



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Public Accounts

Solicitor General and Public Security

Wednesday, November 25, 2009
8:30 a.m.

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**Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 27th Legislature
Second Session**

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Quest, Dave, Strathcona (PC), Deputy Chair

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Woo-Paw, Teresa, Calgary-Mackay (PC)

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| Bruce Anderson | Assistant Deputy Minister, Correctional Services |
| Jim Bauer | Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services Division |
| Ann Hammond | Executive Director, Corporate Services, Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission |
| Gerry McLennan | Chief Executive Officer, Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission |
| Bill Meade | Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Security Division |
| Brad Pickering | Deputy Solicitor General and Deputy Minister of Public Security |

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8:30 a.m. Wednesday, November 25, 2009

[Mr. MacDonald in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, everyone. I would like to call this Standing Committee on Public Accounts to order. On behalf of the committee I would like to welcome everyone in attendance. Perhaps we will go around and introduce ourselves, starting with our research co-ordinator.

Dr. Massolin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm Philip Massolin. I'm the committee research co-ordinator, Legislative Assembly Office.

Mr. Benito: Carl Benito, Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Mr. Dallas: Good morning. Cal Dallas, Red Deer-South.

Mr. Vandermeer: Good morning. Tony Vandermeer, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Chase: Good morning. Harry Chase, Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Kang: Good morning. Darshan Kang, Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Meade: Good morning. Bill Meade. I'm the ADM of public security with Solicitor General and Public Security.

Mr. Bauer: Good morning. I'm Jim Bauer. I'm the ADM of corporate services with Solicitor General and Public Security.

Mr. Pickering: Good morning. Brad Pickering, deputy minister.

Mr. B. Anderson: Bruce Anderson, ADM, correctional services.

Mr. McLennan: Gerry McLennan, CEO, Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission.

Ms Hammond: Ann Hammond, executive director, corporate services, AGLC.

Mr. Wylie: Good morning. Doug Wylie with the office of the Auditor General.

Mr. Dunn: Fred Dunn, Auditor General.

Mr. Drysdale: Wayne Drysdale, Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Ms Woo-Paw: Good morning. Teresa Woo-Paw, Calgary-Mackay.

Mr. Hehr: Kent Hehr, MLA, Calgary-Buffalo.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk, Legislative Assembly Office.

The Chair: Hugh MacDonald, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Could I have approval of the agenda that was circulated? Mr. Chase. Moved by Harry Chase that the agenda for the meeting of November 25, 2009, be approved as circulated. All in favour? None opposed. Thank you.

Approval of the minutes for the November 18, 2009, meeting. Could I have approval of those minutes as circulated? Moved by Teresa Woo-Paw that the minutes for the November 18, 2009, Standing Committee on Public Accounts meeting be approved as

distributed. All in favour? Seeing none opposed, thank you.

Of course, this gets us to item 4 on the circulated agenda, our meeting with the officials from the Solicitor General and Public Security ministry. We appreciate their time and their co-operation with us in preparing for this morning's meeting. We are dealing with the reports of the Auditor General of April and October 2009; the annual report of the government of Alberta 2008-09 and also the consolidated financial statements of the government of Alberta and the Measuring Up document; and of course this is the annual report, which all members hopefully have, for the Solicitor General and Public Security department. We all received the briefing material prepared for us by Dr. Massolin and his staff, and we appreciate that. Thank you.

Now if I could invite Mr. Pickering, please, to make a brief opening statement.

Mr. Pickering: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Public Accounts Committee. I'm pleased to provide you an overview of Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security's activities for the '08-09 period. I'm joined by my department's executive committee, and with us are representatives from the Alberta Liquor and Gaming Commission because the minister's annual report includes AGLC financial performance information.

During '08-09 the Solicitor General and Public Security delivered its mandate through four core businesses: law enforcement and crime prevention; custody, supervision, and rehabilitation of offenders; protection services for officials, facilities, and infrastructure; and programs to help victims recover from acts of violence and other serious crimes. The department's work in these four core areas supported the Premier's mandate of promoting safe and vibrant communities and reducing crime so that Albertans feel safe.

Law enforcement and crime prevention. In '08-09 spending in this core business area was \$279.8 million, \$3.2 million lower than budgeted but up \$24.8 million from the previous year. The reduction in the budget was mainly due to a delay in the use of the federal recruitment fund. The increase from last year was mainly due to \$18 million in higher spending for the provincial police services agreement to address inflationary pressures, lower vacancy rates, and to create 33 new RCMP positions. As well, \$6.9 million for the first hundred front-line officers is part of the Premier's commitment to add 300 officers over three years.

During '08-09 we initiated a review which resulted in a modified model for the Alberta law enforcement response teams, or ALERT, with a united provincial focus to more effectively combat organized and serious crime in Alberta. ALERT now brings over 30 teams working in seven regions around Alberta and involving nine partner agencies, including the Edmonton and Calgary police services and the RCMP. Since their creation in 2006 ALERT teams have arrested over 2,300 people on 5,600 charges related to drugs, weapons, and violent crime. They've seized over 600 kilograms of drugs, 300 firearms, and \$4 million in cash. They recently conducted three major drug busts in Edmonton, Medicine Hat, and Calgary.

The department also remains committed to moving forward on the recommendations of the Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force. The recommendations focused on tougher enforcement, focused prevention, and expanded treatment options. In response on October 1, 2008, we launched the safer communities and neighbourhoods teams, or SCAN teams, to target properties used for illegal activities such as drugs and prostitution. SCAN units now operate throughout the province, and as of October 31 of this year they've received 497 complaints about problem properties and have successfully resolved 377 of those.

We also joined forces with Alberta Justice to colead the Alberta

gang suppression initiative, which was launched in 2008. The goal of the initiative was to find innovative ways to reduce and influence gangs and gang crime. A provincial gang summit was held this past June to further develop strategies focused on prevention, intervention, enforcement, and awareness. The final strategy will be presented to government this fall.

During 2008 we increased our Sheriff Highway Patrol to its full complement of 105 members. We issued more than 114,000 violations during that year. As part of the continuing strengthening of the working relationship with the RCMP traffic services and Alberta's traffic services, the two organizations launched a collaborative traffic pilot project in 2008. The pilot will determine the best way to effectively use both levels of law enforcement personnel to continue to improve safety on Alberta's highways.

During 2008 we saw an expanded role of Alberta sheriffs to help improve community safety. The sheriffs' investigative support unit provided assistance to police agencies in 113 cases. The fugitive apprehension sheriffs support teams cleared 1,189 warrants by arresting 334 fugitives. During '08-09 the department continued to make progress on two major initiatives to support communication amongst police agencies. The Alberta police integrated information initiative, or APIII, will allow Alberta law enforcement agencies to share information and ensure front-line officers have the information they need to do their jobs effectively. The Alberta first responders radio communication system will lead to a common radio system for emergency personnel across Alberta so that they can communicate with each other across geographic and divisional boundaries or organizational boundaries.

The department continues to develop practical and balanced policies with respect to oversight and accountability in the area of law enforcement. Nowhere was that more evident than in regard to our province's new guidelines for use of tasers, which were introduced in December of 2007. The guidelines ensure appropriate policies and procedures exist within Alberta police agencies for the use of tasers. They focus on such areas as safe handling, deployment, training, supervision, officer recertification, and provide consistent standards as to how tasers are used by police across the province. In July of this year we further improved upon the 2007 guidelines, and they now are among the most comprehensive rules on taser use in North America.

In '08-09 a total of \$585,000 in crime prevention grants were distributed to more than 15 projects across the province. We measure performance in this business area by determining if our crime prevention efforts and safety programs are making Albertans feel safer. I am pleased to report that our ministry has surpassed our target, with over 90 per cent of Albertans reporting they feel safe in their homes. We also track victimization and crime rates. In 2008 22 per cent of Albertans surveyed reported being a victim of crime, 1 per cent lower than the year before and three points lower than our business plan target.

8:40

Our work in this area is not yet done. In '08-09 Alberta's property crime rate was 26.5 per cent higher than the national average even though it was 8 per cent lower than '07-08, and our violent crime rate was approximately 20 per cent higher than the national average.

We're also working on moving forward with programs to target high-risk offenders, especially repeat offenders, in response to a recommendation of the safer communities task force working with Alberta Justice to implement a priority prolific offender program. This program focuses on the 15 per cent of criminals who commit 60 per cent of crime in Alberta.

Our second core business is the area of custody, supervision, and

facilitation of rehabilitative opportunities for offenders. In '08-09 spending in this area was \$219 million, exceeding budget by \$3.7 million and an increase of \$22.7 million from '07-08. The increase from last year includes \$17.5 million in salary settlements and \$2.2 million for additional supplies and services costs. We continue to focus on external pressures and changes by focusing on incorporating best practice in the delivery of correctional services. Our blueprint for the future of corrections offers constructive solutions to address a changing offender profile as well as pressures from increase in population.

In '08-09 there were over 34,000 adult and young offender custody admissions in Alberta, up from 30,000 the year before. The provincial adult custody population also increased, averaging 2,800 in '08-09. These numbers include increasing gang population as well as offenders with physical and mental health issues. During '08-09 construction continued on the new Edmonton Remand Centre. When it opens in 2012, the facility will be able to accommodate almost 2,000 inmates, with a possible expansion to 2,800.

During '08-09 we continued to move forward with other areas of the plan, including implementation of a direct supervision model, review of educational programs, and new approaches to preventing crime through community supervision.

One of the performance measures the department tracks is the successful completion of temporary absence supervision. This is an early release program that gives low-risk offenders an opportunity to integrate back into the community while at the same time being carefully monitored to ensure public safety. In '08-09 our target was to ensure that 99 per cent of those released under the program completed their supervision without incurring a new criminal charge. We exceeded that target, with a 99.9 per cent success rate. Another performance measure is the number of escapes. During '08-09 there was one such incident during transportation of a prisoner. It ended quickly and without risk to the public.

With respect to rehabilitative services and programs we measure our success by monitoring offender involvement in work, education, treatment, or life management programs in our facilities. In '08-09 we surpassed our goal of 85 per cent with an 88.5 per cent participation rate. Two major program reviews were completed in '08-09. The first was the examination and report on educational and rehabilitation programs for adults. A work plan is being developed in '09-10 to implement the approved recommendations and guide future educational and rehabilitation program delivery for adult offenders. The second review looked at improving offender access to health services and their successful transition into community care. We are currently working with Alberta Health and Wellness to transition responsibility for health care staff in correctional facilities to Alberta Health Services, and we expect that transfer to be effective April 1, 2010.

To ensure that we had well-trained staff to deliver all inmate programs and implement correctional initiatives during '08-09, we provided a total of 1,333 correctional services staff with training through the Solicitor General college. We also provided specialized training in use of force and emergency vehicle operations to 177 sheriffs.

Our third core business is providing protection services for officials, facilities, and infrastructure. During '08-09 we spent \$52.4 million for protection services and the gathering and sharing of intelligence. This was \$4 million lower than budgeted but \$9.6 million more than in '07-08. The reduction from budget was mainly due to reduced manpower costs as a result of delays in recruitment for court security and reduced purchases of supplies and services for protection and investigative services. The increase from last year was mainly due to salary settlements, recruitment of new staff,

supplies and services for program expansion, IT projects, and the creation of the new safer communities and neighbourhoods program, mentioned earlier. The performance measure in this area is the satisfaction of those we are tasked with protecting.

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Pickering. We already have a list of MLAs that are interested in participating in the question-and-answer portion of our meeting. Your 10 minutes for an opening statement has expired, so with all due respect, we're going to move on. The members can read the annual report, and I'm sure many of them have. Okay? Thank you.

Mr. Wylie: Mr. Chairman, my comments will be very brief. On pages 319 and 320 of our October 2009 report we report on the status of two recommendations we made to the department in 2007 for improving its information technology controls. We are pleased to report on page 319 that the department has fully implemented the recommendation for developing procedures to implement its business continuity plan.

On page 320 we indicate that our recommendation for the department to improve its change management processes will be followed up through a separate review of Service Alberta's management of service level agreements. It is through these agreements that the scope of services provided by Service Alberta to government departments such as the Department of Solicitor General and Public Security are outlined. We plan to report the results of our follow-up audit in our October 2010 public report. Management may be able to provide the committee with an update on the progress made to date.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes our opening comments. We'd be pleased to answer any questions of the committee. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. I appreciate that.

The chair would just like to remind members that we are bound by the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly, and the standing orders do allow members of the Assembly who are not on this committee to participate in our proceedings. They just cannot vote.

We'll immediately go to questions. Mr. Chase, followed by Mr. Vandermeer, please.

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Alberta has a series of unenviable first places in the nation, including the highest dropout rate, the highest addictions rate, and the highest suicide rate on a per capita basis. Even with all the additional funding provided for various initiatives, why does Alberta continue to have a 20 per cent higher rate of violent crime than the national average?

Mr. Pickering: I think two sort of answers to that. One is that I think it's a function of prosperity in the province. The second is that this year the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics started issuing a new crime severity index. Actually, when you look at the crime severity index for the province of Alberta, we're close to the national average versus the high when you look just specifically at crime rate. That's probably largely due to the fact that a number of reported crimes are in the less severe category, and from a severity perspective we're at or close to the national average.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Just a comment leading up to my next question. I would recommend to the ministry the extensive recidivism research done by Dr. Don Andrews, a recently retired Carleton psychology professor.

My supplemental: if the extra funding isn't working, what other initiatives have been identified in terms of best practices?

Mr. Pickering: I'll start, and then I'll probably refer it to my ADM of corrections. As I mentioned, we do have the blueprint for corrections. We have done some work with other departments with respect to our programming and continue to try and evolve in that area. I think one of the difficulties that we do have, given that provincial facilities are remand, those awaiting final disposition of their charges as well as in the corrections, and the sentence sort of facilities, two years less a day, is that the time frame for us to implement programs is somewhat shortened versus in a federal corrections system.

With that, I'll turn it over to Bruce.

Mr. B. Anderson: I guess I don't have too much to add, except that we're working with our partners in the other provincial and territorial jurisdictions and with the Correctional Service of Canada to identify best-practices research in terms of corrections programs. The corrections blueprint identifies some best practices, and we're trying to move our corrections programs in that direction; for example, in the community moving from a risk management approach to a risk reduction approach. We've implemented new assessment tools in both adult and youth community corrections. We've also implemented a new security rating assessment tool in adult corrections, institutional corrections. Those are some examples of how we're moving in that direction.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

8:50

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Vandermeer: I had some other questions, but that's kind of sparked my interest here. I recently had a tour of the federal correctional institution out on the Manning freeway there, and I was very impressed at how it's being run. I don't know if you know, but my father was a correctional officer and became an assistant deputy director in the '70s. The problem back then is that the inmates were starting to run the prisons. What I noticed with the federal correctional facility is that it's the other way around. Could you elaborate or tell me how it's going in our two years less a day, if they're clamping down a bit on the prisoners?

Mr. Pickering: I'll maybe start, and then refer that to Bruce. As I mentioned, we are sort of starting training with respect to direct supervision. While we do have a couple of facilities in the province that operate under a direct supervision model, a number of our facilities operate under what's commonly referred to as a bubble model, where staff are separated from inmates other than when they go through for rounds.

Mr. B. Anderson: Yeah, there's a significant difference. There are similarities, obviously, between the provincial and federal corrections systems, but there are also some significant differences. For example, about three-quarters of our admissions serve less than 30 days, which is a lot of short-term sentences; 55 five per cent of our remand admissions are in custody for less than a week. The federal correction system gets inmates who are sentenced to two years less a day. They've already been through the provincial system as part of the pretrial process. Then they'll get sentenced. So they come into that system having had their health care needs and their addictions needs and some of their mental health issues addressed to some extent in the provincial system as part of that transfer. Then when they get to the federal system, they also know how much time they're doing, so there is some sense, at least, of certainty for them.

In the provincial system we're looking at about 57 per cent of our custody population being on remand, so their charges are unresolved. These people are coming in off the streets, fresh arrests. They have serious mental health and addictions issues in a lot of cases. So you're talking about the same population to some extent; however, that population, when it moves to the federal system, has some of those issues already addressed in our system.

We also had, I think, as Brad mentioned, 34,000 admissions last year. I think a recent document I read showed that the federal system had something like 5,000 sentence admissions in a year. I mean, they just don't at all deal with the kind of volume that we're dealing with.

Having said that, we have taken a number of initiatives to address some of the issues of which you spoke, and direct supervision, as Brad mentioned, is clearly one of those. Placing officers in the living units directly with the inmates is one way of making sure that the officers are, in fact, in charge of that living unit. As soon as you remove those officers from a living unit and place them in a security bubble behind glass, then within the unit there's a power vacuum that's created, and the inmates will assume that power and control within the unit if the officer is not there.

We do have a number of institutions that are operating on the direct supervision model. The new Edmonton Remand Centre, which will be the largest jail in Canada, is designed to operate on that direct supervision model as well.

Mr. Vandermeer: I had a tour of the Edmonton Remand Centre in '04, and at that time I thought it was a pretty old, old building, so I'm glad to see that you're building a new one. Did I understand correctly that it's going to be done in 2012?

Mr. Pickering: That's correct. Yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kang, please, followed by Mr. Dallas.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Given that the victims of crime fund has a significant surplus, what steps has the ministry taken to improve budgeting forecasts to account for the accumulated surplus?

Mr. Pickering: The victims of crime fund is a regulated fund. The net assets at the end of March 31, 2009, were \$46.7 million. That was an increase of \$2 million over the previous year. There has been significant growth in provincial fine surcharging and revenue, primarily to fines issued under the Traffic Safety Act. Although we have had budget increases that were requested and approved over the past couple of years, actual fine revenue has been continuing to surpass these requests.

I think it's important also to recognize that the fund is separate from the government fund, so it is a trust account that's there. A number of the programs we have, particularly the financial benefits program, have ongoing sort of requirements, particularly to a number of programs we've instituted over the last couple of years, which ensures that the money is there for commitments that we have made. As well, on a year-over-year basis there is that ability to absorb the shock if we have larger requests than funding currently within our budget.

Mr. Kang: You've probably answered part of my supplemental. What plans does the ministry have to allocate surpluses within the victims of crime fund to further programs to assist victims of crime?

Mr. Pickering: In the year in question there was a significant

increase that went to our victims' services units. Jim can probably give you the exact amount. We substantially increased funding to our victims' services advocates as well as an increase to the financial benefits program. I think the total increase was to the tune of, combined, about \$9.6 million.

Mr. Bauer: Just to maybe further supplement that, yeah, some of the thresholds have increased. So for the grants that were being paid to victims' services units, the thresholds have gone up for most of the units from \$100,000 to \$150,000. For Edmonton and Calgary, for those victims' services units the maximum amount payable has gone up from \$100,000 to \$300,000. Those are some of the steps that were taken to start to spend a further amount of the fund's surplus in 2008-09.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dallas, please, followed by Mr. Hehr.

Mr. Dallas: Thanks very much, Mr. Chair. We've already spent a little bit of time this morning talking about the blueprint for the future of corrections. I see that there's a reference in the annual report as well on page 50, and I note a number of initiatives that are a part of that plan. My first question. The time frame to implementation: is this something that's well under way? When do we expect to complete the implementation of the initiatives inside that work plan?

Mr. Pickering: I'll let Bruce answer that.

Mr. B. Anderson: It is well under way, but it's not something that is going to happen overnight. It's a plan that will take a number of years to have in place because the plan was developed to address a number of things, including population pressures, and they won't be addressed, really, until the new Edmonton Remand Centre comes onboard. It's a significant part of our plan to address some of the inmate population pressures.

Clearly, some of the best-practices initiatives that I talked about are part of the plan. Some of those are being implemented in the community, have been implemented and are still being implemented, and that's moving from a risk management to a risk reduction model in the community through our new assessment tools and new interviewing techniques.

Training was also a part of the plan for staff, so that continues to be rolled out and, additionally, a part of the inmate programming. That was part of the gap analysis that we have undertaken, and we're moving to implement some of the recommendations in terms of inmate programming from the gap analysis. Also, the blueprint addressed issues regarding recruitment and selection of staff, and some of those issues have dissipated somewhat with the cooling of the economy.

Mr. Dallas: Well, thanks. As a supplemental, then, I would presume that there's a cost associated with that training, research, and looking at clinical best practices, that type of thing. You know, I wouldn't expect that this would be cost neutral, but what is the plan around containing the costs of implementing a major change in strategy such as this?

Mr. B. Anderson: There was additional money of a million dollars that was put into the corrections budget for training, specifically with respect to the risk/needs assessment tools because we need to train all of our staff in those tools as well as in motivational interviewing. So there is that cost. In terms of best-practices research we have

internal resources that we utilize for that. As I'd mentioned earlier, we also rely on our colleagues in other jurisdictions who are delivering similar programs, so we can leverage their expertise as well. And they rely on some of our research, so there's a bit of an economy of scale with respect to our research capacity.

9:00

Mr. Dallas: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Hehr, please, followed by Ms Woo-Paw.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I want to just ask a question on finances surrounding the Tsuu T'ina reserve. I know they have a big casino out there, but if you look at page 363 of the blue book, it looks like \$238 million in grants went to that reserve from the Solicitor General and Public Security. It seems like an awfully large number in collective grants. What was the purpose of this grant money?

Mr. Pickering: I'll ask Gerry from AGLC to answer that.

Mr. McLennan: I'm not certain what you're referring to along those lines from the AGLC. As mentioned, they do have the casino. They do earn money as a result of it. If you could just be a little bit more specific. It was a \$250 million grant?

Mr. Hehr: Well, \$238 million in grants went to the Tsuu T'ina reserve.

Mr. McLennan: If money went in that amount, it wouldn't be from Sol Gen. It would be from Culture and Community Spirit for the First Nation development fund. Maybe what I could do, Mr. Chair, is find out more specific information, and I'll pass it on to the respective committee members.

Mr. Hehr: Well, I did find the information in the Solicitor General's accounts information. At least, I'm pretty sure I did, so I'm surprised you don't have that answer.

I guess as a follow-up: if you guys could look into this for me, and while you're on the subject, what else has been going on on the reserve? There was, allegedly, some ring road going on there and some other things like that. Was any of this money intended for land development or other requirements in preparation for a ring road? Let's be blunt. Was some of that money given for that purpose?

Mr. Pickering: I can't answer that. The ring road discussions I think occurred through Alberta Transportation.

[Mr. Quest in the chair]

The Deputy Chair: All right. Ms Woo-Paw, please, followed by Mr. Chase.

Ms Woo-Paw: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 45 of the '08-09 annual report it indicates that \$2.9 million was allocated to support two new sheriffs' units for public complaints about properties being used for illegal activities. Can you explain how these units operate and what the allocated funds were used for?

Mr. Pickering: A total of \$2.5 million was spent on operating expenses. That was manpower and supplies and services, which totalled \$2.1 million, and roughly \$400,000 for equipment and

inventory purposes. The SCAN Act, which is the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, allows sheriffs a civil means of disabling criminal activity like drugs, gangs, and prostitution by taking action where a property is being used in such a manner and has an adverse effect on the community or neighbourhood.

SCAN is civil legislation, not criminal legislation, so the burden of proof is balance of probabilities, not beyond a reasonable doubt, which is the case in criminal. Two SCAN units were stood up in both Edmonton and Calgary, each having seven investigators. They enforce the SCAN Act throughout the province. They respond to public complaints. They do commence investigations, issue warning letters, mediate the dispute, or apply for a community safety order. The court order is for the owners to clean up or repair the property or for it to be closed for 90 days, and any criminal activity that those units uncover when dealing with the properties is turned over to the police jurisdiction.

Ms Woo-Paw: Thanks. My supplemental: do you have established tools to measure the effectiveness of these units?

Mr. Pickering: Yeah. I'll start and then maybe turn it over to Bill. I think the greatest sort of tool we have is a number of letters from affected communities appreciative, I think, of closing down these type of properties, which they consider blights in their neighbourhood. With that, Bill . . .

Mr. Meade: Thank you. The other measure that is a broader measure is the perception of safety in your home. In those areas where we're addressing some 269 homes, where we've been able to clean it up and work either with the landlord or the tenant or, in fact, close the facility, certainly, people in those neighbourhoods are feeling like we've taken a blight away. There's no longer the traffic coming in and the potential drug dealing and all those sorts of things that tend to go along with some of these houses.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase, please, followed by Mr. Olson.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. What percentage of the 32,272 adult admissions and the 2,046 youth admissions to correctional facilities were repeat offenders?

Mr. Pickering: I'll turn that over to Bruce. I don't know if we've got that exact statistic.

Mr. B. Anderson: No, I don't have that exact statistic, but I can tell you that I think last year approximately two-thirds of the adult admissions were discrete admissions, so you'd have one-third of them who are individuals who are cycling through the system more than once in the year.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. In my role as a former teacher and currently critic for Children and Youth Services the educational programs offered to try and prevent recidivism are very important to me. My follow-up question: how much of the \$215 million reported on page 10, figure 8, was targeted solely towards rehabilitation?

Mr. Pickering: I'll maybe just start by saying that to address this issue, as I mentioned – and this is dealing with the repeat offender sort of scenario – statistics we have generally show that 60 per cent of the crime is committed by 15 per cent of individuals. In order to address that, under the safe communities initiative we've started a pilot project with the RCMP, Edmonton Police Service, and Calgary

Police Service where we're targeting, specifically, 20 individuals in Edmonton and Calgary and 20 as well in the rural. So 60 individuals are repeat offenders. The program, really, is looking at those, making sure we put together appropriate bail packages – there is the opportunity to do surveillance on those individuals so that if they do reoffend, they're put back into custody very quickly – as well as ensuring that we have wraparound services to ensure that they're getting the supports they need in order to hopefully make an appropriate decision to change their life of crime.

Bruce, do you have . . .

Mr. B. Anderson: I guess I can just add a couple of comments. In terms of educational programs it's Advanced Education through an educational framework that provides the funding and the educational programs within the adult correctional facilities, and it's the local boards of education that provide the education programs in the youth facilities. Then we will supplement, obviously, some of those programs through contracts with other service providers, for example for other rehabilitative programming: elders contracts, chaplains contracts, and we have contracts with group homes in the community so that there are some residential services for release, those kinds of things.

Mr. Chase: Would you, please, through the chair get back to the committee on the \$215 million figure, what portion of that is related to rehabilitation? Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Yeah. If you would, please, through the clerk to all the committee members, that would be great. Thanks.

Mr. Olson, followed by Mr. Kang.

Mr. Olson: Thanks. Thanks for being here, and my apologies to the chair for being late.

I have some questions that refer to page 36 of the annual report. I'm looking at your comments on the revised law enforcement framework. It sounds like a big undertaking. It is kind of generally outlined in terms of where you're trying to get, but I'm wondering if you can talk just a little bit about the purpose of this framework and what you've achieved so far in implementing the revised law enforcement framework. I gather that it has to do with connectivity, agencies working together and so on.

9:10

Mr. Pickering: The law enforcement framework basically proposes to build on the success we've had to further improve law enforcement in the province and, in particular, in ways that it's delivered. What we're trying to achieve is to ensure that there's an efficient and seamless delivery of policing services to reflect the priorities of Albertans and that they address the need for openness and accountability from a governance perspective as well as ensuring that the full potential, full spectrum of available policing and policing specialities are available to the province.

In that regard there's kind of a three-pronged approach that we're taking. The three sort of areas that we're focusing on are service delivery, governance, and funding models within the province. Under service delivery we want front-line policing and enforcement to still be handled locally by the community so we have good community policing. We want to ensure that there's good clarification of roles, the right person with the right skills. This is sort of in the continuum from security officers to police officers, that we have the right individuals approaching and being responsible for things.

We want to ensure that we have good, specialized policing. I think it's fair to say that crime does not respect jurisdictional

boundaries, and that applies throughout municipalities in the province as well as from province to province. In order to address that, we have provided significant investment into our Alberta law enforcement response teams, which is a co-ordinated and integrated approach to dealing with crime across the province, and that's using seconded officers from the Edmonton Police Service, the Calgary Police Service, the RCMP, the Medicine Hat and Lethbridge police services as well as Camrose so that we've got everyone in the spectrum of law enforcement across the province involved in that.

From a governance and accountability perspective what we heard in some of our consultations is that that's not applied consistently across the province, so we're looking at working towards some consistency through the province. As well, we believe that local autonomy should be respected, but there should be a methodology for communities to deal with their policing jurisdiction, whether that's the RCMP and policing committees within those jurisdictions, or where you have a police agency, obviously there's a police commission.

The last is sort of the funding. I think municipalities are looking for more flexibility in funding. For communities up to 5,000 the policing is paid for by the provincial government under the police service agreement. Once you exceed the 5,000 cap, then you're responsible for it either through a contract with the RCMP for municipal policing or to set up your own police agency. To try and get some equity across communities, I think we're looking at trying to deal with that.

Those are sort of the main areas of the law enforcement framework. We're working through that. We hope to be back to government in the very near future with the results of our consultation.

Mr. Olson: Thanks. If I could just follow up. Obviously, information sharing and communication are key elements of this initiative. I'm just wondering if you could talk a little bit about the P3 project and where it's at. I think that in the estimates last spring there was some talk about some timelines, and I'm wondering if those are still the timelines that you're looking at in terms of implementation.

The other question I have is just about the radio network. I understand that, you know, the goal is to have a province-wide network that's updated. I've heard police talk about some of the deficiencies there. How does that connect, if at all, with ambulance dispatch?

Mr. Pickering: I'll deal with the APIII one. Then I'll turn radio over to Bill, who's very familiar with it. The APIII initiative started back in about 2006 with our business case. We were successful in obtaining funding for a number of our strategic information initiatives; \$65 million roughly was set aside for the APIII initiative. We've been working with the police agencies, including the RCMP, in implementing that.

I think it's fair to say that our current model creates a number of silos of information around the province. Each police agency has their own policing system. We went through a fairly rigorous process of dealing with our policing partners to come up with the specifications. The specifications were completed. We went through a process of prequalifying vendors. There were two vendors that were prequalified from a consortium perspective to deliver this initiative, and we're in the final stages of that procurement process. We're currently evaluating those bids, and we're hopeful that we'll be making a decision and commencing with the implementation early next year.

The Deputy Chair: Just before we turn that over, if we can just keep the questions and answers a little more concise, folks. This

one's running on a bit. We've got a fairly long list of questions yet. Thanks.

Mr. Meade: The radio is a little bit similar. We're finishing the RFP process. We hope to have a modified bid in from two large consortiums by the end of this calendar year and then move forward with the awarding of the contract. The build is about a two-year build. It is targeting for all first responders. In terms of dispatch, whether there are four or six dispatch centres for ambulance or whether there are, you know, four or five for police or whether there are a number for fire, this is really a highway wherein first responders will be able to talk to each other. It's plug and play into various dispatches. The number of dispatches isn't an important number for us. We can plug and play into all of them.

Mr. Olson: Thanks.

The Deputy Chair: Great. Thanks.

Mr. Kang, followed by Mr. Drysdale, please.

Mr. Kang: A news release issued on June 4, 2008, estimated that the expected annual cost for expanding the financial benefit for victims of crime would be \$720,000, yet page 26 of the annual report states that there was an additional \$2.1 million expended this year on higher financial benefit payments. What is the reason for the discrepancy?

Mr. Pickering: With respect to the financial benefits program in '08-09 the fund amounted to \$11.6 million. That included a new supplementary benefit that we instituted with a benefit of \$1,000 per month to individuals that had brain injury and were quadriplegic to ensure that they were providing ongoing benefits for their care over and above the lump-sum benefit that we provided.

Jim, I'm not sure if you can deal with that number specifically.

Mr. Bauer: No. You made a reference to, I think, a \$700,000 figure, and I'm not quite sure where you're getting that.

Mr. Kang: That was in a news release on June 4, 2008.

Mr. Pickering: My guess is that that is coming out of the release dealing with the supplementary benefit program. I can tell you that in '08-09 there were 10 individuals that were qualified for that benefit. Year to date there are an additional two, so we have 12 in the province. That was basically our estimate at that point in time, when we released the program, of those individuals that we believed had previously received a lump-sum benefit that may qualify.

9:20

Mr. Kang: My supplemental is: what measures were used to determine the additional thousand dollars per month that these victims would be eligible to receive? Was it based on additional costs, was it based on the original costs for dependent care, or was it arbitrarily chosen? You partly answered the question, but, you know, just elaborate on that.

Mr. Pickering: Okay. As I mentioned, under the program there is a lump-sum award that occurs. Generally individuals in that sort of category receive the maximum, which is in the hundred thousand dollar range. Those individuals are also eligible for all of other programs that are provided in the province. Over and above that, based on some investigation that occurred by our staff, we felt that roughly an additional amount of \$12,000 per year would be of assistance to provide services that they require.

The Deputy Chair: Very good.

Mr. Drysdale, followed by Mr. Hehr, please.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 34 of the annual report the Alberta Sheriff Highway Patrol is discussed. I know we see them in action on the highway as far as speed enforcement goes. Believe me, I spend a lot of time there, and they do a good job. Their presence is definitely known, and it really has made a big difference, I think, in reducing speed. Can you explain what they do and how much the ministry spent on traffic safety during 2008-09?

Mr. Pickering: In '08-09 the program expenditure for the traffic sheriffs was \$12 million. Of that, \$9 million was manpower for our 115 authorized FTEs and \$3 million for supplies and services. Basically, what the sheriffs do is patrol the highways. The intent is to target aggressive drivers and speeders. They also assist other police agencies with checkstops. There were 147 that they participated in in 2008.

I think it's important to note that traffic collisions are the leading cause of death among young Albertans. They account for roughly 20 per cent of all injury-related deaths in Alberta. Aggressive enforcement is something we see as a way of dealing with not only the speeders but, I think, the outcome, unintended or not, of high speed.

Mr. Drysdale: Okay. A supplemental: can you expand on how the work of the Alberta Sheriff Highway Patrol complements the work of the RCMP traffic services?

Mr. Pickering: As I mentioned in my opening remarks, in February of '09 we launched a pilot project between the traffic sheriffs and the RCMP. Currently the two units work together, but what we were looking at is: were there opportunities from an integration perspective to deal with that? We had pilot projects in Whitecourt, Airdrie, Wetaskiwin, and Olds. Basically, what we were piloting is different service delivery models to ensure that we could get the most effective use of both the RCMP traffic units as well as the traffic sheriffs. The RCMP, I believe, have about 173 traffic members and with our 105 direct sheriffs I think provide a significant sort of presence on Alberta roadways.

Mr. Drysdale: Thanks.

The Deputy Chair: Very good.

Mr. Hehr, please, followed by Ms Woo-Paw.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. Earlier in the year I was able to participate in going to see our provincial corrections facilities, at least in Calgary, on a day your organization runs where you get to go in and see things. I had the opportunity to talk to numerous guards who were in the prison. They indicated that there was some overcrowding and they had to at times transfer individuals to federal facilities due to the overcrowding. Could you indicate to me how many of these prisoners who were supposed to be in provincial remand centres were transferred to federal institutions because of the overcrowding?

Mr. Pickering: If you want me to be short and succinct, I think that in 2008 we did have a contract with the Grande Cache facility. I don't believe that that dealt with any of our remand people, so the answer would be none to a federal facility.

Mr. Hehr: Well, then, I guess a follow-up question there is: is there

a capacity problem in facilities in our province, and if so, how are we looking to correct that?

Mr. Pickering: I'll start and then refer that to Bruce. As I mentioned, I think that as a large part of our blueprint of corrections to deal with our overcrowding, which is an issue in a number of our facilities, we do transfer inmates around between our facilities to balance their population out based on the institutional capacity that we have. Basically, the new Edmonton Remand Centre will provide 1,944 beds. We see that as a significant relief to our current facilities.

An example of the overcrowding would be in the Edmonton Remand Centre. When that facility was originally designed in 1979, it had a capacity of 334. As a result of some of the work we did to double-bunk, we raised that to over the 700 mark. A lot of the evenings there are probably close to 800 inmates within that facility. We, unfortunately, are a taker of what's given to us. We don't have the ability, I think, to hang a no room at the inn sign, so we do the best we can at balancing in our facilities.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: All right. Thanks.

Ms Woo-Paw please, followed by Mr. Chase.

Ms Woo-Paw: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is on page 46 of the annual report, on performance measure 2(b), public perception of safety in the neighbourhood. Your results show that there have been improvements from the previous year. However, it is 10 per cent lower than your ministry's own target. I'm just wondering if you could provide some explanation or insights on why we're seeing the kind of performance that we're seeing.

Mr. Pickering: I'll maybe turn that one over to Bill to respond to.

Mr. Meade: Sure. When we see these numbers, of course, and we see them either up or down, we either take it positively or we're concerned. As it relates to the violent crimes, the drug and organized crimes that you see in some of the not just larger centres but throughout the province, the drive-by shootings, and those kinds of things for obvious reasons make the attention of the press. When we see those kinds of things occurring, certainly people are concerned about that, and rightly so. We, too, are concerned about it, which is why we're putting so much energy and resources into the ALERT model and there, in fact, finding some great success.

The deputy talked about the bust that we recently found in Edmonton, Calgary, and in Medicine Hat. We see that when those things start to take effect – there are considerably less gangland homicides this year in Edmonton than there were in previous years, and we think that's in large part because of the significant enforcement around the integrated units.

Ms Woo-Paw: My supplemental. According to your own analysis it indicates that those who are of lower socioeconomic status, women, and seniors report an even lower sense of safety. Can you provide some insight on that?

Mr. Meade: The first two. Certainly, if you're living in areas where more of this kind of activity is occurring – the drug houses, the SCAN sorts of things – if you're of less means than others, you might be living in those areas, and that affects things. Single moms trying to manage with work and children going to school and those sorts of things are a concern for folks. For our senior population,

they tend to be concerned about things like some of the parks where maybe young people are also there. It might just be some noise and some other sorts of things. For each of those populations there are different strategies, but certainly those are our target groups because what this is saying is that those are the ones we really have to work on to reduce some of their fears.

9:30

Ms Woo-Paw: Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Just before we take the next question, the chair would like to recognize Mr. Mason. Good morning.

Mr. Mason: Good morning.

The Deputy Chair: Mr. Chase, please, followed by Mr. Vandermeer.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. A ministry news release dated July 3, 2008, reports that \$350,000 in grants was given to youth justice committees to “help youth accept responsibility for minor crimes, assist courts with sentencing, and engage in crime prevention activities.” My first question: does the ministry track the results of this grant funding, particularly the rates of reoffending of youth who participate in these programs, and if so, can you report some positive results?

Mr. Pickering: I'll start and then turn it over to Bruce. I think the funding that we provide is to the actual committees that, basically, review things from an alternate measures sort of perspective.

Mr. B. Anderson: Yeah, that's correct. It's based on the work activity of the particular committees themselves, so the grants are proportioned based on work activity. In terms of tracking the success rates, I don't have any stats on that.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. My follow-up question: approximately how many or what percentage of youth offenders participated in these programs across the province?

Mr. B. Anderson: You know, I don't have a total for that, but I can give you a sense. When you look at the number of, for example, youth who are supervised in the community on a daily basis, we've got about 4,000 youth under our supervision. About 1,100, a quarter of those – and this is a snapshot in time, sort of – would be subject to the extrajudicial sanctions program. That would be the alternative measures program.

Mr. Chase: Well, I'm trying to get a sense of percentages. So there was an improvement of approximately a quarter of the previous youth offenders through the monitoring program?

Mr. B. Anderson: No. I'm just saying that our youth committee corrections people, in terms of their supervised caseload, about a quarter of them would be subject to the extrajudicial sanctions program. So they would be diverted through this kind of a process.

Mr. Chase: Okay. But we don't know what the result was.

Mr. B. Anderson: No. I don't have any stats on the results.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Mr. Vandermeer, please, followed by Mr. Hehr.

Mr. Vandermeer: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 33 of the annual report the Alberta gang suppression initiative is discussed. Can you tell what strategy is here and what specific measures are going to be taken? I understand you're going to have a report coming out. You said this fall, or is that going to be next fall?

Mr. Pickering: It'd be this fall.

Mr. Vandermeer: So now, in other words, right?

Mr. Pickering: We're in the process of putting together our ministerial reports.

That strategy is co-led by the Solicitor General and the Department of Justice. It is a cross-government initiative, so it involves Health and Wellness, Education, Aboriginal Relations, Employment and Immigration, and Children and Youth Services. We also are working with the RCMP with respect to a specific strategy around aboriginal gang crime. We did have community consultations, which resulted in a summit in June. Basically, we are looking at, sort of, four main pillars within the strategy dealing with prevention, intervention, awareness, and enforcement strategies. As I've indicated, we're hoping to put that into the government system this fall for review and approval.

Mr. Vandermeer: Okay. So that's coming out this fall. What are you doing right now to address gangs and organized crime?

Mr. Pickering: A large part of our investment in this sort of gang is within the ALERT model. We did announce 83 new resources to go into the ALERT model through the federal funding initiative that occurred, resulting in about \$10 million per year. That ALERT model, basically, as I mentioned, deals with organized crime and gang drug issues. They recently restructured their organization to specifically link up with the Edmonton and Calgary units that deal with things from a local perspective. I think as a result of that initiative and those investments we've seen significant arrests occurring through that model. I think – and this isn't in '08-09 – currently we've got approximately 421 resources in the ALERT model, so it's a very significant resource, specifically dealing with the higher end sort of issues of gangs, drugs, and organized crime.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Hehr, please, followed by Mr. Dallas.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe this session we passed or are just passing legislation that's going to give time off to provincial offenders for some good behaviour, and I think this is probably driven a little bit by the fact that our current prisons are pretty full and seem to be overstretched. But I'm just wondering whether you guys have estimates on how much this measure will alleviate the overcrowding in provincial correction facilities that you were indicating in your last answer.

Mr. Pickering: I'll start and then supplement to Bruce. I think that's Bill C-25 from federal legislation, which basically goes from a 2 to 1 to a 1 to 1. As a result of that I think what we're probably going to see is a switch in our remand population replaced by our sentenced population. We haven't got specific numbers on that, but we do believe that as a result of not getting a 2 to 1 sort of credit with respect to remand, one of the hopefully intended outcomes will

be a more expeditious sort of process of getting the charges dealt with. There are some assumptions being made that by obtaining substantial credit, there's an opportunity to stay in a remand facility to the point where you believe that when your charge is disposed of, you'll get credit for all time served. That's one of the federal initiatives.

We're supportive of Bill C-25 because we do believe . . .

Mr. Hehr: Okay. I guess I would just supplement. I thought that before the House right now we were putting – did we have to do that here in Alberta, where provincial offences, then, were given time off? I'm talking about the provincial measures, not the federal measures that we put in. That's my first question. I think we got our measures mixed up. I was asking about the recent provincial legislation that we put in recognizing time off for good behaviour, I think, for effective prison management and recognizing the fullness of our jails. That's the one I'm talking about.

Mr. Pickering: Okay. Yeah. I think our best estimate is that we'll reduce our population by 40 per night, but I'll have Bruce expand on that.

Mr. B. Anderson: Forty is the number. Really, the impetus for the legislation was to bring us in line with other jurisdictions in Canada. Everyone with the exception of Yukon does provide for remission for provincial statute and municipal bylaw offences. The other thing is that it's an effective tool in terms of promoting positive behaviour amongst the inmate population.

Mr. Hehr: Yeah. Well, thank you very much. I guess my follow-up question would be that my sense of the Alberta public is that maybe they're not as happy with that. We realize in this room that maybe there is some effective prison management. I was wondering if there was any consultation with the public or whether the Solicitor General or the Department of Justice had any consultation with the Alberta public on how they felt about this measure?

Mr. B. Anderson: Well, in essence, we did a jurisdictional survey to see what other jurisdictions were doing, and there was no public consultation per se. What we ended up with is some situations where individuals serving time for provincial statute offences were actually being held in custody because they could not earn remission longer than individuals who'd been convicted of Criminal Code offences, i.e. more serious types of offences. So, again, we initiated the changes from an equity perspective as well as from an inmate management perspective.

9:40

The Deputy Chair: Mr. Dallas, please, followed by Mr. Kang.

Mr. Dallas: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm looking at page 65 of the annual report and back to a discussion on victims of crime. We've had a little discussion about the financial benefits that victims can access. I want to speak about the programs and services. We spend, by the report, \$12.7 million on benefits for individuals, and we spend nearly that much, \$10.6 million, on programs and services. To start with, I wonder if you can outline how we determine the funding level for those particular programs and perhaps provide some examples of those programs.

Mr. Pickering: A large part of our victims' program, outside of the financial benefits, is dealing with our victims' service and advocate

program. Across the province there are, I think, 147 of those units. Those advocates are individuals that deal with people who come into contact with the police of the jurisdiction, whether that's from an accident perspective or from a crime perspective, and help them sort of understand the process they're going through. As Jim mentioned previously, in 2008 we substantially increased the grants to those victims' services units. I think we're getting very good leverage on those dollars.

They are volunteer organizations in the various communities, and basically the grants increased. In Edmonton's case it tripled from \$100,000 to \$300,000 per year, for the other communities from I think it was \$75,000 to \$150,000.

The actual grant applications are reviewed by a committee, and basically the committee makes a recommendation to the minister as to which organizations get funding.

I don't know if Bill wants to supplement or not.

Mr. Meade: Just really quickly. Basically, there are two broad categories of the services: those that are attached to police – you'll often see them in their local detachments – and then those that are targeted, a question that came up before with some of the specific groups, whether that's people who have been experiencing family violence or other sorts of things. The types of groups that we fund can be those associated on the policing side, but we also fund the Calgary Mennonite society. The women's shelters oftentimes receive some dollars, not for the work they do in the shelter but for some of the outreach support to those people who are experiencing these kinds of crimes. John Howard is another group that tends to receive some dollars for targeted groups as well.

Mr. Dallas: When I divide that number down into the 147, it's a fairly substantial investment and, I would suggest, an investment that's worth every penny of that, and certainly I would support that. What I would like to have you elaborate on is: when we're spending that kind of money, do we provide some supports in terms of helping those organizations measure outcomes? In other words, do they have the tools appropriate to provide supports to victims? How do we support them in terms of measuring the effectiveness of the programs that they're delivering and the value the taxpayers are receiving for that?

Mr. Meade: Sure. We do a few things. One is that we have some of our people in the victims' services program go out and actually help. We also fund some co-ordinators in specific communities, especially some of the aboriginal communities, to help out with some of this. We also fund some of the associations to help out. A conference I believe occurred in this year we're speaking of where we bring them together and learn about best practice. So there are a number of ways in which we support the learnings and the sharings and the work associated with the outcomes.

Mr. Dallas: Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kang, please, followed by Mr. Benito.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 57 of the annual report it says, "Correctional settings also provide for assessment and treatment of mental illness, addictions, and concurrent disorders." My question is, sir: how much funding was allocated towards increasing access to addiction and mental health services for inmates?

Mr. Pickering: I'll ask Bruce if he has got that number.

Mr. B. Anderson: I don't have that exact number, but I can tell you that we spend approximately \$14 million on health services for inmates. A considerable part of that goes towards addictions and mental health because there is a significant percentage of the population that has issues around those issues.

Mr. Kang: Thank you. My supplemental is: how do these addictions and mental health services for inmates in Alberta compare with other jurisdictions; that is, the type of programs offered and length of time or access to these programs? Is there any measurable success rate of the addictions programs? I think that may be too many questions.

Mr. B. Anderson: Well, most jurisdictions provide health services, including addictions and mental health services, the same way that Alberta currently does or has been doing. However, Alberta is now, as Brad indicated in his opening comments, moving to transfer the responsibility for delivery of health services, including addictions and mental health services, to Alberta Health Services effective April 1, 2010. Other jurisdictions are looking very closely at what's going on in Alberta, with a view to possibly implementing the same type of approach in their jurisdictions.

I indicated in my last answer that we spend about \$14 million a year in the provision of health services to inmates. Also, through a safe communities grant, that's been processed through Alberta Health and Wellness to Alberta Health Services, we're going to be able to supplement those expenditures by \$7.54 million, effective in the current year and next year as well, and that money will be targeted towards enhancing addictions and mental health services for the inmate population. AHS is currently in the process of recruiting additional mental health services workers and addictions workers pursuant to that funding agreement.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, sir.

The Deputy Chair: Mr. Benito, please, followed by Mr. Mason.

Mr. Benito: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank all of you for coming here this morning. Your time is appreciated. It has certainly helped this member with your ministry's transparency and performance measures, so thank you.

My question is with reference to page 48 of your report, about the provincial correctional facilities 2008-2009, in the left-hand corner. You know, there's some explanation here about the adult and young offender camps that were closed. The Shunda Creek closed September 15, 2008, and the Fort McMurray minimum security camp closed July 31, 2008. My questions are: where did we send these people, what was the reason for the closures, and was there any evaluation or assessment of the communities or families of the people who lived in these facilities before?

Mr. Pickering: I'll start and then turn it over to Bruce. With some of the camp facilities – and that's not the Shunda Creek because that dealt with young offenders – I think what we've seen over the last few years is a hardening of our inmate population. There's less and less sort of minimum security inmates as a result of conditional sentencing. So we had a number of facilities that were being underutilized, and from an effectiveness and efficiency perspective they were closed. Those inmates were absorbed into our existing facilities. In the Shunda Creek a lot of those were referred out of the

Calgary area, so those young offenders were put back into the young offender centre in the Calgary area.

Bruce, I don't know if you want to supplement.

Mr. B. Anderson: I don't think I can add much more to that except, again, just to reinforce that the profile of the inmate population on the adult side has hardened significantly. The majority of inmates now in custody are remand inmates: 57, 58 per cent. They're not suitable for a camp placement, obviously. They're in custody either because they're a risk to the public or because the court wants to guarantee their attendance, so they need to be held in a secure environment.

Also, with respect to the youth system the type of youth who are actually being incarcerated are youth that have a significant profile as well in terms of their offence types and, again, very few who would be suitable for a camp placement. So the camps were no longer economically viable.

9:50

Mr. Benito: Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, my supplemental question. You used the words on the same page "contracted facilities." Is there a plan by your ministry for adult correctional centres to be contracted or privatized? My concern is about closures. We plan it. There were some policy decisions made. For sure, we made some reasonable assumptions for the logic of why we should open these centres. Then all of a sudden, you know, it changed dramatically. We made the closures. My question before was whether there was any evaluation or assessment of the communities and the families of these people who lived here before. My question is on your assessment. Are the words "contracted" or "privatization" a good concept that might be narrowed down by your ministry, or is there some concept that we might consider, being practised outside of this jurisdiction, that might be applicable for this province, especially in reference to closures?

Mr. Pickering: I'll start and then ask Bruce to supplement. Currently there are no plans by the province to contract out our adult or young offender facilities. The only contract we had on the adult side was previously with the federal government, obtaining some capacity in the Grande Cache facility. I think the change in our inmate makeup was largely due to decisions made at the federal government, probably dating back into the late '90s, when conditional sentences were imposed. We have sort of a graphing of our inmate population. As a result of conditional sentencing, there was a fairly severe drop in our population. The reason that these camps previously existed was because we had a large minimum security population, and as time went on, there were less and less of them.

Bruce, did you want to supplement?

Mr. B. Anderson: I guess only with respect to, if I understand your question, impact on the community. With respect to Fort McMurray there was only one permanent staff member that actually lived in Fort McMurray. We had difficulty recruiting to Fort McMurray, and the staff that operated the camp were actually residents of Edmonton and went to Fort McMurray.

With respect to Shunda Creek we made arrangements with Alberta Health Services to look at utilizing the facility to provide addictions programming. Although our camp closed, there was still a continuation of service.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Mason, please.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much. I'd like to ask about, first of all, the sheriffs program, whether or not there's a longer term strategic plan for the development of – it's called a program, I guess – the sheriffs branch.

Second is if any analysis has been done of the costs and benefits of having a provincial police force versus renewing the contract with the RCMP for policing, whether or not there's a timeline for renegotiating the RCMP contract, and what the province's objectives would be in pursuing that contract.

Mr. Pickering: Okay. I'll start with the renewal of the RCMP contract. I think there were two questions there. One is our intent. As indicated by the Premier of the province, it's to renew our agreement with the RCMP. They have, I think, a very strong and proud tradition in Alberta as our provincial police force, and we want that to continue. A current agreement expires in 2012. We're currently in negotiations with them in conjunction with all other provinces and territories that contract for provincial policing.

With respect to the sheriffs I think sheriffs cover a very broad spectrum within our ministry. There's overall about 600 sheriffs. A large part of that deals with our prisoner and transport component and courthouse security. That's probably two-thirds, or 75 per cent, of our sheriffs population. The traffic sheriffs amount to 105, who are probably what people would perceive as more police-like.

Mr. Mason: It seems like there's a lot more than that.

Mr. Pickering: That's what we're trying to do, particularly from a highway enforcement perspective.

We are working on a pilot project with the RCMP to see if we can get better integration there. I think the reason that program was stood up was under the traffic safety plan for the province because of the significant sort of costs associated with collisions and deaths from a traffic safety perspective.

The Deputy Chair: Very good. That's all the time we're going to have for answers around the table here today, but we're going to take some questions to be read into the record. If the department could respond to the committee through the clerk in a timely manner to those, that'd be great.

Mr. Olson: Well, my question is of more of a conversational nature, so I think I'll just take it up, maybe, afterwards. Thanks.

The Deputy Chair: Very good.

Mr. Chase, followed by Mr. Drysdale, please.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I have two sets that I'd look forward to having answers provided to. Page 54 of your ministry's annual report indicates that Alberta's per diem cost of housing for adult offenders is the lowest in Canada. How does the per diem cost of housing compare with the quality of the housing provided? Is the lowest cost, for example, due to overcrowded conditions and less staff at the facilities in Alberta? What's the reasoning behind it? The supplemental to the first question: why was there such a lack of timely data for reporting the per diem costs that it was determined to no longer be necessary to report in ministry business plan performance measures?

The second set. In the performance measures, why are there no measures that report how many Albertans are impacted by problem gambling and alcohol abuse? Does the ministry believe that it would be more effective to develop objective performance measures rather

than relying on public opinion as a measure of the ministry's success in achieving its goals?

Thank you. I'll look forward to those answers.

The Deputy Chair: Very good.

Mr. Drysdale, followed by Mr. Benito, please.

Mr. Drysdale: I'll pass, Mr. Chair. That's all right.

The Deputy Chair: Very good.

Mr. Benito, followed by Mr. Kang, please.

Mr. Benito: Thank you very much again, Mr. Chair. On page 127 of the annual report why was \$20 million in capital investment unspent in 2008 and 2009? Supplemental to that, can you explain further what the Alberta police integrated information initiative is intended to achieve?

The other question I have is that page 129 of the 2008-2009 annual report shows that \$18 million was spent on organized crime, program 2.2.5. Can you explain what specific outcomes were achieved? Supplemental to that is: since 2006 has ALERT been evaluated or assessed in any way?

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Deputy Chair: All right. Mr. Kang, please.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've got two sets here if I may, please. Referencing page 25, why was the decision made to delay the use of the \$8.5 million federal recruitment fund? The supplemental is: what is the explanation for the vacancies and delayed program implementation of sheriffs and the delay in the first responder radio communication system?

The second set is in reference to page 129 of the report, that First Nations policing was unexpended by \$1.3 million. Why is this? The supplemental is: what percentage of inmates currently held in Alberta facilities are of aboriginal or Métis background?

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you. That concludes our questions for the record.

Mr. Pickering, thank you very much to you and all of your staff for coming in this morning and joining us. Whenever you're ready, you're free to go, of course. Thank you again.

Mr. Pickering: Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair: All right. Is there any other business? Very good.

The next meeting.

Mr. Chase: Excuse me. Sorry. There was. I know you're anxious to go, as we all are. Just a question: was there any plan for outside-of-session Public Accounts sessions such as we had in the fall? Is there anything planned for the spring prior to the session?

The Deputy Chair: Well, we'll poll the committee and see if there's any interest. Of course, it's a fairly short break this time between the sessions, being that we're back in February. We'll poll the committee, and if there's a burning desire to do so, then we'll have that discussion.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Also, our next meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday with Alberta Transportation. I would think that with the speed that we're going through the business in the House, we probably won't be in session next Wednesday. If that's the case, then we'll meet with the department once we're back in session in February.

With that, a motion to adjourn. Mr. Olson. Mr. Chase. Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 10 a.m.]

