



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Standing Committee
on
Families and Communities

Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General
Consideration of Main Estimates

Thursday, April 5, 2018
9 a.m.

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Fourth Session**

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

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Standing Committee on Families and Communities

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Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General

Hon. Kathleen T. Ganley, Minister

Bill Sweeney, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Security

Brad Wells, Executive Director and Senior Financial Officer, Financial Services

9 a.m.

Thursday, April 5, 2018

[Ms Goehring in the chair]

**Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General
Consideration of Main Estimates**

The Chair: Good morning. I would like to call this meeting to order and welcome everyone. The committee has under consideration the estimates of the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019.

I'd ask that we go around the table and have all MLAs introduce themselves for the record. Minister, please introduce the officials that are joining you today at the table. I'm Nicole Goehring, MLA for Edmonton-Castle Downs and chair of this committee. We'll continue, starting to my right.

Mr. Yao: Tany Yao, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Ellis: Mike Ellis, MLA, Calgary-West.

Mr. Orr: Ron Orr, MLA, Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mrs. Pitt: Angela Pitt, MLA, Airdrie.

Mr. Fraser: Rick Fraser, Calgary South-East.

Ms Ganley: Kathleen Ganley, MLA for Calgary-Buffalo and Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. I am joined today by Dennis Cooley, associate deputy minister, Solicitor General; Philip Bryden, deputy minister; Brad Wells, senior financial officer; and Gerald Lamoureux, assistant deputy minister.

The Chair: Robyn.

Ms Luff: Oh. Sorry. I'm Robyn Luff. I'm the MLA for Calgary-East, and I just woke up.

Ms Renaud: Marie Renaud, St. Albert.

Ms McKittrick: Bonjour. Annie McKittrick, Sherwood Park.

Mr. Westhead: I'm Cameron Westhead, MLA for Banff-Cochrane.

Drever: Good morning. Deborah Drever, MLA for Calgary-Bow.

Mr. Hinkley: Good morning. Bruce Hinkley, MLA, Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Mr. Horne: Trevor Horne, MLA for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'd like to note the following substitutions for the record: Mrs. Pitt for Mr. Smith as deputy chair, Mr. Fraser for Member McPherson, and Mr. Westhead for Ms Miller.

Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*, and the committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

A total of six hours has been scheduled for consideration of the estimates for the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General. For the record I would note that the Standing Committee on Families and Communities has already completed three hours of the debate in this respect. As we enter our fourth hour of debate, I will remind everyone that the speaking rotation for these meetings is provided for in Standing Order 59.01(6). We are now at the point in the rotation where speaking times are limited to a maximum of five

minutes. Members have the option of combining their speaking time with the minister for a maximum of 10 minutes. Please remember to advise the chair at the beginning of the rotation if you wish to combine your time with the minister. Discussion should flow through the chair at all times whether or not the speaking times have been combined. If members have any questions regarding the speaking times or the rotation, please feel free to send a note or speak directly with either the chair or the committee clerk about this process.

With the concurrence of the committee I will call a five-minute break near the midpoint of the meeting; however, the three-hour clock will continue to run. Does anyone oppose this break? Thank you.

Committee members, ministers, and other members who are not committee members may participate; however, only a committee member or an official substitute may introduce an amendment during a committee's review of the estimates.

Ministry officials may be present and at the direction of the minister may address the committee. Ministry officials seated in the gallery, if called upon, have access to a microphone in the gallery area. Ministry officials are reminded to introduce themselves prior to responding to questions. Pages are available to deliver notes or other materials between the gallery and the table. Attendees in the gallery should not approach the table. Members' staff may be present and seated along the committee room wall. Space permitting, opposition caucus staff may sit at the table to assist their members; however, members have priority to sit at the table at all times.

If debate is exhausted prior to six hours, the ministry's estimates are deemed to have been considered for the time allotted in the schedule and the committee will adjourn. The scheduled end time for today's meeting is 12 o'clock.

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

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

The vote on the estimates and any amendments is deferred until consideration of all ministry estimates has concluded and will occur in Committee of Supply on April 19, 2018.

Amendments must be in writing and approved by Parliamentary Counsel prior to the meeting at which they are moved. The original amendment is to be deposited with the committee clerk, and 20 copies of the amendment must be provided at the meeting for committee members and support staff.

When we adjourned on April 3, 2018, we were three minutes and 30 seconds into the exchange between Mr. Ellis and the minister. I will now invite Mr. Ellis or other members from the Official Opposition to complete the remaining time in this rotation. You have six minutes and 30 seconds. Please go ahead.

Mr. Ellis: All right. Thank you, Chair. Minister, thank you very much. Staff, thank you as well for being here again today. I know that when we concluded last, I was talking a little bit about carbines and C8s. I just want to, I guess, before I conclude, say a little bit about the rural crime issue, of course, facing the people of Alberta. In many of our town halls with our friends in rural Alberta that MLAs have attended – I also attended some meetings in, for example, Three Hills – much discussion has come up in regard to the use of force. As it pertains to your budget, in regard to education is there anything that you or your department is doing to assist in educating the public on what is an appropriate level of force to use when dealing with offenders that may come onto their properties?

Ms Ganley: That's a very interesting question. Obviously, I've had a number of conversations around concerns that individuals have had. Our advice has generally been the advice that we've gotten from our partners in policing, which is to as much as possible leave the policing to the professionals. We don't presently have education for the public with respect to use of force. Normally we focus on ensuring that our police partners are aware of appropriate use of force because, again, we prefer to have those things dealt with by professionals, but it certainly is something that I think we could consider looking into at some point.

Mr. Ellis: Yeah. I mean, as you're aware, there is the use of force continuum and, as you are aware as well, as I am, the professionals, of course, are best suited to deal with these incidents that occur on rural properties. However, the responses by law enforcement either are too late or at times not happening at all, sadly. Currently, of course, there is the frustration surrounding rural crime. Obviously, I guess my point is that if it is not currently addressed in your budget, at the very minimum you consider addressing educating the public in regard to the appropriate use of force just so that the public has an understanding as to, you know, what is appropriate and considered reasonable, right?

Ms Ganley: I think that's certainly something we would potentially have conversations with our policing partners about. I think our focus right now is on working on our 911 response system, working on having the appropriate number of resources in place, and working on having officers able to respond to calls. But it's certainly something that we can consider.

Mr. Ellis: Great. Thank you.

If I can just change gears as well, Minister, it was brought to my attention here that on page 203, victims of crime fund statement of operations, it says under Revenue and then under Transfer from Government of Canada, the estimate is \$1,348,000. I guess my question to you in regard to that is: if we as a province or you as government are not using that money or it's not allocated in some way, do we lose it? Is it one of those things that we have to use?

Ms Ganley: I'll ultimately get my officials to respond to exactly how that's contracted, but I think that we certainly do use a fair amount of the money that comes into that fund. Obviously, we're using it in part through the financial benefits program and in part through the grants to organizations. It is the case that in most years – and that's been the case for quite some time – more money comes in than goes out, although usually more money goes out than that particular number. So we're working on how to handle that. There is a certain amount that we're required to hold back in that fund sort of as contingency because of the financial benefits program.

I think that my officials can probably speak to the contract on that one.

9:10

Mr. Wells: Sure. As the minister indicated there, we do get annual transfers from the federal government. If we don't use that funding, it does remain in our budget. Depending on programs, it could be reduced the following year if we have not shown that we've completely utilized the transfer that we received the prior year.

Mr. Ellis: How many times has that happened over the last few years?

Mr. Wells: Just looking at '16-17 compared to '17-18, we're spending all of the transfers. I'd have to go back into history, and we'd have to get back to you on that.

Mr. Ellis: Is this a yearly application that we have to make to the federal government in regard to this?

Mr. Wells: Again, it depends on the program. Sometimes it could be a multiyear agreement with the federal government, so we'd get annual transfers in multiple years.

The Chair: Thank you.

I would just like to remind ministry officials to introduce themselves prior to responding to questions. Thank you.

Ms Ganley: Sorry about that.

The Chair: That's okay.

At this point in the rotation I would like to invite Mr. Fraser from the Alberta Party and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Mr. Fraser, are you wanting to combine your time?

Mr. Fraser: Yes, please, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you. Minister, again, thank you for all the work that you and all our great civil servants do. I know that it is a difficult job, and we do appreciate it for sure.

I just want to talk about the business plan regarding the Jordan decision. While trying to comply with the Jordan decision will likely take more resources to make that happen without prosecutions suffering, I don't see much in the way of increases. Can you tell us how many cases have been dropped or stayed, et cetera, as a result of the Jordan decision?

Ms Ganley: We actually keep those statistics online. I don't have them right in front of me, but we do actually post on our website point-in-time updates. I just don't want to give you the wrong number because it can change on any given day. Essentially, that website provides the number of applications that are made, the number that have been successful, that sort of thing. I think there's presently one that's in the appeal period, so it's a little bit . . .

Mr. Fraser: Okay. Out of those cases that were dropped or stayed, how many of those were violent crimes?

Ms Ganley: In terms of the ones that have been stayed for Jordan, there isn't that high a number. Some of them have been violent crimes. I'm not sure if we separate it that way on our website, but if we don't, I will undertake to get you that number.

Mr. Fraser: Okay. Great.

Then with the same type of idea, how many are stayed with prejudice and without prejudice?

Ms Ganley: When there's a judicial stay entered, I don't know if I'd describe it as prejudice, but the case is stayed. We can seek an appeal. We can appeal that decision of a judge, but we can't undo it.

Mr. Fraser: Right. With these types of things going on, you know, for the sake of the public what do you think it would cost to bring your budget up to make sure that you're abiding by the Jordan principle?

Ms Ganley: Well, I think that we're doing a fairly good job of heading in that direction now. It isn't just a question of budgets. I think, certainly, that we've made some investments because we do think that resources are a necessary element, but there are other elements to that plan. One of the things that the Supreme Court has

suggested is that they don't want it to be business as usual. We have to do a better job of making sure we're using resources efficiently, so we've got a number of different things that do that.

It also has to do with – some of the resources are somewhat out of my control, right? One of the big sticking points is still a shortage of Queen's Bench justices, and this has a long and storied history in Alberta because we've grown so quickly. As you'll be aware, the former provincial government had created three positions that the former federal government refused to acknowledge existed. Then when we came in, we created some more positions. Our federal counterparts, thankfully, have chosen to recognize that those exist, but they're still in the process of appointing to them. We're still at a position where we have the lowest number per capita of superior court justices in the country. I guess that's a long way of saying that it's more than just resources, I think, that need to go into this.

Mr. Fraser: Right. In your performance measures 3(b) on page 103 of the business plan it shows that there's been little improvement in the length of trials going forward to 2020-21. How does this improve appropriate and timely access to the courts? Would you say that court times should be coming down or case times should be coming down if you're investing more in the system?

Ms Ganley: Ultimately, you would expect to see an investment resulting in case times coming down. I think there are, again, a couple of other factors that will play into that. A lot of them have to do with how you're sort of doing business. The vast majority of criminal matters resolve. Finding a way to have those matters, which are going to resolve, resolve in a more timely manner and not in a way that it's on the courthouse steps and you lose a court day is a huge part of that. That requires all participants in the system, which includes, you know, the Crown prosecutors, the judges at various levels but also the defence bar, to be willing to sort of participate in that process. Again, it also requires those federal resources. So there are a number of things. We hope that we will start to see not just those average times to trial coming down – the average cases aren't the problem, right? It's the high-end cases. Those are the ones that we need to figure out what the problem is, too.

Mr. Fraser: Okay. Just kind of moving, you know, the same idea over to family courts, we're very thankful that there are judges even considering volunteering their time. Just on that question: how many judges are still volunteering their time in family courts?

Ms Ganley: I don't think we have those numbers. I think that, like, those justices would be keeping track of their own time. I mean, I would like to point out that those justices work very, very hard, and whether or not it's considered volunteering their time, they work long hours. They have, for the most part, a huge dedication to the people of Alberta, and they're willing to sort of sit both at the Provincial Court level and at the superior level. They're willing to sit long days in order to get matters resolved. They have been very, very willing to work with us on ways to – ultimately, I think what most of the evidence demonstrates is that there are some cases that are always going to have to go to court for family law, but the smaller you can make that number, the better it is for everyone because it's very damaging, especially for children, to go through that process.

Mr. Fraser: Just in that same vein, you know, the government has made a number of changes to the labour laws, so when we think about family courts and courts in general, how much has that affected compliance with the actual law? If a judge is going in on extra time, how will they get paid? That being seen as voluntary,

you can see the contradiction. If we were to do that even in the health care system, it's overloaded with people going in and volunteering. I don't think that unions and/or professional organizations would comply with that. Is there compliance? Are we making sure that we're not burning judges out, that they're not volunteering too much of their free time? Again, is there an issue with compliance with the new labour codes? The backlogs for family courts: have they been cleared? The 2017 family court wait times: just to get a half-day hearing in Calgary was 52 weeks, Edmonton 30 weeks; for five-day trials or less Calgary was 46 weeks, Edmonton a full year. What are the wait times now? Have labour laws constricted that, making it more difficult to access the courts just based on the changes in the labour laws?

Ms Ganley: Right. In terms of the Employment Standards Code, lawyers and judges as well tend to be exempted, sort of like doctors and a lot of professionals, so that wouldn't necessarily play into it. In general, I think those professionals tend to exceed those standards although we have had many conversations with the judiciary about ensuring that people are able to find some level of balance. I mean, you know what it's like. In these jobs we tend to work a lot. It's a dedication to the public – right? – so it feels good rather than bad most of the time, I would say.

In terms of our front line, sort of our court clerks and those types of employees, they are already, as you'll be familiar, represented by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. Usually, in most cases, those collective agreements already exceeded the minimum standards, so it wouldn't have had much of an impact.

9:20

Mr. Fraser: Okay. So has your office and the department given any kind of idea, you know, around expanding family custody mediation and focusing on those types of programs and/or when it comes to family courts, especially when there are custody issues? Are you working with groups that specifically research things like parental alienation – there's specifically somebody at Mount Royal College that does an excellent job on that – and how, again, mediation might be a better resource rather than actually occupying court time?

Ms Ganley: No. I think there is definitely agreement amongst everyone that mediation is always the best option. The question is: how do you design the system to sort of encourage that, particularly in light of the fact that these are normally people who are very upset with one another? You know, if everyone is feeling perfectly rational, I think they know that mediation is the best way to go, but sometimes we don't see those results, so it's a question of how to move to that. I don't think anyone disagrees that that's the end goal, more mediation. We have a number of different folks working. The reforming family justice project is working incredibly hard to figure out what those ways are in order to get folks out. We also have a number of different people that work as mediators. The Court of Queen's Bench: we've been having a lot of talks with them about getting additional legal counsel in order to help create more resolutions.

The Chair: Thank you.

At this point, as there are no other members present, I would like to invite members of the government caucus and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Member Drever, are you wanting to combine your time with the minister?

Drever: Yes.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Drever: Hello. Great to have you back for round two, and thank you for being here. As everyone knows, we passed Bill 26, An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis, and there's been a lot of discussion about how this is going to affect people's communities. I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for going to my constituency and talking with stakeholders in the community. We had a really productive conversation with police officers, community leaders, and business owners, and I think everyone left feeling a bit more comfortable with the legalization of cannabis. There's been a lot of interest in my constituency on the retail side. I think, actually, we just had this conversation yesterday about how there's going to be a possible dispensary beside my constituency office. That's interesting. With that said, cannabis legislation is on a lot of people's minds these days. Key strategy 1.3 on page 101 in your business plan addresses the need to implement the federal government's plan to legalize cannabis in 2018. I was just wondering how you're going to ensure that Albertans are safe in their communities once cannabis becomes legal.

Ms Ganley: Absolutely. That's a very interesting question. I think that was, certainly, one of our goals. You know, the federal government made this decision, and it's within their jurisdiction, so we will go along with it. I think our part in this is to ensure that when we do go through the process, we create a plan that reflects the values of Albertans. Albertans told us loud and clear that ensuring that they're safe on their roads and in their communities and in their workspaces is one of their main goals.

I think there are a couple of components there. We've certainly been working very closely with our police partners on this one. A lot of it has to do with setting up the system in such a way that we're ensuring that there isn't sort of flow happening into and out of the legal market, and a lot of that has to do with, you know, making sure we do proper background checks. That's one thing that the AGLC will be working with us on. In fact, we're going to be registering employees, so they will have to have some education and get their background check as well before they can even work at a store. So that's definitely one component of it.

Another big component of it is going to be ensuring safety on the roads. Now, obviously, we're still awaiting word from the federal government in terms of testing devices, but I think that'll be a big way to go. One of the interesting pieces that we've done already is that the federal government has brought in some new impaired driving laws, and we have moved our administrative sanctions to mirror those driving laws. We have a lot of evidence in terms of impaired driving. It is those administrative sanctions that have moved the needle the greatest amount. We're happy to have been able to put those in place to mirror those federal laws. So that's certainly one element of it. But hopefully at the end of the day, as legalization moves ahead, the more of the illegal market we can capture into the legal market, the less of it that is still out there sort of creating an incentive to create a danger to the public.

Drever: Yeah. I think that's really important, and I know it's on a lot of people's minds in my constituency. I do get a lot of questions about that. It's good to know about the background checks. I know that there is a lot of interest, like I said, on the retail side in my constituency, especially in Bowness. Good to know. I will be passing along that information.

Going back to key strategy 2.2 on page 102, it focuses on the interaction of vulnerable Albertans with the justice system. What steps have been taken to ensure that these individuals are respected and have access to the justice system in a fair and equitable manner?

Ms Ganley: There are a number of steps I think that we can take to ensure that folks are able to access the justice system. One of them has to do with, you know, some moves we made early on having to do with sort of setting up navigators so that there's: call, click, or come in. You can access the court system and ask basic questions about where to go and what to do. I don't know how many people have had the opportunity to go down to the courthouse, particularly in Calgary or, like, a really big area, but it's a giant building that can be, I think, very overwhelming for some folks, so it's good to have that ability to be able to ask one person where you're supposed to go in order to resolve your situation.

I think another piece of that has to do definitely with legal aid. One of the things we've done is increase legal aid funding significantly. I think we're actually approaching 40 per cent now in terms of the increase since we've been in government. A lot of that has to do with the fact that legal aid is a program for which people qualify based on financial need, and we've been seeing more folks qualify. That'll start to sort of turn around soon, but right now a lot of people are able to make that application, so that's good. I think it's important to note, too, that legal aid does help folks who are accused of a crime, but it also helps lots of other people. In that are also counsel for emergency protection orders and counsel for family law matters that ensure that if one person in a breakdown of a marriage has way more resources than the other person, that second person has access to representation as well. I think there are a number of components to this, but we do have to continue to work to make sure folks are protected through the justice system.

Actually, one of the very exciting newer initiatives that we have is that we've worked with AASAS to increase funding for victims of sexual assault so that they're able to access those counselling services. In one way it's a really good thing because the Me Too movement has brought a lot of this into the public realm, so people are talking about their experiences, but because they're talking about their experiences, we have a far greater number of people who are now seeking counselling, so that had resulted in some wait times. My ministry along with many others has been able to work together with AASAS to increase that funding.

Drever: Yeah. I just want to say thank you for that. You know, I think that was a really big deal. I was at that announcement. I've never been to an announcement where everyone in the room started to cry. It was really emotional, and it's going to have a huge impact on Albertans, for sure, in a very positive way.

While it is important for those that commit crimes to be brought to justice, it is also important that the victims of crimes are supported as they navigate the criminal justice system. Key strategy 2.2 on page 102 addresses this. I was just wondering: how is your ministry ensuring that victims of crime have the support as they navigate this complex system?

Ms Ganley: I kind of wandered into that in the last one, too. I mean, certainly, that grant that we were talking about to AASAS has been a big part of that. I think there are a number of different programs that do a great job of doing this, many of which are funded through our victims of crime fund.

As you'll no doubt be aware, the victims of crime fund has been the subject of a couple of different comments. We had an Auditor General report, and we have completed a lot of work in terms of the gaps analysis and figuring out not just – I mean, you can always spend money, but the question is: how are we spending money to achieve the greatest result? We've done a lot of work around that. We've of course had a more recent comment in terms of that from Roberta Campbell, who had looked at that system as well. So we're

trying to take some of that into account as we move forward, and hopefully we'll have more to say about that.

9:30

I did want to take the opportunity to comment on the fantastic folks. Certainly, we provide grants to victim-serving agencies through Justice and Solicitor General, but even despite that, many of the individuals who actually work in this area are volunteers. I did want to take the time to thank those individuals for their dedication and for their willingness to step up and to help those around them because I think that's what makes the province stronger at the end of the day.

Drever: Absolutely. Yeah. Thank you.

The third outcome, page 102 of your business plan, involves access to information. How are you working to ensure that those involved with the criminal, civil, or family branches of the justice system have access to information that they need in order to rectify their situations?

Ms Ganley: I think there are a lot of pieces to that. Some people are going to need legal advice, and if they're unable to obtain that on their own, we do have legal aid that's there for them.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

At this point in the rotation I would like to invite Mr. Orr from the Official Opposition and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Mr. Orr, are you wanting to combine your time with the minister?

Mr. Orr: Please, if I might.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I'd just like to say that I really do appreciate both the approach and the expertise that have come from the department. You've made a real effort to try and clarify a very multifaceted or maybe complex ministry, and I do appreciate the effort to try and make that clear. Thank you for that.

I'd like to go back, if I may, to line 6.5, the contract policing piece. That's the one that still leaves me searching for better understandings. I guess I'd like to start maybe on that piece by referring to the part – Ottawa provides, I understand, 30 per cent for national policing. I'm just wondering: is that amount in the budget anywhere, and if so, what line would it be on?

Ms Ganley: As I understand, it doesn't come through the budget. We provide our share, and that's what's reflected here, but Ottawa's 30 per cent won't be reflected in our budget. They have to move every time we move, so when we increased funding for rural crime, we increased funding to the RCMP, and Ottawa – I've already had the chance to speak with my federal counterpart – moved immediately to match that funding. So they've been pretty good partners on that.

Mr. Orr: Okay. Good. Just to try and follow that a little bit, I understand we have a contracted number of 1,560 police officers. If the contract is tied, 30 per cent of those would be 468 full-time equivalent officers. I guess my question, then, is: are these separate and distinct, or do provincial detachments just contribute 30 per cent of their time and resources to national duties?

Ms Ganley: It's not so much a matter of – I don't think they are usually segregated in quite that way. Essentially, we are required to provide policing for that portion of the province, and that's based

on the Police Act. So it's rural municipalities and urbans under 5,000 that the province pays for. The federal government sort of contributes a 30 per cent cost to that. There are some specific divisions that are different than this, but it's not generally the case that there are specific officers that are allocated to do federal stuff. There's a portion of our costs that sort of allocate to the budget, to sort of the central, you know, heavy crime unit in Ottawa, but with the exception of a few specific small units – and I'll leave this to be corrected if I'm incorrect – I don't think that generally we allocate funding that way.

Mr. Orr: Yeah. That's interesting, then. So how would the local detachments sort of track when they've spent 30 per cent on federal and 70 per cent on provincial? I don't know. I mean, I could see really interesting situations there where one borrows from the other. How do we keep a balance on that?

Ms Ganley: I don't think it's that they're necessarily set up in that way. What I'm seeing is that there are 1,560 PPSA members and civilian members. Plus, there are federal members.

I'm going to let Mr. Sweeney speak to the fine details on that one.

Mr. Sweeney: Yes. It's Bill Sweeney from the public security division. I'm still suffering from a cold, so please bear with me.

The 1,560 is members, but the RCMP Act characterizes or describes members, at the time the contract was signed, as both civilian members – those aren't public service employees. There are specialized functions that the RCMP performs in the dispatch centres: analysts, crime analysts, and police officers. I wanted to clarify that.

Previously, in the previous iteration of the contract, every RCMP member used to fill in a form called a C75D, which would describe the work that they did during the shift, whether it was federal or provincial duties, but it was found to be an inefficient way to conduct business because the form really was meaningless. In this current contract iteration both the parties, provincial and territorial partners and the federal government, acknowledge that the 70-30 split accurately reflects what a police officer does in the course of their duties attending to both provincial and federal responsibilities. So there's no record keeping today.

Mr. Orr: Oh. Wow. Okay. Well, thank you for that clarification. That definitely helps.

Let's focus, then, if I may, Madam Chair, just on the provincial portion at the moment and leave the federal piece out. Just as further clarification, 1,560 officers and civilians at roughly \$115,000 apiece is \$234 million. That leaves \$22 million from the budget total contract price of \$256 million and change. What is that additional \$22 million used for?

Ms Ganley: Again, I mean, they estimate the cost of an officer, right? It's not a perfect fit. Generally there would be a number of things that they would need in addition. Obviously, they'd have a lot of equipment, cars. The cars usually have computers in them. Detachments: I think that the actual physical detachment is paid for under Infrastructure. But there would be a bunch of things within the detachment that they use on a daily basis. We normally call those things supplies and services, but there'll be a portion of the contract that attributes to that as well.

Mr. Orr: Okay. To look at the same subject maybe from a slightly different angle, then, the \$256 million roughly divided by \$115,000 actually comes to 2,227 officers, but we're contracted at 1,560. I just wonder: are the potential extra 667 officers, then, taken up in services and supplies, which was your phrase?

Ms Ganley: Yeah. I would say that most of it would be supplies and services, so having to do with vests, guns, cars, those sorts of things. I mean, obviously, there's way more to it than that, but those would be the examples that spring to mind.

Mr. Orr: Yeah. There are lots of things, yeah.

The rough number of \$115,000: I realize that we're talking somewhat in generalities here, but does that represent the 70 per cent of an officer's time that goes to provincial and that the total cost of an officer would be another 30 per cent for the federal portion of it, or is that \$115,000 roughly meant to cover both the 70 per cent provincial and the 30 per cent federal?

9:40

Ms Ganley: I think they're estimated at \$156,000, roughly, for both the provincial and federal, but again that's an estimate cost, right? So depending on where you are in the structure, you'll actually get paid ...

Mr. Orr: Yeah. I'm not going to hold you to specific numbers. All right. That clarifies it: roughly \$115,000 for the provincial, \$156,000 for the combined number. Does that seem right?

Ms Ganley: Sorry. Just give me one second. I think we've got the wrong number.

So \$150,000, not \$115,000, is apparently the provincial portion, and I'm pretty sure I said \$115,000. That would be my fault.

Mr. Orr: So \$150,000 for the provincial figure plus another \$30,000.

Ms Ganley: It's 150, not 115.

Mr. Orr: Yeah, 150. I did that just this morning. I reversed two numbers.

So \$150,000 plus the 30 per cent is the real cost, then, of both the federal and the provincial.

Ms Ganley: That's all in, so that's including supplies and services. Sorry.

Mr. Orr: Okay. That does help me understand a little bit how that's all put together. I think that's important. I think I can leave that for now.

I'll turn the rest of the time over to Angela, okay? [Mr. Orr's speaking time expired] Sorry.

The Chair: Thank you.

At this point in the rotation I would like to invite Mr. Fraser from the Alberta Party and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Mr. Fraser, are you wanting to combine your time?

Mr. Fraser: Yes, please. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Fraser: Minister, I just want to go back to a little bit around human resources and some of the things we were talking about. One of the things I wanted to ask: how many human resource complaints were lodged in your department in 2017? Do you have a number for that?

Ms Ganley: I don't know that I have a number on specific human resources complaints. I'm going to seek from my officials whether or not that's even something that we can – I know there were a number of grievances filed through AUPE in terms of workload, grievances having to do with court clerks, which is why we've taken

the step of filling those vacancies and adding some new positions. But in terms of the total department I will seek some advice on whether we're allowed to disclose that number, and I will get back to you.

Mr. Fraser: Right. It's, again, just in the interests of the capable people that are doing the work in Alberta Justice. You know, the conversation that's out there is that it's taking up to seven or eight months from when a complaint is lodged to when the complainant is even interviewed. Do you have an average time from when a complaint is lodged to its conclusion? Do you have a number for that?

Ms Ganley: I don't think we keep averages on that because each case is so individualized. It's sort of a difficult thing to average. I do know, like I've said, that we've had some problems with some workplace grievances. Obviously, I can't speak specifically to the ones that you raised. Usually for all our employees who are represented under the collective agreement, which is a fairly large proportion of those employees, those complaints will go by way of a process which is outlined in the collective agreement. I'm not sure exactly what the steps are, but there are usually a series of steps that have to be gone through in a specific order, and they usually have timelines around them. I don't know what those are for our specific collective agreement or whether I can disclose them, but I can definitely look into that.

Mr. Fraser: Is the process the same for lodging a complaint from somebody who's unionized and somebody who's management exempt?

Ms Ganley: I would imagine that it isn't, but I don't know. It's not quite the same, because the union will have bargained for a certain process whereas the process for exempt employees will be the process that we have delineated.

Mr. Fraser: Right. You can understand why I'm asking these questions. Obviously, if there's a delay in court time and we have a workforce, whether they're management, exempt, or unionized – if there's nobody there to fill those positions, then we're shutting down court time. Obviously, that's an issue. Is that actually happening, and/or how much overtime is being run that affects the budget, where that money could be put back into other areas of justice that create efficiencies?

Ms Ganley: Yeah. That's actually a very good question. We have been working on this with respect to corrections since I took office. When I initially came into this ministry, one of our biggest problems with cost overruns in corrections was the fact that we had huge amounts of overtime because there hadn't been hiring done in quite a long time. You're absolutely right. That was super inefficient, and it was extremely hard on our employees. We've been working to rectify that in that area for quite a while.

We do know we've been having some issues with respect to our front-line clerks in court areas. That sort of constraint can have serious impacts on folks. Ultimately, it has a more negative impact down the line, and that's why we're looking to invest money to fill up those positions. I think hiring has been under way for some time for those. We've also added a few additional clerk positions to deal with bail because we've been having some trouble in that area.

But you're absolutely right. Those are certainly concerns, and we're definitely alive to them. In corrections, which had our biggest problem with that, I think we've managed to push that back to a certain degree. Obviously, I mean, you'll know; you were a first responder as well. You know that sometimes there's nothing that

can be done. It's just the situation. But for the most part we try to keep that overtime down as much as possible because it's better for everyone.

Mr. Fraser: Right. Now, just again relating to prosecutors, especially in central Alberta, is there a record keeping of how many of them are off on sick leave and/or mental stress leave because their caseloads are so high? Do you keep a record of that?

Ms Ganley: There will be records within the department. There are only a certain number of prosecutors in every office, and when you get down to a very specific level, essentially we'd be disclosing personal information about individuals if we were to tell you who's there and who isn't. We do know that there's a concern with prosecutors working hard. That's why we invested in the last budget and then again in this budget in additional prosecution resources. We're trying to make sure we balance the need to not grow the size of the public service against the need to ensure that people are not being overworked. That can be a difficult balance to strike, but I think we're getting closer.

Mr. Fraser: Right. Thank you for that.

I just want to follow up on indigenous issues. The day before yesterday I asked the question about the \$2 million in 2015 to consolidate data about missing and murdered indigenous women across different police services. Were you able to find out where that report is at yet?

Ms Ganley: We may have been. It appears that we're into phase 2 now. The missing and murdered indigenous women initiative includes an environmental scan of all police services to better understand their similarities. A final report and video were created, and it was distributed to communities. But it looks like there's a second phase under way as well. I'll provide you a response in writing, I think, because it's probably a better way to go with that.

Mr. Fraser: Yeah. And if you can just let us know where to find those reports, that would be great.

How is the current budget supporting the principles of restorative justice right now?

Ms Ganley: We do have some restorative justice grants that come through. We are looking at that. There are some that come through the victims of crime fund as well. We are looking at sort of trying to expand that program and working with partners to expand that program. We're hoping to have more to say about that soon. But you're right. Restorative justice has been demonstrated – I mean, in the criminal system it requires that all participants be willing to participate. They have to voluntarily enter, both the complainant and the accused, but it can have some very beneficial outcomes, and it results in higher satisfaction. So we are definitely looking very closely at ways to expand that.

9:50

Mr. Fraser: Great. Does your department have any specific goals in respect of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission or the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples? How does that work in your department, and what kinds of goals are you focused on?

Ms Ganley: That impacts my department in a huge number of ways. Indigenous individuals are not only more likely to be incarcerated; they're also more likely to be the victims of crime. So I think Justice needs to take a very hard look at that. One of them, certainly, is that we've been working on our Gladue reports, and we've gotten our numbers, I think, up to 91 per cent now that are

produced within the six weeks that the court requires. That enables the court to take the circumstances of the indigenous offender into account. I think that's a very good way to move forward.

We're also working with many of our partners. One of the ways to ensure that you're not seeing overrepresentation of certain groups is to make sure that you're sort of focused on how it is that those individuals are coming into the system. We do know that we had in remand a lot of short-stay individuals, and I think that even those individuals were disproportionately indigenous people. So we do need to look at how and why it is that that's happening.

You know, when you have someone who's staying in remand for only one to four days, that person, obviously, isn't presenting a danger to the public. They didn't need to be in jail. It's just that somehow the system has wrongly categorized them. We're working on ways to ensure that we're not sort of asking for low cash bails or other reasons that those people are getting into the system. That's certainly one of them, but I could go on about this all day. Did you want me to?

Mr. Fraser: Okay. No. Again, how does your budget address those responsibilities?

The Chair: Thank you.

At this point, as there are no other members in the room, I would like to invite members from the government caucus. I believe Member Drever will be speaking for the next 10 minutes with the minister. Do you want to combine your time?

Drever: Yes. Also, I'll be ceding some of my time to MLA Westhead.

The Chair: Thank you. Go ahead.

Drever: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Chair. I was interested in key strategy 3.3 on page 103 and alternative dispute resolution in particular. It seems like it could be an effective means to address court backlogs. I'm just wondering if that's the case.

Ms Ganley: I think it's absolutely the case. I actually think that moving to alternative dispute resolution not only addresses our issue with respect to court backlogs; it also significantly brings down the cost of the justice system and is better for the participants. There's a lot of evidence, particularly in the area of family law, that going through the court system doesn't result in the best outcomes, and it can be very traumatizing not only for the participants but often for their children, which can have lifelong impacts as they grow up. I think a focus on moving to greater alternative dispute resolution in a number of areas is absolutely critical not only in the family law area but also in the criminal law area.

I think that one of the things the Supreme Court was trying to tell us with the Jordan decision was that we need to do business a little bit differently and we need to be willing to consider alternatives. You know, the system is a very good one at adjudicating sort of facts, but we need to always be willing to look at other systems that might be better in some instances.

Drever: Yeah. I definitely agree with that.

Talking about the Jordan decision, I understand that the Jordan case had an impact on the criminal justice system and the courts. Key strategy 3.1 on page 102 addresses this. I know that you've already kind of talked about it, but can you give us more information on what your ministry is doing to address the outcome of this case?

Ms Ganley: Oh, boy. There are so many things. There are a number of things, I think, that are necessary here. One of them is exactly what I've been saying, that we need to sort of be doing a better job of ensuring that we're trying to resolve matters at the earliest possible point. Certainly, the Crown prosecution service is working very, very hard to assess cases at an earlier point so that they understand what the strength of their case is and they understand sort of where to go with that and are able to try to resolve matters with the other side as early as possible.

You know, there are a couple of other components to that. I think resources is definitely one. In our criminal system the most serious and most violent cases tend to be heard in the superior courts, so in Alberta in the Court of Queen's Bench. Those are often the cases that are of greatest concern to us. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to appoint those justices, so we have been working with our federal partners to try to get more people appointed. Now, that isn't to say that they haven't been working on it. We've seen a fair number of appointments out of them although we would like to see them, I think, coming a little more quickly. But they have been willing to recognize the shortage of justices in Alberta and recognize that we need those positions filled, which is great. It's a huge step forward from the former federal government, so that is really good to see.

It's also going to be a matter of working together. We've had a number of federal-provincial-territorial meetings around this. It's going to be a matter of working together to look at ways to alter the Criminal Code so that it's a little easier to navigate. You know, there are a lot of pieces in there that are sort of relics from another time. In fact, because it hadn't been amended in so long, there are a lot of what they refer to as zombie laws still in there, which are provisions which are no longer enforced because they've been deemed unconstitutional for various reasons. So there are a bunch of challenges with the Criminal Code, and I think we've started to see some moves working to address those. That will help, too.

It's a slow ship to turn, but it is really good to see a federal government that is willing to acknowledge that it is a shared responsibility. Their predecessors weren't willing to acknowledge that, and that meant that all we could do was add more resources. There was no way to find efficiencies or fewer ways to find efficiencies, and now that we can do both, I think we'll start moving a lot faster.

Drever: Yeah. I definitely agree. You know, for myself, I'm part of a homicide support group, and this is brought up a lot, just the backlog in the courts and how they have to wait to go to trial. I think that with the Jordan clause it definitely is an improvement on that. I want to thank you for working really hard with the federal government to make sure that we can appoint more justices to make sure that we can get to these cases. It's very emotional for a lot of people in Alberta who are dealing with, well, in my experience anyway, a crime against their loved one. I just wanted to acknowledge that and thank you.

Speaking of the Jordan clause, working collaboratively is essential in a post-Jordan era to ensure that the priorities are balanced effectively. Again in regard to key strategy 3.1 how is this collaboration being encouraged and managed?

Ms Ganley: Yeah. I think, definitely, working collaboratively is one of the things that is most important in the post-Jordan era. I think sometimes people don't realize how much of a change this is. The justice system has kind of been grinding increasingly slowly over the course of decades. It's sort of been travelling in one direction. Then the Supreme Court steps in and says: "That's it. Back off. Go the other way." That was a huge change, I think, for

everyone involved. There is still, as there is in every system, a certain I don't want to say resistance, but it seems to have a certain inertia when it's going in a certain direction. I think that in working to operate in a more cohesive and integrated manner to co-ordinate and align and work effectively, we'll be able to sort of balance all the competing demands. I mean, the difficulty with the criminal system and the reason that it's sort of slowing over time is because it's trying to balance some of the most fundamental things we have. It's trying to balance the safety of the entire community against the rights of individuals, which is, I think, a real challenge for it. We've been, I think, kind of perceiving those things as at odds with each other in the criminal justice system for a long time, but I don't know that they necessarily are in a hundred per cent of cases. Certainly, there are going to be competing demands, but I think we can find ways to work together to improve both goals simultaneously without sort of creating this slowing down.

Thank you.

10:00

Drever: Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

Moving on to outcome 2 on page 102, it talks about the criminal justice system, that it can be difficult to navigate for unsophisticated litigants as well as families who are drawn into the system. I was just wondering: what is your ministry doing to help these individuals to navigate the system?

Ms Ganley: Yeah. That's a great question. As I was, I think, saying in response to an earlier question, sometimes the courthouse can be a bit of an overwhelming place for families, so I think we need to continue to make sure that it is more responsive to their needs. It's a pretty complex system, and people are experts in their own lives, not necessarily experts in that system. I think we need to ensure that they're able to understand the complexity and the nuance as they move through it. I think, you know, part of that is ensuring that we're resourcing different forms of dispute resolution, part of that has to do with ensuring that we're helping folks to navigate the system, and a lot of it has to do with ensuring that we're properly resourcing.

I'm sure you've heard a lot of talk around resourcing the justice system. We have, in this year's budget, put in to cover – we're already in the process of filling a number of vacancies with court clerks, and we're looking to hire a few more. I think that that is definitely a critical step. It's a challenging balance, you know, having an economic downturn, where the pull on those resources is quite a lot higher at the same time that revenue drops is a bit of a challenge. I wish I could go back 20 years and . . .

The Chair: Thank you.

At this point I would like to invite Mrs. Pitt and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Mrs. Pitt, are you wanting to combine your time with the minister?

Mrs. Pitt: Please.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you. Good morning, Minister. The government of Alberta's website about help for victims of crime notes that crime which involves a victim includes "assault, theft, abuse, [and] property damage." It goes on to say that "victims of crime can get a monetary benefit to acknowledge victimization," but theft and property damage are not included among the eligible offences in the victims of crime regulation. So what services are available for victims of crime regarding property damage?

Ms Ganley: The victims of crime program has sort of two different elements. One of them is that financial benefits element, which has a bunch of sort of statutory brackets around it, shall we say, and people make application to get a financial benefit, which they can use however they see fit. Whether it's that they've had time off work due to their injuries or they've had additional medical costs or psychological costs, they can use it to sort of defer some of those costs.

The other part of the program is victim services groups. We provide grants to those groups, and they are normally operated – there are some employees, but by and large, those are fantastic volunteers out there in the community, who can meet with victims and sort of discuss them and support them and support them in going through the process. Anyone who has been a victim of crime can contact their local victim services . . .

Mrs. Pitt: Sorry, Minister. I don't mean to interrupt you. I'm asking specifically in regard to property crimes. It seems like there is a lot of, you know, physical or psychological, but is there anything for victims of property crimes?

Ms Ganley: Well, like any other victim of crime, they are able to reach out to their victim services units. There are a number of those. Some of them are police operated; some of them are community operated. Some of them do deal with specific things like domestic violence, so obviously one of those wouldn't be a good place to reach out to. But those victim services are, to the best of my understanding, available to all victims of crime.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. So specifically in regard to property damage is there anything for property damage?

Ms Ganley: Are you saying: is there a specific victim-serving agency that deals only with property damage?

Mrs. Pitt: Not a victim service agency. Is there any financial benefit to those that have had property damage?

Ms Ganley: I think that would be by way of a restitution order.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. So that is something payable through the victims of crime fund?

Ms Ganley: No. That's a separate order.

Mrs. Pitt: Can you explain that?

Ms Ganley: What will happen is that the victim in the case will forward to – I don't know if it goes to the police or directly to the Crown prosecutor, but they indicate what their sort of financial loss is with respect to that, and then the prosecutor seeks a restitution order, which is part of the sentence.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. I just would like to point out that given our current rural crime rates specifically in regard to property crime, which are on the rise, there are a lot of victims out there right now that have been victimized multiple times and are experiencing significant financial hardship and would have to go through a fairly lengthy court process to receive any sort of monies in return to help them recoup some of the costs involved with these crimes. So it's a little bit misleading that the government's website says that there's help for victims of crime and that it includes property damage, but it doesn't have any monetary benefit allowed for victimization. I don't know if the Auditor General has recommended that perhaps there be a program in place specifically for property damage in regard to this fund. I would like to say on the record in recommendation to you that

that should be something that should be considered moving forward.

There's a lot of money in this fund, and it's not going out where it needs to be. We have wonderful – and I've said this before – victim services organizations in this province that are fundraising to help victims, but there's a lot of money sitting in that fund that's not going out. We need some action on this. It's been three years under your watch where you've had the ability to make these decisions. I know you've said that there's an announcement coming soon. But I would like to point out that it's been three years. The Official Opposition has been asking about this fund for quite a while, and I know there are victim services agencies right across this province that are extremely frustrated that we've asked them to go fund raise so that they can take care of those people that have been victimized.

Ms Ganley: No. Absolutely. Those victim services agencies are doing a fantastic job. We meet with them regularly. We didn't want to come in and tell them how to operate, so we did want to take the time to meet with them and to talk with them about how the needs are met. You're right. We have had this problem for three years. I might point out that the previous government had it for seven years as well. But, yes, you're absolutely right. The fact that they didn't do anything is not an impetus for us to not do anything, which is why we have been having those conversations with victim-serving agencies. But the Auditor General's recommendations, again, were that we take the time to figure out what the needs of victims are and how to best meet them in advance of figuring that out, so we did want to take the time to do that work. I do meet regularly with victim-serving agencies, and I do know that there is a level of frustration about the length of time that this work is taking.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. We'll be holding you to the fire on this one, Minister.

As was mentioned on Tuesday, the revenue from the victims of crime fund is more related to traffic offences – that's where the income is coming in – and the proceeds of crime fund received forfeited funds from federally prosecuted Criminal Code offences. So are we seeing an increase in revenue in the proceeds of crime fund?

Ms Ganley: Yes. Those are two different things. We have seen increases in the victims of crime fund. In terms of the proceeds of crime . . .

Mrs. Pitt: And where would I find it, I guess, while you're at it?

Ms Ganley: We're going to get Bill Sweeney up again because we apparently like to make him walk with a cold.

10:10

Mr. Sweeney: There are actually two streams of revenue that come to the province. Civil forfeiture, which is a provincial initiative: the revenue that comes to us is roughly about \$2 million a year, which is used for crime prevention and similar types of grant programs. Proceeds of crime is a sharing agreement that we have with Canada, so it's using the Criminal Code legislation, forfeiture of proceeds of crime, and we don't know from year to year what the revenue will be. Some years, actually, there has been none. Some years we'll get a million and a half from the federal government.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. Thank you.

Do you have any additional plans for this fund?

Ms Ganley: Sorry. Is that the criminal forfeiture fund, not the civil?

Mrs. Pitt: The civil forfeiture.

Ms Ganley: That goes out usually by way of grants. We did a call for grants. It's really difficult for me to remember the timing, but we did a call for grants of about \$2 million, probably. I don't want to give you a time frame because I'm not going to remember. Every couple of years, roughly, there's a call for folks to make applications to that program, and then a number of grants go out. I can get you when the last call for grants went out and what those grants were and where they went. I can provide a list of that.

Mrs. Pitt: Is that kind of based on, like, if there are a million and a half dollars that year that came in through civil forfeitures, that's the grant money available sort of in the next year? Would that be accurate?

Ms Ganley: Normally, rather than having it come in and go out, because it goes up and down so much each year, what we get into it – it's got a certain amount of reserve in it – when it gets to a certain level, we'll just do a call for a certain number of grants, and then we'll distribute the money. It's not like the victims of crime fund, where it's sort of evenly regulated every single year. It kind of goes up and down a little bit more.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. That makes sense. Thank you.

Your performance measure on page 102, 2(a), the "percentage of victims satisfied with services provided by employees and volunteers within the criminal justice system": does this measure include and account for victims of crime whose perpetrators are not charged?

Ms Ganley: I don't believe so.

The Chair: Thank you.

At this point I would like to invite Mr. Fraser and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Are you wanting to combine your time?

Mr. Fraser: Yes, Madam Chair. Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Fraser: Minister, we've talked a little bit about making the justice system more efficient and easier for people to navigate so that those efficiencies, you know, can come to fruition. One of those important aspects is making sure that legal aid is accessible to those who actually need it. Your budget line item support for Legal Aid on page 192 of the estimates holds Legal Aid funding flat from the previous year. What's the rationale for keeping it flat this year?

Ms Ganley: It doesn't actually hold it flat. It's going up another \$7.9 million. Now, admittedly it went up in-year as well. If you look at budget to budget, there's an increase, if you were looking at forecast to budget, because we realized in-year that we needed to supply a little bit more money. We've been trying to do a lot of work around Legal Aid to determine where their costs are, and in fact we have, I think, some recommendations from the Auditor General with respect to that one as well. Yeah; with budget over budget there has been an increase, and we will have to continue to monitor that situation just because (a) there are a number of new initiatives that we're looking at, and (b) demand in the program is often just based on who qualifies. Since we've come into office, I think the increase has been almost 40 per cent.

Mr. Fraser: Right. In regard to who qualifies, what kind of education is being done to make sure that people are actually aware that they qualify for legal aid?

Ms Ganley: I mean, we do a number of attempts to get information out to the public, but I don't know that – I think usually the way in which people find that out, from my experience anyway, has been when they come for a first appearance and they speak to duty counsel. Duty counsel would usually let them know that they can make an application to Legal Aid, and then Legal Aid will make the determination.

Mr. Fraser: Okay; so it's predominantly just duty counsel then that is kind of the go-between?

Ms Ganley: That's my understanding. Sometimes a judge will tell someone that they should make application, sometimes a prosecutor will. It just sort of depends on the individual. The information is publicly available on the website, but of course people won't necessarily seek it of their own initiative. So a lot of times it is participants within the system that are advising an individual that they should make such an application.

Mr. Fraser: Right. Now, in terms of rural and remote Alberta what is being done to make sure that those folks understand that they have access to legal aid? How many people actually use legal aid, you know, in those remote rural areas of Alberta or rural Alberta in general? If there are challenges with that, what's being done to address that?

Ms Ganley: I don't have all the information on that one, and the reason is that Legal Aid is a separate entity, and there's sort of a really good reason for that. Ostensibly the way the system is set up, I'm kind of the prosecuting agency, so it would be inappropriate for me to interfere too deeply into Legal Aid's business. We provide them with a grant, and we do have a lot of conversations around sort of the services we'd like to see and how we'd like them to operate. But in terms of very specific things like where people are making applications and how many of those are being approved, we don't keep that information because it wouldn't be appropriate for us to have it.

Mr. Fraser: Right. Now, just in terms of kind of the opioid crisis – you know, everybody has kind of surmised that that is leading to the additional issues with rural crime – how many folks that are arrested for these rural crime issues in terms of theft of property are first-time offenders? It's more than just a criminal issue for them; it's a mental issue, it's an abuse issue. Again, it seems to me that legal aid and maybe some other forum of kind of justice would be more applicable there to make sure that these people are being dealt with more appropriately in terms of their mental health, addiction, that sort of thing, rather than going to the system.

Ms Ganley: I think you're absolutely right. There's actually a lot more to that than legal aid. A lot of our police partners – I have to give them credit – are sort of very advanced in this progressive understanding of how the justice system ought to work. In a lot of cases the individual officers will themselves be referring out to services. But one of the things we're doing, especially in rural areas, with respect to our RCMP contract is the integrated crime reduction units, what they do, in addition to focusing on those prolific offenders who are sort of, shall we say, frequently and intentionally victimizing members of the public. Some folks will be people who are committing crimes to feed an addiction. Those integrated crime reduction units, the point of that sort of more proactive policing is to allow those folks to be identified and potentially linked up with services.

The Crown prosecution service also has a mental health diversion program as well as an alternative measures program, so those sorts

of diversions are a very cost-effective way to get folks into other areas of the system. But at the end of the day, in order to move them to those other areas, we have to be making those investments in things like mental health supports, in things like affordable housing because housing is often sort of one of the underlying drivers on a number of factors.

Mr. Fraser: Again, I know that you don't want to interfere with Legal Aid, and that sounds appropriate. I just want to make sure that the grants for Legal Aid are, I guess, again, appropriate for rural Alberta or, you know, reach parity with what's happening in urban centres to make sure that legal aid is equally accessible to those in rural Alberta. Are you keeping stats on that, making sure that that's a measure in all fairness?

Ms Ganley: What we do is that we deliver the grant to Legal Aid, so it just goes as one grant. It's not for different areas. It goes as one grant, and then they provide the services. Again, it's on a qualification basis regardless of where the person lives. So whether they live rural or urban or wherever else they live, they're able to make that application. There is, I would imagine, sometimes difficulty retaining counsel in certain areas, but that's probably typical of professionals. We sometimes have difficulty seeing doctors get into certain areas. But as I understand it, Legal Aid does in general a fairly good job of getting counsel on a file when they are – when somebody qualifies, Legal Aid will work to ensure they're providing counsel regardless of where the individual is.

Mr. Fraser: Right. We've talked about some of the crime investigation units that recognize some people that have addictions and that sort of thing. When it comes to people that are actually imprisoned or in remand, how are you working with Health to make sure that they are getting the appropriate mental health and addictions treatment that they need?

10:20

Ms Ganley: I think we're working to ramp up some of those programs even now. I'll speak to some personal experience. If you've ever had the opportunity to attend the Edmonton Remand Centre, they have Alberta Health Services right on-site. So that provides them with the opportunity to deal with the health and the mental health needs of the individuals directly. But, certainly, we're looking to expand some of those programs. It can be a little more challenging in remand because someone hasn't been sentenced yet. Once they're in a sentence facility, you can sort of mandate certain types of treatment, but in a remand facility, because the individual hasn't been sentenced yet, it's on an as-requested basis. But we're starting to see more people coming forward because they're spending longer in remand; more people come forward to look for those services.

We're also looking to put in place additional programs having to do with methadone and suboxone, opioid-dependency treatments, by prescription in Calgary and Edmonton.

Mr. Fraser: Okay. Given that there are recent stories of alleged sexual misconduct at Alberta correctional facilities, what is your office and your staff doing and where in your budget would we be able to look at that you're, you know, taking steps to protect correctional staff in these facilities?

Ms Ganley: I think what you're referring to is an incident at a federal prison in Edmonton, so obviously they would be taking those steps.

Mr. Fraser: Okay. But even that it's highlighted in terms of the provincial aspect of it.

Ms Ganley: Absolutely. We've actually been working extremely closely with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, who represents those individuals, to work on a number of these issues. They have had for many years some serious concerns about their health and safety in a number of ways. We continue to work with them to ensure that they have access to what they need.

Mr. Fraser: Okay. Well, thanks so much for your time. I appreciate it.

Ms Ganley: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

At this point I would like to invite Mr. Westhead from government caucus and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Mr. Westhead, are you wanting to combine your time?

Mr. Westhead: Yes, please.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Westhead: Well, thank you very much. Thank you, Minister, and all your staff for being here today. I know we've got some really important topics that we're discussing, and I really appreciate the opportunity to ask some questions.

I want to go back to the victims of crime and specifically outcome measure 2(a), that deals with the ministry's success in supporting victims in their interactions with the justice system and the satisfaction that they receive. You know, we've talked a little bit about victim services organizations earlier this morning, but I wanted to sort of point out some of the unique circumstances and challenges that they deal with in my constituency.

For example, in the Bow Valley, in Banff and Canmore, we get a lot of tourists at hotels, and unfortunately there are sometimes tourists that get victimized, and, you know, there can be domestic violence situations as well. Of course, there's a resident population in Banff, but there's also quite a large transient population in terms of tourists and workers coming in and out. The victim services organization there does fantastic work, helping tourists and stuff. They're away from their homes. You know, sometimes there have been situations where there's been a domestic situation and one of the partners gets left there without a vehicle, so they really get stuck. The victim services organizations help them out in these really difficult circumstances. I really want to applaud them for the work that they do.

They've talked to me and discussed some of the struggles that they have, and I know that the ministry is working hard to address those. Outcome measure 2(a) talks about the quality of services that are provided by staff and volunteers. With those things in mind, I'm just wondering if you can tell us – you know, of course, prosecuting criminals is important, but the victims of crime also require particular care – a little bit about the actions that the department is planning to take to achieve next year's target.

Ms Ganley: Absolutely. I think a lot of that has to do with looking at the victims of crime fund. We do know that victim agencies are a bit stretched. I think there are some in certain areas where it's more of an issue than in other areas, so we definitely have to look at that. The sort of cap on those grants was set a number of years ago, so that's one of the things we're definitely looking at by way of our review in that area. I think it has been very nice of those victim agencies – they've been very, very good about working with

us, and I do know they have a lot of frustration about the length of time that things are taking. You know, I think they're right. I do think we need to move forward with this expeditiously. I'm hoping to have more to say about it very soon.

You know, you mentioned that you have a lot of tourists, and those folks may be from inside Alberta. There have been comments actually very recently made in another report having to do with victim services about the co-ordination throughout the province or about the sort of consistency of service level. So that's something that we're now looking at as well because I think that's going to be a big piece of it.

It's a pretty complex puzzle, and, as it turns out, it can be quite challenging to sort of scope. You know, what the Auditor General asks is: what are the needs of victims, how are you meeting them, and how are you measuring that? As it turns out, those are more complicated questions than I might initially have realized. So, you know, we are working to ensure that we're addressing those.

We hope to have more to say. But I think it'll be an ongoing process as we go forward. As a colleague of mine is so fond of saying: as we know better, we do better. Hopefully, we'll see the doing better soon.

Mr. Westhead: Well, thank you very much, Minister. I also know that the Cochrane and area victim services does an excellent job as well. You know, of course, the town of Cochrane is a large town, but they also service the outlying areas like Morley and the Ghost valley and the summer village of Waiparous and that kind of thing. They struggle with travelling and also with the Stoney Nakoda Nation there, you know, having good relationships and knowing that victim services is there to support them. They do excellent work in trying to establish and maintain those relationships. I just want to applaud them, too, for the work that they do.

I guess I also want to talk a little bit about the touchpoint for the justice system, which is whether people have been satisfied with the police work that's being done. Performance measure 1(b) on page 101 shows that 82 per cent of Albertans were satisfied with the work that the police had done in 2016-17. You know, with the rise in rural crime, especially from what I've heard in my constituency, people know that the police are there to support them, and they feel that when they call the police, they get the kind of response that they want. They're also quite pleased about the increase in funding for more RCMP officers. I think it's also pretty brilliant in terms of hiring civilian officers to do reports so that the police can get out from behind their desks. I'm just wondering if you can tell us a little bit more about satisfaction measures and performance measure 1(b) and how it compares to the last actuals reported in comparison and how we're looking towards achieving the goals for this coming year.

Ms Ganley: Absolutely. We're sitting at around 82 per cent, which is, I think, roughly on target. You know, it's worth noting that we can always do better, but I think our police partners do a fantastic job in some really challenging situations. A lot of it has to do with being able to support them to do the work that they do the best that they can. Our actuals: we have a number of years going back, and it looks like the last measure was at 81 per cent. Then they're sort of up and down in the mid-80s. I guess the lowest one on here seems to be from 2008-2009. By and large, I think people are satisfied with that work. But I think a lot of it, again, has to do with supporting those officers to be able to do the work. So I think these integrated crime reduction units will help police to be able to use their time in that proactive way. I know that that's how they would prefer to use their time. That enables them to identify those people who are, either intentionally or unintentionally, presenting sort of a

repeated challenge. When they are given the opportunity to do that, they're very good at linking people up with services.

10:30

Ultimately, the outcome that we're all looking for, whether it's the public, whether it's us in the ministry, or whether it's our police partners, is increased safety. That's the best possible outcome, and that is often achieved by getting folks into a treatment program or getting them housed or a number of other things. Sometimes it's best achieved through the criminal justice system, but I think that what we have been learning over the last number of years is that, you know, a number of cases in the criminal justice system, probably many or most even, were sort of best addressed somewhere else, and through underinvestment in those services over a number of years they've kind of fallen onto the criminal justice system. So that's one of them.

Those civilian employees will also allow folks to get out on the front lines, which is, I think, a really good way to use those resources, and that ultimately will work to make everyone safer. I think the sharing of intelligence that we're working on doing with respect to our other peace officers and with respect to civilian crime watch groups – and there are a number of them. In fact, there are more of them springing up in the province. It's really amazing to see that if you give people the opportunity to work to make their communities safer, they will almost always do that. I think those groups do fantastic work, and we're happy to see those happening, and we're hoping to work closely with them to ensure that information is flowing there as well.

Mr. Westhead: Great. Just in the little bit of time that we have remaining, I know one of the satisfaction measures that people ask about is deployment. They are pleased to see the additional resources, but can you just tell us a little bit about the deployment of those RCMP resources?

Ms Ganley: Ultimately, it will be the RCMP, as the sort of experts in the area, that will determine where the deployment will be best suited, but those crime reduction units will be able to move ...

The Chair: Thank you.

At this time I would like to invite Mr. Ellis and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Are you wanting to combine your time?

Mr. Ellis: Yeah. That's fine.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you very much. Minister, great to chat with you again. One of the concerns or, I guess, observations over the last little bit that has come up – Mr. Sweeney, when he stood up there and spoke, talked collectively about members. Of course, in my background, when we talk about members, we're referring to only the police officers, and then civilian staff are separate from that. I guess my question really has to do with: how many actual police officers, when we talk about the members in the RCMP, are we talking about here? Does somebody in your staff have any numbers? Maybe they can explain.

Ms Ganley: I can get that information for you. I think the shift in language has been to reflect the fact that our policing partners are – when we talk about our policing partners, we don't want to be excluding those civilian members because they do do incredibly important work. They do things that allow police officers to be back on the front lines, and they do a lot of analysis as well.

In terms of the specific number I think I'm going to have to undertake to chat with the RCMP and get back to you because they provide us . . .

Mr. Ellis: Sure. Civilian staff: let's be clear here. You know, police officers cannot do the job that they do without the civilian staff, but it is important for the public to understand – that's what my understanding was – that when we were talking about members, we were talking about actual police officers. I mean, I see numbers like Mr. Sweeney mentioned the other day, that "the RCMP is currently funded for 1,560 positions" and "1,580 right now as a consequence of their anticipation of growing in the next fiscal year." But with those positions, those members, in my head I'm thinking, "Oh, those are actually police officers," and they're not; they're a combination of police and civilians. I mean, I'd like to know what that is.

You know, just in regard to terminology, as far as real-life experience, I know we talk about our comms takers. Let me just say this. Our comms officers, whether it be in the RCMP or within the police service ranks or EMS or fire, provide a vital first point of contact to a victim in any particular case. But terminology is very important. If they refer to themselves as officers, it has to be very clear to that person on the other side of the phone that they are not speaking to an actually fully trained police officer. That is completely separate and has the potential to go down a very bad path, right?

Anyway, if some of your staff have provided those numbers, I'd certainly like to have them.

Ms Ganley: I think we're going to have to get back to you on those.

Mr. Ellis: Okay. Thank you.

The other question I have, I guess, refers to Tuesday's comments. "The RCMP is going to put 40 troops through Regina next year. That's 36 members per troop, so roughly 1,200 new officers will be trained," which is great, because that's supposed to disseminate throughout Canada. Is there any portion of those numbers that has been promised to Alberta?

Ms Ganley: Well, obviously, we're looking to get the 39 sworn members and then the additional 40 civilian members as well. I mean, they have said that they will have those members in place in Alberta.

In terms of specifically where they're coming through and which class, like, that kind of deployment is pretty internal nitty-gritty to the RCMP. We wouldn't have that information.

Mr. Ellis: Now, in factoring in those numbers, which, again, sound wonderful, has Alberta or have you consulted with your federal counterparts in regard to how many officers are anticipated to be retiring this year? I know that we always want to factor in, obviously, HR cases as well. You know, years of experience will give you a rough idea of what you could expect although I understand that there are variables and that it's not easy. Certainly, these are things that need to be planned. Has that been taken into consideration as well?

Ms Ganley: The RCMP are definitely taking it into consideration. I don't want to necessarily speak for them, but in conversations that I have had with them, I think they are very alive to the fact that we will be seeing retirements. I had heard someone, an RCMP member, say just the other day that the days of a full 35 years of service are perhaps coming to an end. They're very aware that the sort of human resources reality is not the same as it used to be, and they're definitely attuned to that. I think the reason they're

putting so many individuals through the training program and recruiting so heavily is because they know exactly that that's going to be the case.

Mr. Ellis: Yeah. There has been, we'll say, a shift in the workforce as far as, you know, thought processes. Like, for me, when I started, I probably would have done the job for free, quite frankly, but I know that that's a bit of a difference to this new generation right now.

Are you anticipating or have you had discussions with the RCMP in regard to some of our more rural areas? When I say rural, you know, maybe rural and remote, I guess, areas. Are they anticipating any sort of issues in regard to staffing any of these areas, and are they also possibly considering any changes to their deployment model for those remote areas?

10:40

Ms Ganley: Again, not wanting to speak for them, they are definitely alive, I think, to the concerns and have been for a number of years. This is not a new problem that has just arisen. There has been a problem getting professionals of various sorts into some of the more rural and remote areas, and I think the RCMP is definitely alive to that. They have a number of strategies, that I won't go into intense detail on because they're their strategies, to ensure that they're able to get people into those positions, and I am confident that they work hard to make sure that that's happening.

Mr. Ellis: Thanks, Minister.

If we can just shift to the Crown prosecutors. I think I was looking at lines 4.1 to 4.4, covering Alberta Crown prosecutors. You know, obviously, you've put aside \$2 million. That's great. It's great to have more money to hire these folks, that obviously have a very important role to play in the judicial system. Have you been experiencing any issues regarding the hiring of these individuals, really, because of the wage freeze that is currently imposed?

Ms Ganley: I think that that freeze – my conversations with the association have indicated that it's not so much a problem in terms of hiring because they will be hired in at a level corresponding to their years at the bar; it's more of a concern in terms of retention. The challenge is that obviously there's been a wage freeze of non-union employees pretty much for the entire term of this government, but there were also three or four years under the previous government in which they were frozen in a similar way. So now some folks that have been loyal to the government of Alberta are quite far behind as a result of the actions of our government and previous governments, and that, I think, does create a challenge. I've certainly heard from them in terms of that issue, and I think it's something that we're monitoring closely in terms of how to move forward with that. Right now I do still have great confidence in the abilities of our prosecutors to get the job done, but we need to keep an eye on that retention.

Mr. Ellis: Right. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm assuming that you're in the process of hiring these individuals that, hopefully, will be deployed into the rural communities. When do you anticipate . . .

The Chair: Thank you.

For the next 10 minutes I would like to invite Mr. Westhead from the government caucus and the minister to speak. Are you wanting to combine your time?

Mr. Westhead: Yes, please.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Westhead: Great. Thank you very much. We kind of left off last time talking a little bit about deployment of resources, and we didn't have a lot of time to delve into that, so I wonder if we could take this opportunity to do that. I know that key strategy 1.2 on page 101 talks about engaging with everyday Albertans to combat crime. You know, a common question I get is on deployment. I know that the RCMP is responsible for the deployment, but I just wonder if you could elaborate on that and kind of tell us what factors go into decision-making about deployment. People trust the RCMP, and they'd just like to know a little bit more about how the resources get decided upon.

Ms Ganley: There are a number of factors they'll take into account, you know, having to do with statistics in terms of what's going on in certain areas, which is why it makes it so important. I'll make this public service announcement, because the RCMP is constantly saying this and constantly telling us this, and in fact we hear it from police within my own riding as well: if they don't know about it, they can't respond to it. So if people are not calling and reporting crimes, it makes it very difficult for them to deploy effectively, and it makes it difficult for us to understand what's going on on the ground. We would always ask that people would report things.

Now, you know, if you go away on vacation and you come back and your shed has been broken into and some things have been stolen, obviously that's happened a while ago. There maybe isn't a lot of evidence to collect, but they would still like to know about it. The reason is that if there are a number of those incidents that they can correlate together, then they're able to understand more about how to best deploy those individuals. So it's really important that people be willing to sort of come forward and share that information. Yeah. That's definitely one of the factors that goes into that.

Mr. Westhead: Okay. Thank you.

There's also been, you know, a fair amount of emphasis placed on a feeling that people or criminals are treated like it's a revolving door. Someone might get caught, they get a small penalty, and then they're back on the streets reoffending. One of the steps that's mentioned is about reducing recidivism for that very reason. People want to see, if they're getting things stolen or they don't feel safe in their house because these criminals are just coming over and over again – it feels like it's the same people. What kind of response is your ministry looking at? How can we try to get these repeat offenders to kind of get the message that this is not acceptable?

Ms Ganley: Yeah. I think that's one of the most important things to focus on because, ultimately, people deserve to feel safe in their homes. This work that we've done with the RCMP is not just about putting more people in place. I mean, obviously, that's an important element of it. But what it'll really do: the civilian employees free up the sworn police officers to sort of be able to go back out on the street.

In addition to that, having these crime reduction units, that are able to focus proactively – it's not just a matter of responding to calls, but it's a matter of sort of getting to figure out who the offenders are – will allow them to do a couple of different things. One of them is to build a strong case and to understand all of the offences committed by an individual so that if they do want to make some sort of specialized applications to the court to have that person spend longer in prison, they're able to do that.

Another big piece of that is to allow them to identify individuals who are offending because of some other problem, right? I was very fortunate to hear in a meeting in central Alberta just recently about this very issue, you know, one of our RCMP partners talking about

how in one area they were able to identify the individual who was responsible for something like 60 per cent of the vehicle thefts. It turns out that that individual really just needed to be housed and sober. They were able to get him the supports that he needed, and that did a huge amount to reduce the crime problem in that area.

Recidivism can be dealt with, I think, in a number of ways. Sometimes it's the court system, but again, often it's other systems. The most critical piece of this is to continue investing in health care, in education, in mental health supports, in housing supports. You know, a lot of people talk about resources and resourcing the justice system. Well, one of the most important pieces in resourcing the justice system is to actually resource the health system and the housing system, and I think that all of our police partners would agree with that. Yeah. That was sort of a bit of a tangent, but I think that people need to bear in mind that when we're talking about addressing recidivism, the cost of doing that is often best placed in ministries that aren't Justice.

Mr. Westhead: Well, you know, I think it might have been a tangent, but I think it was applicable because I think this morning I saw a report on the CBC about how most people that police interact with have mental health issues, so I think you're bang on. When we invest dollars in prevention on the health care side of things, it also results in better outcomes in the justice system or not even getting involved in the justice system in the first place.

I want to move on to a little bit about human rights. There is some increased funding in the line item for human rights in the statement of operations. You know, of course, the principles of natural justice say that people have the right to a fair trial. Of course, we have to ensure that criminals are held to account for their actions, but no matter how heinous the crime may be, everyone deserves the right to a fair trial. Sometimes it can be hard for people to kind of wrap their heads around that someone may have committed a horrible, horrible crime; nonetheless, everyone deserves due process. I think that goes in line with human rights and protecting human rights. I think there's a lot of really good work being done there, and I just wondered if you could tell us a little bit more about the increased line item and funding for human rights in the statement of operations and how that's going to help people's rights be protected.

10:50

Ms Ganley: Absolutely. There are actually a couple of different things that you mentioned there. One of them has to do with the right of individuals to a fair trial. I think the important thing to recognize there when we say that an individual has the right to due process is that the point of the right to due process is so we can get the process right. No matter how hideous the crime is, punishing just anyone won't do. We want to find the individual who actually committed that crime. That's the whole point of due process there and a lot of that money you'll see in legal aid and ensuring that those individuals have those rights.

With respect to the human rights grants we're seeing an increase in complaints. Those are complaints from across the spectrum. They're individuals who feel that their employment was terminated because of a disability or because of their gender or something like that or individuals who feel perhaps that their housing was unfairly impacted, maybe because of their gender identity or various other reasons. I think that it's important to continue investing in that because we're seeing an increased number of complaints, I think, because people are more aware of these issues and because they're more willing to bring them to the forefront, to stand up and say: you know, I was treated differently because of my race or because of my gender or because of my disability, and that isn't right. In some

ways it sounds like it's bad to have more complaints, but I think that in some ways it's really just a matter of: we're capturing what's actually out there. This will allow people the chance to adjudicate those things.

Mr. Westhead: Great. Thank you.

You know, I think I've just got about a minute left in my line of questioning, so, Madam Chair, I would turn to you and ask if perhaps this might be a good time for us to take the break that you mentioned.

The Chair: At this point I'm going to send it over to the Official Opposition for the next 10 minutes to speak with the minister.

Would you like to combine your time with the minister?

Mrs. Pitt: Yes, please. Thank you. Minister, how does your government plan to measure the success of your recent announcement to address rural crime? What are your performance measures?

Ms Ganley: I think there are a number of different ways we measure that. In part, it has to do with satisfaction in terms of the justice system, but in part it'll be in seeing the results of those crime reduction units. We have had one pilot operating already, that the RCMP had set up in . . . [A timer sounded]

The Chair: Sorry. Continue.

Ms Ganley: Okay. I was, like: that can't possibly have been 10 minutes. I know I'm long winded, but really.

Yeah. One of those definitely has to do with how safe individuals are feeling, but it also has to do with sort of what those units are able to achieve. We've seen a lot of results from the unit in Airdrie in terms of getting some prolific offenders. I think we'll also probably see some results in terms of the ability of prosecutors to make specific applications for prolific offenders, so that'll be a big one.

I think that ultimately what we're going to be looking at – and, unfortunately, the measures follow quite far behind the actuality. Statistics Canada takes a number of measures having to do with crime severity and that sort of thing. It's been criticized for being imperfect. It probably is imperfect in a couple of different ways, but I think, you know, ultimately, that is probably one of the biggest measures. The measure of the problem is that some of these areas are seeing the highest rate of crime they've seen in five years, so I think that we need to keep that measure definitely in mind in terms of a solution. It's a little annoying because it lags significantly in terms of our finding out the data, so we do have to rely on a number of other things.

Mrs. Pitt: Sorry. To be more specific, is that measuring more specifically charges laid, or . . .

Ms Ganley: No. I don't think that charges laid are the – the crime severity index is kind of a complicated measure. It has to do not just with the number of crimes but sort of with the types of crimes as well. I don't want to say off the top of my head exactly what those analytics are. I'm not sure if . . .

Mrs. Pitt: Sorry, Minister. Maybe I could clarify a little bit better. Okay. I think you said that the crime severity index is very much delayed and definitely not the most accurate in real time in terms of measuring more immediate success. I know you have frequent conversations with the RCMP units in our province on what they're doing. How are you measuring success, from what they're telling you, in specifically addressing the rural crime problem?

Ms Ganley: You know, there are a bunch of different measures. I wish I could say that there was just one measure that measures crime, but I think our understanding of this is sort of evolving quickly, and any of our measures takes into account – you can look at a certain type of crime and charges being laid. But it's difficult sometimes to distinguish between – when you look at crime rates, sometimes they reflect an increase in the amount of crime being committed, but sometimes they reflect an increase in the amount of crime being reported or detected, so those measures tend to be a bit complicated, especially with respect to these integrated units. We can sort of look at the number of offenders that they've gotten and a couple of other measures. They'll have seized drugs or weapons or things like that as well. Those are some of the measures we can look at.

We can look at, you know, that when you get one offender, it may only be one offender, but they may turn out to have been responsible for a whole host of crimes, so that will have an impact going forward. Yeah. There are, I guess, a number of different ways that we can look at that. I mean, ultimately, usually the best statistics don't come until a bit further out, so we're stuck with those measures.

I think that a certain measure of our success will be how individuals in the population are feeling. I know that that is not always reflective of reality, but I think that people feeling safe in their homes is itself an important measure. I guess it's not a statistic. It's something that you get from your constituents. It's something that I get from my constituents. It's something that all of us have as we have conversations throughout the province. It's often something that's brought to me by municipal councillors. A certain degree of our measure of success will be not only our ability to detect those crimes and our ability to in the long term affect crime rates but our ability to make people feel that they are safe in their homes.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. Minister, on page 105 of your business plan you talk about evidence-based decision-making.

In order to provide modern services efficiently and effectively, decision makers require timely access to accurate, reliable and appropriate information. Without this information, decisions could be delayed and uninformed undermining the ministry's credibility and ability to achieve its strategic outcomes.

Now, I asked you a couple of weeks ago in the Legislature if you and your government supported MP Shannon Stubbs' motion on rural crime, which was largely about quickly studying and getting the information necessary to make evidence-based decisions to tackle rural crime, and you didn't support this motion, despite what you say in your business plan. Why is that?

Ms Ganley: Well, I do think that it is absolutely the case that we need to work with the best information, the best statistics that we have, but at a certain point you can talk round in circles forever, and that won't help anyone. I think that at this moment, we have been monitoring the situation for quite awhile, and I think this is the time for action. That is my view. I think we have hit the point where more talk and more politicians in rooms are not going to solve anything. I think people need to see real action on the ground, and that's why we think that the best way to move forward is to provide that action.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. I hear that you obviously support evidence-based decision-making, so in hearing what you just said, do you agree that you have all the information to make the decisions moving forward?

11:00

Ms Ganley: Well, I think that in something as complex as crime it will never be the case that anyone has all of the information. In fact,

I think it might be logically impossible to get all of the information. You know, I think that at a certain point – and this is the great joy of governing and the great joy of leading – you have to say: we know enough to know that there is a problem, we know enough to know what some of the solutions to that problem are, and now is the time to act. You can spend forever trying to get the absolute, most perfect plan in place, but if it takes 30 years to develop the perfect crime plan, what are people supposed to do now?

What I'm hearing from Albertans is that they're afraid in their homes sometimes now, that they have felt that this problem has been mounting for quite a while now, so they want to see a response. It's my view that we have definitely hit the point at which a response is what's necessary, so we will continue to monitor what the outcomes of the pieces we've put in place are. You know, like anything in which you can't have a controlled experimental setting, in which you can't have some double-blind perfect standard of experimental methodology, you're going to wind up with situations where you do the best you can with the information you have and it turns out that perhaps you could have done slightly better. So you move to improve in that way. I mean, that's very much the case throughout the justice system, that we will have to continue to monitor the situation and continue to move forward.

So, yes, I think evidence-based decision-making is absolutely critical, and I think that that evidence is what leads us and what leads our RCMP partners to the view that these sorts of integrated crime reduction units are the way to go because the majority of the crimes are being committed by a very, very small number of individuals.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Ganley: Man, I can go on forever, huh?

The Chair: Before I call our agreed-to five-minute break, I've been advised that the members of the government caucus will be ceding their 10-minute slot, which is next in the rotation, and that the members of the UCP will be ceding the first five minutes of their next rotation to provide for a 20-minute break for the minister to feed her baby. We will return to the record promptly at 11:22.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned from 11:03 a.m. to 11:23 a.m.]

The Chair: Thank you, everyone. I would like to call this meeting back to order.

For the next five minutes I would like to invite Mrs. Pitt and the minister to speak.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you. Minister, just kind of where we left off in talking about MP Shannon Stubbs' motion on studying rural crime and taking action, I just want to point out that, yes, taking action right now is certainly important. That's what members of the Official Opposition have been saying for quite some time now. We're glad to see that you're finally listening to us and taking some action. That's great. Supporting this motion doesn't mean that you also can't take action. One is not exclusive of the other. I just would like to point out that the federal NDP has spoken in favour of the motion, made an amendment, so it would be okay to support it as well.

Moving on, Minister, yesterday . . .

Ms Ganley: Sometimes we don't agree with our federal friends, as you will be well aware.

Mrs. Pitt: I don't know. I see it as one and the same.

Minister, you referred yesterday to very, very recent recommendations regarding the victims of crime fund that have had an impact on your response to the AG report from 2016. Can you just clarify what those recommendations are that you're referring to, the very, very recent ones?

Ms Ganley: Roberta Campbell drafted a report for me in response to a matter – because there's a publication ban, it's been referred to as the Angela Cardinal matter – and that contains some recommendations having to do with the victims of crime fund, or not the fund specifically but essentially the victims' services model in Alberta.

Mrs. Pitt: Can you elaborate?

Ms Ganley: Well, she had referenced sort of a lack of co-ordination. Obviously, she's from Manitoba, so she referenced their model and suggested that it was in some ways – it's a more centralized model, sort of government run, whereas ours is a more dispersed model.

We're considering the recommendations. I don't know that I would necessarily – I think a lot of work that's being done by our victims' services agencies is really fantastic. I think that she might be right in terms of the co-ordination and the sharing of information, so we're looking at some of that. I'm not saying that we're necessarily going to move in the direction that she has suggested in its entirety, but I think there's a lot of very important information in there in terms of how victims' services operates.

One of the concerns in that instance was that victims who are less vulnerable and more able to advocate for themselves will seek out those services. So if the services are just responsive, that worked fine for that group of folks. But some victims who are more vulnerable and have less of an ability to self-advocate may not proactively reach out. So, essentially, what she was critical of is the fact that maybe because there is a lack of co-ordination sometimes without that proactive reach out, there's a disconnect. So victims' services, in some cases, with some victims may need to reach out proactively to ensure that that person is made contact with.

Mrs. Pitt: Was Angela Cardinal not aware of victims' services?

Ms Ganley: No, she was absolutely made aware of victims' services, or at least that's what the information we have suggests. Obviously, she's not around anymore to be able to tell us that, but as far as we're aware, she was made aware of victims' services. The challenge is that having been told about that, then there was no contact up until about two days before the trial. So that was the problem that Roberta Campbell was sort of identifying in terms of the disconnect.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. A little bit more on Angela Cardinal. Horrifying, and I know you made comment to it, Minister. What is your department doing to fix some of these challenges?

Ms Ganley: Absolutely. One of the reasons we asked Ms Campbell to come in from out of province to look at this was to have sort of a fresh set of eyes on it in terms of what the challenges were. We also have a working group in terms of witnesses coming into the criminal justice system, that we've added a couple of participants to, so a voice to speak on behalf of victims of sexual assault, an indigenous participant to be able to help with that process. So that's a different process.

In terms of Roberta Campbell's report, we had identified a number of things that were already under way, so some of the . . .

The Chair: Thank you.

At this point in the rotation I would like to invite Mr. Westhead and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Mr. Westhead, are you wanting to combine your time?

Mr. Westhead: Yes, please.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Westhead: I just would like to focus on key strategy 1.2. It's on page 101. That strategy revolves around enhancing collaborative relationships between the government, law enforcement partners, and the communities that they serve in order to modernize enforcement and promote effective crime reduction. On that note, can you tell us a little bit more about the plans for doing that? It sounds like some pretty exciting work, and I'm really looking forward to hearing what you've got in mind.

Ms Ganley: Absolutely. Ensuring those open lines of communication and positive relationships between organizations, government, law enforcement, communities, and various other agencies certainly allows, I think, for a preventative approach to crime. I think that there is general agreement, particularly amongst front-line folks that, you know, taking this more preventative approach and approaching an offender and sort of asking what the source of their behaviour is is a much better way to go forward.

I think the question becomes: how do we best accomplish that, right? So for a number of years, particularly here in Alberta – which is a context I'm familiar with, so I'll speak to it. Because for years and years budgets were based on how much revenue was coming into the province, basically, oil prices determined whether certain budgets got an increase or not. We kind of wound up with a patchwork, where money has gone to weird places at weird times in a not very well-planned way.

11:30

I think we've been trying to reverse that by ensuring that we're doing sort of stable, predictable funding so that everyone can work together, and that will, over time, have an impact on the system, allowing people to not try to shift the buck to each other all the time. That will allow people to participate together. I think we've known for a long time – and almost everyone I meet with raises this – that we need to have better communication between ministries and better integration in our responses.

But a lot of the question is: how do we achieve that? A lot of that is achieved through ensuring that every area has this sort of stable, predictable funding that isn't slashed because oil prices happened to have dropped. That allows people to sort of stabilize the services they are delivering, and it allows them to work together and to not be constantly scared and trying to hoard their budgets, right? So I think that will help to answer the questions of not just: what should we do, but how should we do it? That will enable a bunch of different agencies to work together in a better way to share information.

A lot of that has to do, too, with MOUs about information sharing. There were, I think, following on freedom of information, privacy, and that sort of stuff, a lot of people concerned about what information they can and can't share. Getting those protocols in place and ensuring that everybody knows what those are will allow information to flow more effectively. Ultimately, it's all very well and good to protect an individual's privacy, but if, ultimately, what you're protecting them from is the information that their failure to be housed is what's driving their criminality, you're not really protecting the individual. I think moves to ensure that that information works together will help us to not only deal better with

individuals but to deal more efficiently and in a more cost-effective way with those individuals.

Mr. Westhead: Well, thank you, Minister.

I guess it is kind of shocking to me to hear that the principle of sustainable and predictable funding is a transformative vision in the government of Alberta, and it's not something that was practised in the past. So something as simple as not making sure that departments know what their budget is going to be year after year kind of speaks to the importance that the former government put on this department. I'm really proud of us and you for making sure that we have that kind of leadership here in the province, nowadays.

I would like to move on to outcome 4, which is on page 104, I believe. That is regarding how "Alberta's custodial and community supervision is sustainable, appropriate and proportionate." For outcome 104 I'm just wondering if you can tell us a little bit more about how you would achieve that outcome and the challenges that we're facing as we work to address that situation.

Ms Ganley: Absolutely. I think that these ideas of being sustainable, appropriate, proportionate can really impact the way we look at the whole justice system. Having the justice system respond in a proportionate way is, in the long term, not only better for the safety of society and for the individual offenders, but it's also more cost-effective in the long term, having that proportionate response. There are and have been, especially in the past, sort of calls to have a disproportionate response, to say: someone steals a nail polish; they should spend six months in jail because that's how we teach people lessons. Well, our evidence indicates that that's not how we teach people lessons. In fact, we teach them lessons that way, but we teach them lessons on how to be released and be better criminals, and that's not, I think, what the goal should ever be. So having that proportionate response, ensuring that folks who are remanded and who have been imprisoned for whatever reason, who have needed to be in prison for whatever reason, that we're transitioning them back through sort of a custodial or community supervision. Or sometimes they just go straight by way of community supervision. Sometimes that can be a much more effective tool because oftentimes folks just lack the life skills.

You know, I always think of this program that they have at the Edmonton Remand Centre, where they use a form of kind of military discipline, and these people have a very regimented life when they're living in the Remand Centre. But we have to be able to help them with that transition back to community because otherwise they'll get out and they'll sort of go back to the behaviours they had before – they may not want to; in fact, often they don't – and it's not good for society if they do. I think it's worth sort of working together to ensure that with that custodial and community supervision they are able to liaise appropriately with people, not just the individuals but with the folks in remand, to make sure that people come out into community and they have those supports.

Ultimately, we hope to be able to link those supports to other services as well because often it's very challenging for an individual to deal with their underlying drivers like mental health, like addiction when they don't have a place to live. Ensuring that all those pieces and all those components are able to work together is ultimately critical in addressing recidivism.

Mr. Westhead: Yeah. Well, thank you. It sounds like there's a really refreshing approach there that we're taking and sort of more wraparound services and not just sending people on their own to fend for themselves but actually trying to help them out so that they don't become repeat offenders and just sort of go through a really vicious cycle.

I want to get into a little bit more about some increased funding in terms of the statement of operations on page 106. There's some increased funding that's going towards resolution and court administration services. You know, one of the things we hear about a lot is the backlogs in the courts and people waiting an extended time to access justice. I'm just wondering: is that increased funding going to help address those backlogs that we're hearing about?

Ms Ganley: Absolutely. You know, when we're looking at investing money in resolution and court administration services, a lot of those individuals are support workers around the court, so they work at various counters or they do resolution services and that sort of thing, and I think a lot of that is ensuring that we're supporting those individuals to be able to support the people coming into the court system and to be able to support the other staff, right? A lot of it will be court clerks supporting a courtroom. In this case we're filling a lot of those vacancies in RCAS, which will, I think, help move the court system to move forward more quickly, but it will help the other employees as well because those people have been under a lot of strain for a long time, and that's not good, I don't think, for anyone.

It will also enable us to put some resources into working with JPs, helping the clerks there with JPs, which I think will ultimately be very helpful in their work because they do a lot of things, a lot of various . . .

The Chair: Thank you.

At this point in the rotation I would like to invite Mrs. Pitt and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Are you wanting to combine your time?

Mrs. Pitt: Yes, please.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you. Minister, on April 13, 2017, my former colleague Brian Jean moved a motion in the House that was passed with unanimous consent resolving that the government work collaboratively with the Law Society and the Provincial Court Judges' Association on the education of judges and lawyers when it comes to victims of sexual assault. Is there anything in your budget that addresses this?

Ms Ganley: I mean, yes. Amongst the money that goes to the Provincial Court, there's money for continuing professional development, so ultimately it's not appropriate for me to step in and say that I will educate judges, because they're a separate branch of government. But they do an enormous amount of work to ensure that their education is up to date. Amongst that money that goes to the Provincial Court will be money that they can use for professional development. We also provide a grant to the National Judicial Institute that does education for – this enables our Provincial Court judges to get access to the educational programs that go to superior court judges throughout the country, so that's the federal program. They provide a lot of work on that. I had the opportunity, actually, to be at a Provincial Court conference not too long ago, and I ran into an old professor of mine, who happened to be there to provide education in the law of sexual assault. I know that they take those responsibilities seriously, and that is part of the total monies that go to the Provincial Court.

11:40

Mrs. Pitt: What about the Law Society and lawyers?

Ms Ganley: The Law Society, as a self-governing body, essentially runs off dues from their membership, so it wouldn't be directly

reflected in our budget. But they provide a lot of educational opportunities, and in fact all of us as members of the profession are required to file documents every year indicating how we are sort of keeping up on our professional, educational responsibilities in that way.

Mrs. Pitt: Is there anything specifically related to sexual assault in that matter?

Ms Ganley: From the Law Society? Yeah; you know, I can't speak to all of the programs that the Law Society offers. They offer a huge number of continuing professional development courses. I would expect so, but I wouldn't be able to say with certainty.

Mrs. Pitt: Is there any conversation or any manner in which your ministry could communicate the importance of training regarding sexual assault?

Ms Ganley: Well, I think we've had ongoing conversations with the Law Society, and I think they are definitely alive to this issue. I don't think they need me to tell them that. But, you know, they ultimately have responsibility for the whole profession, and I think they are very much alive to the fact that their lawyers need to be kept up to date on that sort of thing. In fact, ultimately they are the body that holds lawyers to the responsibility of understanding the law properly. You know, it is the law that those discredited myths and stereotypes can't be used. So they definitely have a big role in that.

Mrs. Pitt: Have you given direction to the Crown prosecutors regarding any education with sexual assault?

Ms Ganley: Crown prosecutors are provided with all sorts of education in criminal law matters. In fact, most of them – I've had a number of different conversations on this – are probably more aware of the law of sexual assault than anyone else in the province. They do a very good job of consistently putting that forward before the courts and ensuring that they're doing their best job. I had, actually, the opportunity to speak on a panel with a Crown prosecutor, who did an incredible job of explaining how important it is to be able to not only present the law effectively but to be able to ensure that we're making contact with victims and letting them know what it will be like to testify in court.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. In regard to testifying in court, there's been talk about privacy screens for children in the court system. We've been hearing that not all courts have them and lawyers are needing to improvise. Does your budget reflect this shortfall? Is this something you're working towards this year to improve?

Ms Ganley: I mean, certainly, we are interested in ensuring that those screens are available in every court. Part of that package that we put together with respect to sexual assault funding, most of which is going to AASAS, part of that will go to ensure that there are screens, so that sort of infrastructure investment.

Mrs. Pitt: For every courtroom where children will be?

Ms Ganley: I don't know if they're just in the courthouse and they get moved. Obviously, you won't be using them in all courtrooms simultaneously, but as to the specific number, you know, we have folks that ensure that that deployment is done in a way that it's effective.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. That's sufficient. Thank you.

Minister, in your rural crime announcement you've mentioned "technology to target rural crime, including bait programs." Do bait

programs increase the likelihood of convictions? What is the main benefit there, and is there any other technology that you've included in that announcement or future technology endeavours? Specifically, I guess I'm looking for GPS technology, asking about GPS technology.

Ms Ganley: Those bait technologies, those trackers that are on, will utilize GPS. That's what enables the police to track them, and those can be affixed to different cars. Sometimes it's used by way of specific bait vehicles, but it can also be used with respect to farm equipment. That's another piece that we're looking at in terms of ensuring that.

Mrs. Pitt: What about people? Are you looking at GPS technology to track high-risk offenders?

Ms Ganley: It's something that the ministry is constantly looking at because it comes forward a lot. To my knowledge – and the last time I had this conversation was a little while ago – there has yet to be an instance in which that GPS technology has been effective. The challenge is that if you use it and people rely on it, they don't use other methods like intelligence and, you know, other methods of surveilling the offenders, and what that results in is actually a more dangerous rather than a less dangerous situation.

Usually when you talk about sort of high-level dangerous prolific offenders, if you're talking about gang members or something like that, they are the most likely to be able to defeat that technology. I know that the companies who are selling the technology will always say that their technology is capable of defeating that. We haven't witnessed that in a lot of jurisdictions yet. Generally, unfortunately, it does tend to be defeated at some point. It's something that we'll continue monitoring. I mean, the hope is always that at some point someone will be able to do that, but right now the other methods available to us continue to be more effective.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. There are many police forces that do find a lot of value in GPS tracking for high-risk offenders, specifically Red Deer, Calgary, and Edmonton. That's what we've been hearing on the ground. It's come up multiple times in consultations that I've been doing with various police forces as an effective manner, so maybe it's worth some conversations around there, in particular.

Mike, I'm going to tag you in for the last two minutes here.

Mr. Ellis: Okay. Great. Thank you.

I guess with just the one minute I'll briefly talk. Minister, have you received any briefing on the federal Bill C-75? I think the piece of legislation is being proposed right now. I guess my concern surrounding that is that there are a few changes within that bill that might indirectly cause some increases in costs for Crown prosecutors, you know, and judges, obviously within our justice system, that Albertans will technically have to pay for. Have you had any discussions with your federal counterpart around the possible increased costs as a result of this C-75?

Ms Ganley: C-75 is a fairly large bill. I'm not sure what specific portions you're ...

The Chair: Thank you.

At this point I would like to invite Member Drever and the minister to speak for the next 10 minutes. Are you wanting to combine your time with the minister?

Drever: Yes, please.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Drever: Thank you, Chair.

Right now, actually, in the Calgary Remand Centre – I'm sure you already know about this – there were three people who were overdosing and had to be hospitalized because of opioids. You know, right now we're in an opioid crisis in Alberta, and I know that our government is taking a lot of action on this. On your end how do correctional officers deal with opioids in correctional centres?

Ms Ganley: There are a number of different strategies that are used. We use the strategies that have been in place for a number of years. Those include intelligence collection, searches on entry. Sometimes they'll sort of lock a unit down and do searches if they have intelligence. They have sniffer dogs and a number of things to sort of try and detect those. Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, I think we know that, you know, these substances will sometimes come into remand centres just because of the amount of flow of individuals in and out.

We are piloting in Edmonton, which is showing initial good results. Hopefully, it will continue to show good results, and we can expand. We're piloting a body scanner in Edmonton, which has had very positive results with respect to detecting not only drugs that are coming into remand centres but potentially other objects that can be dangerous to folks.

11:50

There are a bunch of different programs as well. We've been working with opioid dependency treatment to be provided in provincial facilities. Currently we use primarily methadone. We'll continue to monitor those sorts of things to ensure that they are available. AHS, I think, does the monitoring, delivering a lot of that. But I think that, you know, ensuring that people can make other choices, working on that demand side as well as working on the supply side are both sort of critical components of ensuring that we're doing a better job of keeping folks safe.

The substances coming into remand are not new. This is a problem that has existed and has been addressed, you know, over years and decades even, but because those substances are so much more deadly, I think we do have to ramp up our efforts to deal with them. That becomes a challenge not only from the perspective of ensuring inmates' safety but also from the perspective of ensuring the safety of our officers working within those centres. Not only is there the physical safety element and the fact that they may be exposed to some of those substances and because of the nature of the new substances that are coming in, they can be very deadly in very small amounts, troublingly small amounts, in fact, but in addition, it puts a significant amount of mental strain on our officers if they're sort of constantly responding to these serious medical incidents.

Yeah, I think it's definitely worth continuing both in terms of ensuring that those can't get in but ensuring that we're providing people treatments so that they're not needing those substances.

Drever: Yeah. And I know that, you know, in Calgary we have drug court. Actually, the judge, Judge Ogle, lives in my constituency. I met him many times. I know they do wonders with people who use opioids. It's a prevention piece for them to not go to jail and that they have a second chance on trying to help themselves. I know that there are a lot of success stories.

I have Simon House in my riding, which is a rehab centre for men, and I go to their monthly sober birthdays, as they call them, and just the stories I've heard from them are quite inspiring. It's nice to hear that we are tackling this in many different ways.

You mentioned the body scanner in Edmonton. Is this something that we're going to be doing in Calgary as well?

Ms Ganley: That body scanner is currently a pilot project, so the idea is to collect information and data and do the best. Obviously, people who are bringing drugs into the remand centre are trying to hide it from us so that we don't know, but we do our best to sort of try to understand what levels those are at, and we're going to be looking to see what impact those scanners have. They have a lot of impact in terms of detection, but sometimes they'll also have an impact in terms of people knowing that they will be detected. The word gets around and fewer people try to do it. So that's I think a good method as well.

We're hoping to see positive results. They've seen positive results from those in other jurisdictions, which is one of the reasons we've moved to them. And, certainly, we've had a number of calls from the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees in terms of the safety of their members and why we should utilize those scanners. So we're hoping that we'll see the same positive results that have come out of other jurisdictions, and then we'll be able to look at expanding that program.

Drever: Okay. Good to know. Thank you.

Moving on, I'm just wondering: what's the daily average population in our correctional facilities?

Ms Ganley: That is an excellent question and one to which I have an answer. We do definitely have it. I will have to undertake to put that on the record.

Drever: Okay. No problem.

We've heard a lot about the issues with bail hearings. Are there new staff in this budget to support more timely access to bail?

Ms Ganley: Absolutely, there are. The bail system in Alberta has changed significantly since we came into government. After the tragic death of Constable Wynn a report was done looking into our bail system because it was quite different than it was in other places in the country. That report recommended a number of things, but one of the main things that it recommended was that they didn't believe there was the authority to do bail the way we were doing it, so we should go and seek direction from the court, which we did.

Ultimately the court ruled that we needed to have Crown prosecutors in at bail. That has caused us to sort of significantly revamp our system. I think that in the end it will have definite positive and beneficial effects, but as with any large, systemic change, sometimes it doesn't work perfectly initially, and that's a huge concern. The reason it's a huge concern is because the things that are at stake are the rights of individuals and the safety of the public. We've been looking very closely at that system and seeing how to make it a little bit better.

One of the things that we've determined is that the JPs that sit on bail, previously they had to annotate their own files. Some JPs have reported to us that they would spend 50 per cent of their time doing that. Well, that's not a very good use of resources at all. So one of the things that we've done here is we've included some funding for court clerks so that they can sit with those JPs and they can do the

annotating of the files. That's a more cost-effective use of our resources, and it will allow the system to flow much more quickly.

Drever: That's excellent to hear.

Just wondering, in order to reduce some of the backlogs in courts, the alternate methods of dispute resolution are offered through the justice system. Can you expand a bit on the performance measure 3(d) on page 103 and how effective the alternative dispute resolution services have been?

Ms Ganley: What we look at in terms of those is that we look at the resolution rates in terms of the family mediation program as well as in terms of the civil mediation program. Those are working quite effectively, especially in the family area, I think. One of the reasons we need to constantly be alive to that is that it's not generally very good for families to go through the court process. It's not just that it's an additional outlay of provincial resources, that it's more costly; it's also that ultimately that can be quite damaging for the individuals involved.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Ellis, I would now like to invite you and the minister to speak for the next minute and 19 seconds.

Mr. Ellis: Thanks. Minister, just to follow up here, it looks like the feds are looking to hybridize most indictable offences punishable by a maximum penalty of 10 years or less, increase the default maximum penalty to two years less a day of imprisonment for summary conviction offences – as you know, two years less a day is provincial – and extend the limitation period for summary conviction offences to 12 months. The way I read it, this looks like it might have impact on our system in Alberta. I was wondering if you had any thoughts in regard to that.

Ms Ganley: Man, I wish I had more time. Yes, it will probably have potential impacts on a number of different things. One of the nice things that this does is that it allows more things to go by the Provincial Court route, so that obviously sort of brings down the cost overall of the matter because there's a lot more procedure involved in the Court of Queen's Bench, and this would allow prosecutors to elect to go that summary conviction route in a number of different places. That will create more cases in the Provincial Court, but at the same time, because we're ceasing a number of preliminary inquiries, that will free up some time in the Provincial Court. A couple of these components kind of have to move together in order to have, I think, an impact in the long term.

The Chair: Thank you.

I would just like to thank everybody for today's meeting and for working together to accommodate the extended break. I really appreciate that.

I would like to remind the committee that we are scheduled to meet next on Wednesday, April 11, 2018, at 9 a.m. to consider the estimates of the Ministry of Health.

Thank you to the minister and all of the people that attended here this morning.

This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 12 p.m.]

