, that the federal government will have a look at the resolutions that have come from across the country and do some form of resolution on their own, acknowledging the benefit of the process and the value of the Calgary framework.

Across the country most of the jurisdictions have approved the Calgary framework as a set of principles, some with modest amendment. For example, in Newfoundland they deleted in I think clause 4 the term "gift of" as it relates to the contribution of aboriginal peoples, et cetera, because that was indicated by aboriginal peoples to be offensive language. That was not the intention the way it was drafted, but certainly it wasn't suitable to continue with it after that indication. The Northwest Territories put a whole framework around it in terms of its expectations. So as was intended in Calgary on September 14, there's been discussion around the elements in the Calgary framework, and people have come forward with their concepts and ideas as to what should be added to it or subtracted from it. There's been a considerable amount of work.

The challenge now in terms of going forward is how we can continue to communicate to the people of Quebec the benefits that we see out of Confederation. The Calgary framework will be one element that can be utilized in that process, but quite frankly, at the present time our major push in that direction is showing that federalism works through achieving some results with the social policy framework, trying to demonstrate that the country works best through negotiation, through the internal trade agreement, for example. I could mention that significant progress I think has been made in that area even recently.

I'll move to the internal trade question that you asked, because it is important. Internal trade has been a particular challenge for Alberta. As you're well aware, Alberta has championed open borders across the country and internationally, quite frankly, because we believe that we can trade and participate in the world and in the global economy with the best of them, that it's not a threat to us. But other jurisdictions haven't shared that same degree of challenge and that same degree of preparedness to challenge the world markets. Particularly, our neighbour to the west has been reluctant, to say the least, to enter into the agreement on the MASH sector.

8:55

We achieved, I think, a great step forward on February 20 in Ottawa when we had a meeting of the committee on internal trade and got an agreement from British Columbia that the MASH

procurement appendix could be added to the agreement. The internal trade agreement has been hampered over the years by the fact that it's a unanimous agreement. It's one which is amended by consensus, which means that everybody, essentially, in this context has to agree. Up until now B.C. has not agreed to the MASH sector being added, even though the principle of having it in there was in the agreement and that it was just the time frame for negotiating it that should have been undertaken.

So what should have happened in 1996 has now finally happened. B.C. has agreed that we could put the MASH annex into the agreement, that it will apply to all jurisdictions other than B.C. We hope that B.C. will see the benefit of it in the fullness of time and will adhere to it as well. The benefit of adding the MASH sector in as we did is that we didn't have to in essence break the internal trade agreement – go outside the internal trade agreement to make a separate agreement between all the provinces that wanted to do it – and basically destroy the concept of the internal trade agreement.

There's other progress being made. Alberta has chaired the energy chapter, for example, and the energy chapter is going to energy ministers this spring, may even be in their hands now. It will be going to their energy ministers' council in either late June or early July, I believe, and presumably, as we're not aware of any holdups on it at this stage, it will be going to the Premiers in August. So there has been progress made, but as you may appreciate, because you alluded to it, sometimes it's painfully slow. That's why, again, it speaks to the need for having some constant effort put into this and having clear direction from the government that we want to go in this direction. We have in our Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs department some very, very good talent who have been strongly involved in the trade negotiation and trade policy issues both with respect to internal trade and with respect to international trade. I believe that really adds to the Alberta government's position in terms of being able to pursue those objectives on behalf of Albertans.

Mr. Chairman, I think perhaps I'll leave it there for now so I can get other questions on the table that others may wish to raise. I'll review my notes and see if there's anything here that I've missed that I might be able to add to, and I can answer of course any of the ones I've missed in writing later.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The next one is Calgary-Cross. The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin by thanking the minister for the sensitivity and the interest that you've shown in aboriginal issues. I've been watching that over the past year, and quite frankly, I've been very impressed. I've noticed that you've raised considerably the profile of aboriginal issues, and as well I've watched a far more co-ordinated approach. I say that even in keeping with how you changed the name of the department from Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs to Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs. That alone said to the community, not just symbolically, that you were truly interested in aboriginal issues.

One area that I know we've talked about in the past and I continue to be interested in is the whole issue of the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. That report, as you know, was in place calling for significant changes in government relationships with aboriginal people. We noticed that the first response was, I think, about eight weeks ago, at the beginning of January – Pearl, you could correct me if I'm wrong – when federal Minister Stewart had made a strong statement about the

royal commission report. Well, actually she unveiled a statement of reconciliation for aboriginal people that had been in residential schools. At the time, she announced significant funding. It was \$350 million for healing initiatives for aboriginal people.

Just prior to Christmas I had been to a workshop in Lethbridge where there were 250 people from different First Nations that attended, and it was in regards to residential schools. Quite frankly, it took my breath away, the horror that they publicly stated had happened in the schools. I was pleased to see this funding was allocated through the federal government. Not only was the \$350 million allocated, but also there was I think \$245 million allocated for other programs. Those programs included the aboriginal Head Start. We've heard in the past that aboriginal people lose their language. It's not written, and there's no other country to go to to find that language, much like can happen with people from other countries, that can go back to their homeland to learn the language if it's truly a lost language. But with the aboriginal people that's not able to happen. The funding is in place for a number of those initiatives.

I also understood, Mr. Minister, that of the \$245 million, half has already been allocated. I saw that as being quite problematic for us as a provincial government. My question on all of this, with the residential school funding and with what's happened with the statement of reconciliation, goes back to last year to your annual report. In the report it had stated that the royal commission's

lengthy report is being reviewed closely by governments, Aboriginal groups, and the public with a view to acting on those recommendations which are felt to be of most practical assistance to Canada's Aboriginal people.

I heard in your opening statements that you would wait to be invited to the table in order for that action to occur. I'm not sure I heard that quite right. I'd like you to please comment on that.

Also, if you could comment on whether or not you will endorse the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report and as well Gathering Strength, Canada's aboriginal action plan, that was unveiled in early January.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you. Those are some very important questions, because people, particularly aboriginal people, have been waiting for a response on RCAP for a long time. It was a very lengthy consultation process, a very expensive consultation process, and then the screen went blank for a good year while we waited to see how the federal government would respond. It was important that we wait for the federal government response because the responsibility primarily still lies with the federal government with respect to the vast majority of the areas that are encompassed in this report.

Although the report did call for a significant restructuring of the roles and responsibilities and a new understanding, in order to implement that, there had to first be a response from the federal government. So we were very pleased that the federal government did finally respond in January of this year. We had had a meeting with provincial and territorial ministers responsible for aboriginal affairs and with aboriginal leaders in November in Saskatoon, I believe. Coming out of that meeting, one of the things that the aboriginal leaders and the ministers all called for was for the federal government, in fact for the Prime Minister to call a meeting relating to the outcomes from RCAP and to deal with it. They declined to do so but started off with a response in January which was, I think, significant.

The question about Alberta being invited to the table only speaks to our respect for the fact that this is an aboriginal governance issue and an aboriginal peoples issue primarily. In the past on many of these issues they have indicated that they want to deal directly with the federal government on a government-to-government basis. At times they have not wanted us to be at the table for some of those discussions, and we respect that. We respect their right to have a say as to who should be at the table on what issues.

9:05

Nonetheless, we continue to be engaged in the discussion because it's very important for Alberta and for Albertans and very important for aboriginal people living in Alberta that there be a role the provincial government plays in helping to determine what we can do to develop self-reliance particularly, how we can help them to develop their communities on a sustainable basis, and we indeed have reorganized the department to put an emphasis on economic self-reliance initiatives. It's particularly important when many of the First Nations in the province live in areas which are impacted by natural resource development, and of course natural resource development is a purview of the province. So there's a significant role for the province to play, but in some of the negotiations it's important that we not push our way into the discussion but rather wait until we're invited to the discussion.

It's hard to endorse the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples because of its size and breadth and the vast scope that it embraced. There are many things in that report, and we've done a comprehensive survey of what each department in the Alberta government is doing and asked the departments to look at the recommendations of the report to see whether we're doing something in that area already, whether we think we should be doing something in that area, or whether we don't think we should be doing something in that area. So we're in the process of compiling that and developing some responses in that area, but it wouldn't be fair to say that we could agree with or endorse the whole report. There are just some things which are beyond our scope and beyond our ability to deliver on, so it wouldn't be fair or reasonable for us to say, yes, we agree with everything in the report, when there are some things that just are not able to be delivered.

With respect to the \$350 million so-called healing fund, one of the interesting developments and of significant importance to Alberta is that the federal government has announced the fund, but they haven't announced how it's going to be used. That's to be developed in participation and co-operation with aboriginal peoples. Specifically, they've indicated that they will be working with the aboriginal leadership across the country in determining how that money can best be used.

One of the important concerns relative to Alberta is that we haven't had a cohesive aboriginal leadership coming out of Alberta, in terms of Alberta chiefs not playing a significant role in AFN in the past. We've had organizations on a treaty basis, but there hasn't been in the past a coming together of all the chiefs to say: this is what we're doing with respect to Alberta. So that causes some concern in terms of the ability of aboriginal people in Alberta to have access to those funds and have input on how those funds should be spent. When the federal minister was in the province in January specifically relating to the initialing of the Loon River agreement, she also met with chiefs in Alberta. There was some significant progress at that time, I think, towards developing a cohesive organization which could respond to and participate in the development of programs to utilize some of that \$350 million on behalf of Alberta aboriginal people.

With respect to some of the other money in the program, I think it would be fair to say that some of that was really announcing again what had been announced before, so there's some disappointment in terms of that. But I guess to put it in a better light, it was an attempt to put together the whole package and show that there had been significant progress made. I think there has been significant progress made. I think the spirit which has been shown by the federal minister, certainly in the meetings that I've had with her now and talking about having another meeting of aboriginal affairs ministers and talking about looking at solutions rather than all of us sort of going back to negotiating positions and guarding our turf, has been an important shift in focus, and I look forward to that.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Mr. Minister. Just three catch-up questions related to your response to some other questions.

I think my take on the question about the 5 percent response on the unity surveys is not whether that's a good response or not but rather whether there was value for money spent. Perhaps I might gently say that perhaps you doth protest too much. I don't know that it's helpful to do a comparison to other provinces. We're looking at value for money in our own province.

Okay. You asked what were performance measurements that might be considered more useful. If I might suggest, I think what we're looking for is the benefits that accrue specifically to Albertans from the programs and agreements that your department is responsible for. So it's not the number of agreements that are signed that are of interest; it's what economic benefits are derived from those agreements or the effectiveness of whatever the agreement was meant to be rather than just the number of agreements. So I hope that's helpful.

Another question around the European Union privacy directive. Perhaps you want time to check into this and respond in writing, and that would fine. We have \$1.1 billion worth of trade under these agreements. We have a directive that says that we won't trade with nations that don't have the appropriate privacy legislation in place.

MR. DICKSON: Legislated privacy protection.

MS BLAKEMAN: Legislated privacy protection. I'm getting prompted by my colleague. Thank you.

Specifically, what is the department doing around this? Obviously, there's a time line involved here. We need to have our ducks in a row, and I guess that we're expecting privacy ducks to be in a row in other countries. So where are we with this, exactly, and what's being done?

Okay. Still on international trade – and I know this was touched on briefly by my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo – I note that the Economic Development Authority has set up an external trade task force and has announced that it will develop goals and plans for all trade missions carried out by the ministers or by the Premier. So, again, I am questioning why we have both the foreign offices and the Economic Development Authority and your department doing the same thing. I understand that you're saying that one group does the diplomatic aspect and the other does, specifically, the promotion of trade. They're so close. I'm wondering why you can't just have officers that are responsible

for each of those in one department, approaching this in a more streamlined way. I'm wondering if that could then lead to a downsizing or a streamlining in the department, seeing as these are already being performed by the other departments and agencies.

Around the national unity I note that although there are experts in the department that were responsible for advising the government on national unity, the Premier also convened a panel of university professors to advise him specifically on issues concerning Quebec, which confuses me a little seeing as they're supposed to already exist in the department. So I'm wondering if the Premier was not satisfied with the advice that he was getting through the department. He had a group of advisers in the department specific to this, and he sought additional expertise from outside of the department. Why did he go to two different places to get this when he had specific people dedicated to this in the department?

I'm also wondering what is the current status regarding our Ottawa office. Has a new executive director been appointed since the former director moved to the position in the southern Alberta Premier's office?

9:15

In the business plan, which is in the Agenda for Opportunity, page 271 is saying that the department is pursuing Alberta's strategy in changes to Alberta's social and fiscal policy and a rebalancing of responsibilities in the area of environment, federal spending power, federal tax policy, and internal trade barriers. Could the minister comment on his goals in each of these areas and what specific changes he hopes to achieve? Again, those are the areas of environment, federal spending power, federal tax policy, and internal trade barriers.

I'd like to move on to aboriginal affairs. For references, could I direct the minister to the ministry business plan, pages 269 to 277, and in the estimates, pages 245 to 257. I can give you specifics as we go through them.

Under the aboriginal self-reliance initiatives, which is 1.0.6, I note that the budget is the same as last year and the business plan goal 2.1 is "increased self-reliance of Aboriginal communities." So what self-reliance initiatives are being funded, and could we have some examples of that, please? Could we also have some examples of how aboriginal communities are being helped to participate in local economic development.

I know that some companies – Syncrude is the example that springs to mind. It has taken a lead role in employing aboriginal people. Is the department doing anything specific to approach other companies to encourage them or to assist them in finding ways to encourage aboriginal participation in their workforces? It's an excellent program from Syncrude, and I'm wondering if there are other ones that we can get happening.

In the business plan on page 272, goal 2.1 referring to grants, what types of projects receive grants to encourage self-reliance? Still in the business plan, the performance measures on page 276. The performance measurement is the "number of Aboriginal communities/organizations delivering sector specific" measures. How is the success of programs and assistance measured?

How does the work of your Department of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs relate to the work of Family and Social Services with respect to giving aboriginal people more responsibility for child welfare services? You did speak about that in your opening remarks, but I'm looking for the specifics of what the two departments are doing and how it's intermeshing, particularly around the child welfare services. I know there was a real commitment that one of the four pillars in the redesign of

children's services was to have been aboriginal participation. Was your department involved in that, and how?

Is Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs working with the Department of Justice to improve justice services for aboriginal people? In particular here I'm referring to Judge John Reilly stating that criminal cases are being dismissed because when people are living on reserves, they're unwilling to testify because they're afraid of repercussions from family members on the reserve. So what work has been done specifically there between the two departments?

Under aboriginal relations, line 1.0.7, I notice there's a budget of \$2.6 million. It's the same as last year. What parameters have been developed for Alberta's participation in self-government discussions? That's referring to the business plan goal 2.2.

I'd also be interested in hearing about initiatives that have been undertaken that are related to aboriginal self-government. How does the province see its role in the self-government initiatives? The federal government carries the prime responsibility for that, so where exactly does the Alberta government fit into that? What's its responsibility and accountability? Being always interested in public participation and an accessible process for that, what is the province doing to ensure that affected parties have opportunities for input?

I notice that in goal 2, "to enhance Alberta's relationship with Aboriginal people," there are some performance measurements to assess the success of this. When will we see the outcomes of these measures? Will they be collected this year? Therefore, does that make this year's collection of that data the baseline that we build from?

We know that the ministry conducted a comprehensive client survey in 1995 and developed baseline data for future surveys. That's contained in the business plan, 1997-98 through 1999-2000, specifically on page 183, attachment 3. What was the response of the Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs' client survey with respect to aboriginals? Have the results been published? If so, where? If they were not, then could you please release the results? We know that the government intends to continue with these client surveys. My question is: will the same client survey that was conducted in 1995 be conducted again this year, or will a new one be developed? If so, what are the elements involved in that?

Where will the record of key Aboriginal Affairs' achievements be published? Will it be in the department's annual report? This again is referring to goal 2's performance measures and outcome measures.

Moving on to aboriginal land claims, specifically 1.0.8, I remember that in your opening remarks you said that the additional money that was approved through supplementary estimates was to finance the Loon River Cree band settlement. It seems that the decision is to put the money needed for land claims settlements in through supplementary estimates, so my questions are: how many land claims are currently being negotiated, with which bands, and which claims might be settled this year, in which case we'd be expecting to see those figures coming up in supplementary estimates? How many claims have been settled since 1993, and what has this cost the province? As well, does the minister have a list of achievements?

Still on land claims, what progress is being made on the Alexander First Nation? Has the settlement been finalized? The minister has indicated – and I'm quoting here from *Hansard*, February 17, 1998, page 399 – that he's

ready, willing, and able to sit down at any time to discuss land claims negotiations on a basis which is appropriate for the people of Alberta and consistent with settlements that have been made

with Woodland, with Loon, with other nations in Alberta. We're certainly prepared to deal with the Lubicon at any time and have discussions with them.

Have you told the Lubicon band this directly? Are you in discussions with the federal government about speeding up these discussions? This claim I can remember from way back when. I'd be interested to see if there's any specific movement on this one.

Moving on to the Métis Settlements Transition Commission – and we had Bill 17 introduced today. It was very interesting to read through that. The budget at 2.0.1 is the same as last year. Does this mean that the commission will remain fully active? I thought I understood that the commission would be winding down its activities as the settlements became more independent, but the budget item is the same. Does that mean that it's going to stay at exactly the same level of operation?

9:25

The legal costs in aboriginal matters are now the responsibility of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs rather than Justice. How much was paid in legal costs in 1997-98, for how many law firms? Could you tell us specifically which firms?

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MS BLAKEMAN: The anticipated legal costs in 1998-99?

AN HON. MEMBER: Watch out.

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you. That was an interesting question that got slipped in there.

The Métis Settlements Appeal Tribunal, 2.0.2. This has a slightly higher budget. What we're looking for is: how many appeals were held last year in each category?

How much time have I got? Three minutes? Okay. Thank you.

Moving on to Métis settlements funding, 2.0.3, again the budget appears to be similar to last year, and as an interim measure the government is moving to an alternative funding model. This is referred to in Bill 17. Is it known how long this alternative funding model will be in place?

One of the goal 2 performance measurements is the "percentage of self-generated revenues as part of Metis Settlement budgets." What is that figure for 1997-98 for each of the settlements, and what are their targets for 1998-99? How much funding is expected to be required when we change to the matched funding system? Will that result in a decrease in your budget?

Goal 2 performance measures, intermediate outcomes: "MOUs, protocols, framework agreements and other process arrangements negotiated and implemented." Could we have a list of these for 1997-98, or will there be a complete list in the department's annual report?

Still on goal 2 performance measurements, secondary indicators: "Socio-economic data for Métis Settlement residents." Where is the socioeconomic data for the Métis Settlement residents? Is it the intention to publish this annually? Which year is the baseline, and what material is available so far?

Those are the questions that I'd like to bring forward tonight. I look forward to your response, a written response if you are not able to give us the full answers now.

MR. HANCOCK: I'd certainly like to take the opportunity to deal with a number of the questions that you've raised tonight. First of all, having said that I hoped not to have to mention the national

unity consultation process again, I have some concern with your saying: "doth protest too much." I think what I was merely trying to emphasize was that we ran, on a co-operative and nonpartisan basis with input from all three parties in the House with respect to the content of the consultation document and the form of how it was to be proceeded with, I think a very efficient and effective mechanism whereby all 83 constituencies were able to be consulted and constituents in them had an opportunity to have input into the process. The high degree of response that we got and the high degree of participation by Albertans in that process demonstrated the effectiveness of the process.

The comparison that I was making to other provinces wasn't to show how effective and efficient we were particularly, although it does tend to show that. It was more to show that Albertans were engaged in the process in a manner which wasn't, quite frankly, anticipated by the media that we would be engaged in. So my reaction to the 5 percent remark was more as a result of that being the process by which the media particularly tried to denigrate the extent to which the public of Alberta were engaged in the discussion and wanted to be engaged in the discussion. So I think there was tremendous value for the money spent.

As with any process, you can always improve it. We could have used improved distribution methods. It might have been a little bit more costly, but it would have also been a little bit more effective perhaps, and there are other ways that the process could have been improved. Overall the feedback that we've received is that it was an effective process. It was one of the best consultation processes that has happened over the course of the discussions around national unity during the last 10, 15 years that we've had them, and certainly more Albertans had an opportunity to participate.

With respect to performance measures, it would be nice to be able to delineate benefits specifically which accrue to Albertans as a result of engaging in international diplomacy and working on governance projects, working on international trade policy agreements, but as I tried to set out in response to your colleagues, that is very difficult to specifically do. It's difficult to say that we signed a contract here and it's worth \$1.8 billion. That's easy to do on the marketing side, the economic development side, but on the intergovernmental affairs side, where we're talking about trade policy issues, it's much more difficult to actually sit down and say: we have a benefit today that's quantifiable from the efforts that we put in yesterday. Nonetheless, it's still important to try and do that, but we consider those to be secondary measures rather than primary measures of our performance. That having been said, we believe that it's still very important to develop those international relations and those working relations with some national governments in other countries, with individuals involved in other countries, because it's those relationships and that relationship building which helps to develop the baseline or the table on which trade can happen.

I attended a discussion, a think tank in Alberta last fall, and Gwyn Morgan was speaking at it. One of the things that he indicated that I think was a very thoughtful discussion of this area was that we are a natural resource based economy right now, and for now, a natural resource based economy has been a good thing. It's been our advantage in the world. But as we move into a services- and a technology- and an information-based economy, we will lose that advantage in the world. So we have to determine what it is that we're going to be able to sell in a global economy. What is it that's going to give us a competitive edge?

We have in Canada and particularly in Alberta – this was his thesis – a society where we have people from all over the world. We have an ability to get along in a very cosmopolitan society.

That gives us an advantage which isn't seen in the same way in other societies, such as the United States – they don't have the same type of relationship – or Great Britain or in some societies such as Japan, for example, where they don't have that same mix of people; they don't have friends and relatives all over the world. Our international relations program helps to build on that advantage that we have, to build those relationships around the world.

We had a trip to South Africa in January where one of our colleagues went to South Africa on a CIDA project and agreed to an expansion of that CIDA project for another year. We're dealing with governance issues with respect to setting up some national governments in South Africa which they haven't had before. Quite frankly Alberta is one of the few governments in the world that CIDA can look to for that type of expertise. What does that do for us in terms of back home in Alberta? Well, what it does for us is it builds some relationships; it builds some long-term trading bases; it builds some opportunities which our businesses and our people can take advantage of over the long term. But in terms of performance measures, it's difficult to come back and relate that to a specific quantifiable increase in the amount of trade that's happened. Nonetheless we continue to try and do that.

With respect to the question relating to the Quebec advisory committee, I'm somewhat surprised at the question coming up again. The Quebec advisory committee is not a new committee; it's been around for a number of years now. Its genesis was when the Premier invited some of the academics who had been talking in the public media about Quebec, about policy relating to Quebec, about what we should be doing and what we shouldn't be doing. He took the opportunity to invite those commentators, those academics, to come and sit around a table and provide him with that advice directly, which can only be seen as a very advantageous process. Just because you have a few people who give you advice doesn't mean you should shut your ears to all the advice that can come from other directions. I would think that someone who is a member of the opposition would clearly want government, the Premier to be listening to good advice from all quarters. That's what we're doing with respect to the Quebec advisory committee. The fact that we have some very, very good people in the Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs department who are capable of providing us with high-level advice and high-quality advice doesn't mean for a moment that we stop looking to all those who are interested in a particular topic and who are able to provide particular insights.

9:35

With respect to the Ottawa office, we haven't appointed and won't be appointing a new executive director, although I'll have to check on that. I'm not big on titles, so I'm not sure exactly what we call the person who's operating in the Ottawa office at the present time. We still have an office location there. We gather information there, and it's provided to all departments of government that want to have access to it.

With respect to the aboriginal affairs side of things and the question about self-reliance, what we're doing with respect to self-reliance is a number of different initiatives. They broadly range from direct involvement through what's called the CLOEEP program. I did have a piece of paper where some of this was written down, but I've put it someplace. So I'll give you more detail later.

So small grants to communities that have specific programming initiatives to broader co-ordination or encouragement to companies and industries to involve aboriginal people in their natural

resource development programs and initiatives. Our ministry some years ago was involved in encouraging an economic development council of CEOs and aboriginal affairs departments of companies that are doing business. There has been some really phenomenal movement, I think, in that area. I had the opportunity again to meet with that particular group with the federal minister when she was in town in early January. To see that there is actually very strong progress being made by companies and recognizing it's not appropriate simply to hire aboriginal people for the sake of saying you've hired aboriginal people. It's absolutely important that they involve them in the development of their own communities and in the traditional land areas and indeed in the area in which they're living. That's happening, and that's happening in a big way and in way that we don't talk often enough about or much about in Alberta. We need to do more of that, to tell people what's happening.

With respect to Family and Social Services issues and Justice issues. [remarks in Cree] Did I get that right, Pearl?

The bottom line with respect to Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs is that we're not a program delivery department. We're very much a policy and co-ordination department. So it's our responsibility to ensure there's an advocacy role undertaken so that when Family and Social Services, for example, is delivering programming, we make sure that programming takes into account the needs of the aboriginal community and the aboriginal people in Alberta and particularly takes into account the special needs of those communities because of the lower socioeconomic standards that are exhibited in those communities.

The same would be true of Justice. Aboriginal affairs is not about to go out and start delivering Justice programs. That's the role of the Department of Justice, and as was indicated by your colleague earlier, it's important that we not start engaging in overlap and duplication. So we're not about to go out and initiate Justice programs, but we very much are interested in advocating to Justice the need to be actively involved, as they are, in looking at areas where programming is needed and taking into account the special nature of the community when they're designing programs.

With respect to land claims: how many have been negotiated since 1993? It looks like there've been five negotiated since 1993. That would start with the Janvier and Tallcree settlements which were concluded in 1993, the Alexis settlement which was concluded in 1995, and the Alexander agreement in principle and the Loon River agreement in principle. The Alexander agreement in principle was concluded in 1996. We hope to have an answer to your subsequent question, final agreement in place with respect to that this year. There have been some very difficult issues that had to be cleared out of the way with respect to third-party interests and those sorts of things. That's a significantly different claim. So, hopefully, that one is on track for conclusion this year. Of course, the Loon River agreement in principle was signed this year, and we hope to have the final agreement in place this year, again assuming that some of the third-party interests can be cleared out of the way.

With respect to claims under negotiation, there are three claims currently considered to be under negotiation: two of them, Fort McMurray and Salt River, the third being the Lubicon claim you alluded to. I did indicate in supplementary estimates that we were ready, willing, and able to get to the table with respect to the Lubicon settlement. Yes, I have spoken with the federal minister indicating our interest in having that particular land claim, as with all the land claims, moved ahead, but particularly that one and those in Treaty 8.

I was in Little Buffalo in November and did meet with the chief

at that time. We've indicated we were interested in moving ahead with discussions on that particular claim. I would also repeat what I said in supplementary estimates; that is, that we have to conclude any land claims on a basis which is reasonable and equitable to all parties, including the people of Alberta. We would be hoping to look forward to a settlement of that claim on a basis similar to the other claims that have been settled in the province.

With respect to the Métis Settlements Appeal Tribunal, there were 64 files for formal appeals filed last year. The tribunal issued 12 written decisions: six involving disputes over ownership of interest in land, one involving membership, and five regarding land access and compensation appeals. They also issued 12 surface rights orders involving 49 existing orders, establishing new compensation rights, amending the parties to them, and in one case terminating an order.

In addition to those, though, you asked for specifics, so I gave you specifics. But it would be important to emphasize that the role of the tribunal is broader than simply those individual hearings. They're working on a mediation process which is going to be, I think, in the future very important for settlements, to be able to have a mediation process which is sensitive to the communities and operates within those communities. In fact, I met recently with the Métis Settlements Appeal Tribunal. We were talking about the renewal and regeneration of their business plan and encouraged them to think broadly about their business plan and what it is they should be engaged in, because it is such a unique body in Canada, and it's doing its job particularly well.

With respect to the Métis Settlements Transition Commission, I did indicate that it's our intention to wind that down, but it's not our intention to wind that down this year. It has a continuing life, I think, of five years. I stand to be corrected on that. It would be our hope that it would be wound down in a shorter time frame than that. Its budget is at the same level because when and how we wind it down depends very much on progress being made in transferring authorities and jurisdictions to the settlements general council and the settlements themselves and being satisfied with respect to the accountability processes put in place for the moneys provided to them and being satisfied with respect to bylaw-making authorities and abilities and that there are appropriate bylaws in place and those sorts of things. So there's still work to be done.

The transition commission is operating very effectively. It's also been very active and effective in the last year on governance issues. I know that your colleague who spoke to the Métis Settlements Statutes Amendment Act this afternoon in the House talked about concerns of individual settlement members and have they been taken into account. The Métis Settlements Transition Commission plays a very integral role in the whole question of making sure there's an accountability level and that any issues that come up can be resolved on an amicable basis between settlement members and settlement councils and the general council.

So we have had a few issues relating to governance over the course of the fall. There have been some investigations ongoing with respect to that conducted by the transition commission. We've been doing them on the basis that we try to ensure that the settlement council is cognizant of the issues raised, whether they're raised by direct call or letter to my office or by way of a petition, which they can do under the act, and that when those issues come up, the transition commission engages with the settlement council to review the issues being raised, an appropriate response and investigation of that response, and then does a report, as it's appropriate to do, but then goes back to the settlement council and asks them how they're going to deal with the issues that have been raised. So there's still a very significant

role for the transition commission in this process. But we hope, by the very nature of it, that its need will be removed in the very near term.

I think, rather than go on at length, perhaps I would stop there and leave any other questions that I haven't answered for written response.

9:45

THE CHAIRMAN: The next person that I have is the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to cover some areas perhaps in a little more depth, some of the areas that others of my colleagues and, of course, the members of the government have covered also.

First I'd like to cover a little bit of ground that the Member for Calgary-Cross covered and, incidentally, displayed a great deal of knowledge in an area that I had hitherto not known she had an interest in. That's complimenting the minister in a couple of areas. Certainly the name change of the department may not seem to be a major step in direction for many, but it is for this member, at least, in that it does give the status of the aboriginal peoples and the native people of this province, whether they be treaty, urban or Métis, a status that says they are someone and need to be treated in a manner that's a little more conducive to their well-being than simply stuck in some department without any recognition.

The other area she covered was of some special interest. I'll have to read the answers and the questions to fully understand the gravity of it. But I do like to understand why the two portions of your ministry are even together. I can understand, and I wouldn't want to put you in the position of, again, having to justify your existence. But I guess that's what I'm sort of asking in that I have no difficulty personally, no difficulty ever, with having a complete department with aboriginal affairs separate and distinct and call it that and deal with that specifically. I do have a little difficulty with, as other members have pointed out also, the international trade portion of intergovernmental affairs, negotiations related to your Canadian governmental relations. Those would be, in part, well put in Economic Development and tourism, of course. Some of them would, in my view. Others would more rightly fall in the Premier's bailiwick. In dealing with other governments, it behooves the head of a government, particularly if you're dealing with the nation, to deal with the head. I'm not looking for an immediate answer or a complete justification but some indication of how these two segments of your work come together.

I'd also like to know – this perhaps stems from not knowing specifically how a minister's office works. How is it that your office operates on \$260,000 a year? The Minister of Justice operates on about \$350,000 or thereabouts. The Minister of Health, which is a massive department, operates on less than Justice, something like \$338,000 or something like that. Of course, the minister of transportation, one of my all-time favourites, operates on around \$210,000 or something like that.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: He's higher priced help.

MR. WHITE: Yeah. Just a farmer from northern Alberta. They don't need much to operate. I understand.

I don't understand how that operates or why a relatively small expenditure department would have the need of more money than a large capital expenditure like Transportation. This may be just out of ignorance also, but I don't know how they operate and how they'd be any different.

It seems to me that there has to be some stubbing of toes and running into one another when you're dealing with treaty native affairs with the federal government. I wonder how one justifies the expense of having experts in the field in your department dealing with all of the same sorts of matters as the federal government, and I don't really understand why all of that must occur. Although I do have to say in defence of the department that if you are going to go into areas similar to the Winnipeg solution of Gathering Strength, the one window of urban native affairs, if that were the kind of thing that you were doing, which the federal government doesn't do a lot of, then I could say, yes, perhaps there is some justification for it. But I haven't seen that, not that it doesn't occur.

I'd like to hear perhaps the minister's assessment of Gathering Strength and see if there's a potential application. I mean, I know it goes across in doing something similar. You said earlier that you're an advocate, that you weren't program driven in deliverance of hard service, a lot liaison and a lot of bringing together of departments. Of course, that particular report, as I understand it, would take elements of Justice, elements of Social Services, elements of Health, and certainly elements of the minister without portfolio's area, children's services, a lot of those areas, and centre them in one geographic centre in an urban setting for ease of access of native persons in urban centres.

However, I'd like to move on from there into areas of the royal commission on native affairs. As I recall, you were saying that there are some elements, some parts of that report that we can grasp, that we understand, that we can agree with, that we can move on, although we can't come to the conclusion that we as a government can adopt the entire report. The question: what parts fall on what side? What part do you wholeheartedly agree with and can say: "Yes, this is the essence of how we believe we should be dealing with the provincial native affairs."? This is the discard pile, as it were, and these are those that are still in between. I haven't seen anything published in that respect, and there may not be.

9:55

You stated something about a misplaced paper or something, that you had some notes on some programs that the department is involved with in aiding the attainment of at least one of the goals of the royal commission, which is self-governance. I think you called it economic self-reliance. If you're going to be in those, I'd like to know what the performance measurements are, if you have a gauge, and if you've been in the business long enough to know whether actually the performance of the department has any history or any pilot projects that have worked out or not and why.

On page 276 there's a goal relating to the enhancement of the relationship with aboriginal peoples, and there's some polling data referred to: "Polling data on views of Albertans regarding Aboriginal affairs." I'm wondering if that information has been gathered, and if so, could it be and would it be available to the general public and to ourselves? It would certainly be interesting to know.

To move on to another area, with the time being ever so short: the trade barriers. I think one of my colleagues mentioned that we hear about this time and time and time again as at least part of

the justification for having a department. It seems to me that this government, being an advocate of more provincial powers, is working at cross-purposes with the bringing down of trade barriers. As you know, the interests of each government being politically different and being profoundly parochial, they always end up putting more barriers as opposed to less, depending on the life cycle of their government. I don't see how one can make major headway in that respect, spending money on it over and over and over again when the similar sorts of magnitudes of moneys could be spent in other areas even in your own department, some of the areas I mentioned earlier about enhancing the self-governance for aboriginal peoples.

The last area. There was some poll data mentioned also in that area: "views of Albertans regarding federal/provincial relations." It's also on page 276, goals and performance, goal 1. I'm wondering if that information could be made available through your office to ours in order to better understand what the relationships are and what relationship Albertans do appreciate and therefore perhaps partial justification for the budget you expend, sir.

I thank you for your time, and I must again compliment you. I knew for years and years, all the years I've known you, more years than either of us would like to recall, your interest in intergovernmental affairs. I knew that from the '70s, but I didn't know your interest and your breadth of knowledge, as Calgary-Cross pointed out, in aboriginal affairs. I compliment you and wish you well.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister.

MR. HANCOCK: Well, just very briefly, Mr. Chairman. The questions with respect to the need for an Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs department. I'd just very quickly point out now – and I'll leave the rest of the questions for later – that Aboriginal Affairs is very much involved with the whole Canadian federalism issue. If anybody followed the whole process of the Charlottetown accord, the whole discussion relating to Meech Lake, the whole discussion about aboriginal self-governance issues, the interrelation between the Canadian federalism area of the department and the aboriginal affairs area of the department is self-evident.

I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chairman, and perhaps provide further responses later.

I would now move that we rise and report.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister has moved that the subcommittee do now rise and report progress. All those in support of this motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed, say no. Carried.

[The subcommittee adjourned at 10:01 p.m.]

