



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature  
Second Session

Standing Committee  
on  
Public Accounts

Labour and Immigration

Tuesday, July 14, 2020  
8 a.m.

Transcript No. 30-2-10

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
The 30th Legislature  
Second Session**

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP), Chair  
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP), Deputy Chair

Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)  
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)  
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UCP)  
Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)  
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)  
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)  
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UCP)  
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UCP)  
Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (UCP)\*  
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UCP)  
Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)

\* substitution for Sarah Hoffman

**Also in Attendance**

Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)

**Office of the Auditor General Participants**

W. Doug Wylie	Auditor General
Rob Driesen	Assistant Auditor General

**Support Staff**

Shannon Dean, QC	Clerk
Stephanie LeBlanc	Clerk Assistant and Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Teri Cherkevich	Law Clerk
Trafton Koenig	Parliamentary Counsel
Philip Massolin	Clerk of Committees and Research Services
Sarah Amato	Research Officer
Nancy Robert	Research Officer
Michael Kulicki	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications
Jeanette Dotimas	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Janet Schwegel	Director of Parliamentary Programs
Amanda LeBlanc	Deputy Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

## **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

### **Participants**

Ministry of Labour and Immigration

Maryann Everett, Assistant Deputy Minister, Workforce Strategies

Shawn McLeod, Deputy Minister

Myles Morris, Assistant Deputy Minister, Safe, Fair and Healthy Workplaces

Lenore Neudorf, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategy and Policy

Andre Rivest, Acting Senior Financial Officer



**8 a.m.****Tuesday, July 14, 2020**

[Mr. Gotfried in the chair]

**The Deputy Chair:** Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call this meeting of the Public Accounts Committee to order and welcome everyone in attendance.

My name is Richard Gotfried, MLA for Calgary-Fish Creek and acting chair of the committee. Ordinarily I would suggest going around the committee table for all participants to introduce themselves. However, with participants joining us through various methods of communication, I will note for the record that the following members are present either via video conference or teleconference. On video conferencing we have MLA Guthrie, MLA Renaud, and MLA Rosin.

The following members are present in the committee room, and I think we have an introduction around the table, then. I'd like to start to my right.

**Mr. Rowswell:** Okay. Garth Rowswell, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

**Mr. Reid:** Roger Reid, MLA for Livingstone-Macleod.

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

**Mr. Stephan:** Jason Stephan, MLA for Red Deer-South.

**Ms Neudorf:** Lenore Neudorf, ADM, strategy and policy with Labour and Immigration. Good morning.

**Mr. Morris:** Myles Morris, ADM, safe, fair, and healthy workplaces, Labour and Immigration.

**Mr. McLeod:** Good morning. Shawn McLeod, Deputy Minister of Labour and Immigration.

**Mr. Rivest:** Good morning. Andre Rivest, acting senior financial officer.

**Ms Gray:** Good morning. Christina Gray, MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Marlin Schmidt, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

**Ms Robert:** Good morning. Nancy Robert, research officer with the Legislative Assembly Office.

**Mr. Roth:** Good morning, everyone. Aaron Roth, committee clerk.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you. I would note for the record the following substitutions: Mr. Schmidt for Ms Hoffman. We also have MLA Dach on video conferencing.

**Mr. Dach:** Good morning.

**The Deputy Chair:** Good morning. Thank you, Member Dach.

Also joining us today are the following officials from the office of the Auditor General via video conference. From the Auditor General's office we have Doug Wylie, Auditor General, and Robert Driesen, Assistant Auditor General.

From the Legislative Assembly Office, LAO staff present: Aaron Roth has already introduced himself; and, of course, we have Nancy, I think, in place of Philip Massolin this morning. Today we also have officials from the Ministry of Labour and Immigration. We have Deputy Minister Shawn McLeod in person. We have, joining us, Maryann Everett on video conference. We can see you

here, Maryann. Have a quick wave for us as well. Of course, we have our others introduced as well already around the table.

A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Based on the recommendations from Dr. Deena Hinshaw regarding physical distancing, attendees at today's meeting are advised to leave the appropriate distance between themselves and other meeting participants.

I would also ask all members participating via video conference or teleconference to ensure that your microphones are muted unless you are recognized to speak. Once you unmute your microphone, please wait a second or two before speaking to ensure that the audio captures what you are saying as you begin speaking. For those members and guests present in the room, *Hansard* will operate the microphones for you.

If you wish to abstain from a recorded vote, please send the committee clerk a private instant message, e-mail, or text.

Committee proceedings are live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. The audio- and video stream and transcripts of meetings can be accessed via the Legislative Assembly website.

First, I'd like an approval of the agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the agenda? Seeing none, would a member like to move that the agenda for the July 14, 2020, meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be approved as distributed? Member Rowswell. Any discussion on the motion? Before the committee's vote, I would ask all members to unmute their microphones on the lines. All in favour? Any opposed? Members on the phone? I think we've already heard from you. Thank you. The motion is carried.

Hon. members, we have minutes from our last meeting. Do members have any errors or omissions to note in regard to the meeting minutes? If not, would a member move that the minutes of the July 7, 2020, meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be approved as distributed? Member Toor. Any discussion on the motion? Again, before the committee votes, I would ask all members on the phones to unmute their microphones. All in favour? Any opposed? Have we captured everybody on the phones? Thank you. The motion is carried.

I would like to welcome our guests from the Ministry of Labour and Immigration who are here to address the office of the Auditor General's outstanding recommendations as well as the ministry's annual report 2018-2019. I invite officials from the ministry to provide opening remarks not exceeding 10 minutes.

**Mr. McLeod:** Good morning, and thank you to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for the opportunity to discuss Labour and Immigration's 2018-19 annual report and the recommendations of the office of the Auditor General. As previously mentioned, with me today is Lenore Neudorf, ADM, strategy and policy; Maryann Everett, who is online, ADM, workforce strategies; Myles Morris, ADM, safe, fair, and healthy workplaces; and Andre Rivest, our acting SFO.

Alberta Labour and Immigration focuses on serving the needs of employers, employees, and newcomers to the province of Alberta. Our department is responsible for ensuring that Alberta has a highly skilled and efficient workforce and a strong labour market that supports a thriving and diversified economy. Our core business includes providing Albertans with access to adequate skill development and workplace training, labour market information, immigration co-ordination, governance of professions and operations while protecting workers' rights by regulating workplaces and ensuring fair and modern legislation.

Over 900 dedicated Labour and Immigration employees working in over 40 offices across our province and in the field are working,

connecting Albertans to the jobs of today and preparing them for the jobs of tomorrow. Our strategy and policy division focuses on the policy side of this work to align our labour supply and demand and make sure Alberta workplaces are safe and healthy and operate within a legislative framework that supports Alberta's economy. This division also leads federal-provincial relations work, provides mediators and arbitrators to assist unions and employers in resolving disputes.

Safe, fair, and healthy workplaces works with employers, employees, industry associations, and labour groups to promote an informed and knowledgeable workforce regarding shared workplace rights and responsibilities. This division monitors compliance with employment standards and occupational health and safety legislation using a risk-based approach, responding to complaints, incidents, and injuries, and establishing a prevention framework to reduce injuries and illnesses within Alberta workplaces.

The workforce strategies division works with other provincial ministries, industry, the federal government, and other departments to attract and train qualified workers, reduce barriers to labour mobility across Canada, improve qualification recognition, nominate newcomers to Alberta, and help them settle successfully in the province. This division also administers the labour market transfer agreements and delivers programming for indigenous Albertans.

The mandate of Labour and Immigration also includes several agencies, boards, and commissions, including the Alberta Labour Relations Board, the Appeals Commission, the Fair Practices office, the medical panels office, the Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee, the Land Agent Advisory Committee, and the Workers' Compensation Board. These organizations are separate entities but work closely with the ministry. The Workers' Compensation Board, as you may know, is an arm's-length statutory corporation that has its own budget and reporting processes.

Today I will be focusing on Labour and Immigration's 2018-19 reporting processes, including the financial information contained therein. As shown in our annual report, Labour and Immigration's consolidated operating expenses for budget year 2018-19 totalled \$226 million. The year ended with an actual operating expense of approximately \$208 million, being an approximately \$17 million reduction to budget. Despite the \$17 million operating expense surplus, the department was able to address the outcomes outlined in the annual report and exceed many of the identified targets.

Within the 2018-19 annual report our first outcome ensures "workers are protected by a modern and balanced labour environment that promotes safe, fair, and healthy workplaces" and addresses the department's important work to prevent injuries, illness, and deaths by providing a strong health and safety culture in workplaces. In 2018-19 key results towards promoting safe and healthy workplaces included amending the employment standards regulation to raise the age for most youth employment to 13 years of age, amending the occupational health and safety code for the farm and ranch sector, banning hazardous footwear, adding psychological and social hazards to Alberta's occupational health and safety legislation, and amending the Public Service Employee Relations Act.

During this time the department exceeded several performance measures, including a 21 per cent increase to the number of employment standards complaints completed within 180 days, an increase of 2,400 OH and S inspections completed above the 12,000 target for 2018-19. These increases were a result of efficiencies and streamlined processes added to Alberta's safer and healthy

workplace culture, where workers are protected and understand their rights.

#### 8:10

Our second outcome related to expanding on workers' rights and focusing on the areas of labour relations and dispute settlement, where workers have access to timely, fair, and independent adjudication and dispute resolution services in Alberta. The department's mediation services branch, the Alberta Labour Relations Board, and the Appeals Commission focused their efforts on these specific outcomes. Mediation services help unions and employers resolve disputes in collective bargaining, providing mediation services to parties involved in workplace negotiations and disputes. The Alberta Labour Relations Board is an independent and impartial tribunal responsible for the day-to-day application and interpretation of Alberta's collective bargaining laws, in particular the Labour Relations Code. The Appeals Commission for Alberta's workers' compensation is a quasi-judicial tribunal that acts as the final level of appeal for WC matters, ensuring impartial decisions for workers and employers.

Some key results from 2018-19 include establishing the Fair Practices office to help injured workers and employers, establishing the Labour Relations Board as the appeal body for employment standards matters, and gaining further experience within the LRB adjudicating appeals under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. These key results enhance positive labour management relations throughout Alberta. These results included resolving 99 per cent of collective bargaining agreements with a ministry-appointed mediator and without a work stoppage. They also include the Labour Relations Board successfully handling a growing number of cases, from 517 to 649, during the year, including a growth in certification applications by approximately 12 per cent. These results and others clearly illustrate the good work of the staff of the Alberta Labour and Immigration department and their role in contributing to Alberta's workplaces.

Our work also includes ensuring Albertans can be successful in these workplaces. Our workforce strategies division spends considerable time working with employers and job creators to ensure the workforce has the skills and training needed to address labour market demands. This involves delivering programs and services to all Albertans, including groups underrepresented in the workforce such as indigenous people, youth, newcomers, and the unemployed.

Through training programs, employer supports, and immigration services our department has responded to our third business outcome: ensuring that "workers and newcomers are well-prepared to participate in Alberta's dynamic labour market." Our department worked on many initiatives during 2018-19 to achieve this outcome. These include launching a simpler and faster application process for the Alberta immigration nominee program, investing \$18 million in the Canada-Alberta job grant program that helps provide valuable skills training to Albertans, establishing a workforce adjustment committee to help workers displaced by the transition away from the coal-fired electrical generation. In 2018-19 the Alberta-Canada jobs grant program was successful, with a total of 6,284 grants issued, a 4 per cent increase from the previous year. These grants provided training to 12,154 Albertans, with an increase of 6 per cent from 2017-18.

The grants and programs demonstrate the services provided to Albertans and newcomers and result in exceeding targets in the following areas. Under training for work nearly 72 per cent of clients reported employment or further training compared to the target of 70 per cent.

Mr. Chair, to sum up, in 2018-19 the department generally met the outcomes of the department established, and in many areas exceeded these targets. Occupational health and safety inspections and employment standards complaint resolutions were up. Labour negotiations were successfully mediated, and support programs for Albertans and newcomers seeking new skills in the labour market exceeded our measured goal.

In addition to this work, the department has also begun the important work to address its recommendations from the office of the Auditor General. A recommendation was to “regularly measure and report on the results of [our] current workforce strategies, including lessons learned.” A variety of processes have been put in place to report on current programs and services. All actions relating to addressing this recommendation were compiled into a program monitoring, performance measuring action plan, which was put in place in 2019. Our department has advised the office of the Auditor General that we are ready for a follow-up audit. With that said and after consultation with the office of the Auditor General, staff in the Auditor General’s office are still reviewing some of our action plan processes and documentations. We will wait to get feedback from the office of the Auditor General and make a final determination as to whether we are ready for a final audit with respect to the Auditor General’s follow-up.

In conclusion, we recognize the importance of planning for the future to ensure we can continue to attract investment and support job growth in Alberta. Alberta Labour and Immigration continuously evaluates Alberta’s labour market and workforce to identify and develop the valuable tools and services needed to address current and future needs for Alberta.

**The Deputy Chair:** Great. Thank you, Deputy Minister McLeod.

I’ll now turn it over to Auditor General Mr. Wylie for your comments. You have five minutes.

**Mr. Wylie:** Well, good morning, Chair and committee members and representatives from the ministry. I will be brief as the deputy has touched on and hit the highlights of our outstanding recommendation.

Maybe I’ll just make one point, and that is that we do understand that the department has implemented some new processes relating to the recommendation we made, and it’s currently verifying that they’re operating as intended. As the deputy indicated, my staff will be working with the ministry staff to assess those. When ready, we’ll do a complete follow-up and report the results of our work to the Assembly, which is customary practice.

With that, I’ll cede the rest of my time to the committee, Chair.

**The Deputy Chair:** Great. Thank you, Mr. Wylie.

We’ll now proceed to questions from committee members for our guests. As a reminder of the rotations, we will start with 15 minutes each for the Official Opposition and the government side, then three rotations of 10 minutes each, followed by three minutes for read-in questions at the discretion of the members.

I will now open the floor for questions from members, first starting with the opposition side. MLA Gray.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, and thank you very much to all the officials from the department of labour for being here as well as to the office of the Auditor General.

My first question is for our Auditor General, in fact. I was hoping to just get a slightly better understanding. This audit from November 2018 was looking at the building and educating tomorrow’s workforce strategy, which was originally released in 2006. I want to make very clear that I think the Auditor General made strong recommendations, and it is important that we’re

measuring and monitoring our workforce strategies, reporting on and evaluating performance. I think this is all perfect and good.

I guess my question is that this was a strategy kind of put out by cabinet and the government of the day in 2006, and then, as I understand it, the political oomph behind this, that particular strategy – I mean, ministers change; government priorities change. Around the 2012 timeline, when the department was perhaps not monitoring and reporting on the progress towards those planned results, 2013 to 2016 – obviously, at that point I was a computer programmer and not involved at all, but I understand that getting the political will to continue monitoring and reporting on this strategy, that the government had moved past, was a challenge for the department.

I just wonder if the Auditor General can speak to the impact on the department operating when the political direction has shifted. In this case, the Auditor General has recommended that it needed to be fully closed out, and the department has been working toward that. But I can also understand that it’s difficult for the department if the ministers and cabinet have changed their priorities, and the 10-year strategy is something they’re no longer talking about. I just wondered if you could speak to this situation and if you’ve seen things like this before in the public service and your recommendation.

I hope the Auditor General is there.

**The Deputy Chair:** Auditor General, you may have to unmute your microphone.

**Mr. Wylie:** Yes. Sorry about that. I was just having difficulty connecting.

Yeah, you are absolutely correct, and you provide a very good summary of the chronology of events. Our work was undertaken in 2018, and just prior to the commencement of our work was the ending of the strategy that you refer to. It was a 10-year strategy, and it was really the focus, predominantly, of our audit, and that was to assess the success of that strategy and the reporting of that strategy. What we found at the time was that the department had taken over primary responsibility at the time of our review. We determined that, in fact, you know, improvements could be made, particularly in the areas of monitoring and reporting on the progress of achieving that planned strategy, so how successful was the strategy in its deliverables and also that it could demonstrate that the strategy achieved its results and whether the resources dedicated were well placed. In essence, results achieved at what cost: that is the way we would summarize that. A recommendation was made.

8:20

You’re correct that the strategy ceased as a multiministry strategy, as we understand it; however, the recommendations and the findings were relevant to the ministry itself. It’s important, you know, that it continues to measure and report on the results of the workforce strategies that continue to this day. So in that context we made the recommendation that we did. We think it’s important. As we said, we’ll follow up on the action taken by the ministry.

Now, I will ask Rob Driesen, who is on the line, to see if he would like to supplement or provide more detail in case I’ve missed anything or if I’ve missed any salient points of your question, Member.

Rob, do you have anything to supplement?

**Mr. Driesen:** Good morning, everybody. The only thing that I’ll add is that in the final few years of the strategy, the 10-year strategy, so from 2013 to 2016, there was an effort to focus on what the next potential strategy would be. There was a lot of work being done on that, but there was never a new strategy implemented. So because

of that focus on the new strategy, I think there was less emphasis on focusing on what the results of that current strategy at the time were. As a result, when a decision was made that there would no longer be a government-wide strategy to take over from BETW, then there really wasn't a lot in the way of analysis of the results of that strategy and what could be learned from it. That's what drove our recommendation that there should be some review of that, so you can learn from those lessons and could apply those to all the strategies that were then going to be done within the individual departments.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you both.

**Mr. McLeod:** Could I add a comment? I think you were perhaps briefed on the same background of that strategy that I was when I first joined the department. Certainly, I don't really want to talk sort of about looking back, but in terms of looking forward, we're obviously addressing the recommendation and are happy to do so. I do think that I would just like to add that some of the things that we are doing when we're addressing the recommendation are going to be policies and procedures that will be forward looking as well. So they are sort of flowing out of that strategy and how it was monitored, et cetera, but it will really be used as a tool on a go-forward basis. I just wanted to point that out to the committee.

**The Deputy Chair:** All right. Just as a reminder to everyone, we are looking at the report and the Auditor General's report specifically. So although I appreciate the looking forward, we are actually looking backward at today's meeting.

Thank you.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much. Yes. We don't use the word "forward" in PACs.

**Mr. McLeod:** I'll try to remember that.

**Ms Gray:** That being said, that leads me into my kind of follow-up. Just at this point I think the information that the PAC committee receives is that you're ready for your follow-up. You've come up with the strategies. Would you be able to describe in any more detail prior to the Auditor General seeing and approving how you're reporting on and evaluating performance and some of the changes that you've implemented to respond to this Auditor General recommendation?

**Mr. McLeod:** Yes, I certainly can do that. Maybe what I'll do is that I'll just outline them at a high level. Maryann Everett is most intricately involved in this, and I'll also, then, turn it over to her to provide some additional detail.

With respect to the program monitoring, performance measurement action plan, as we call it, the goal of the program is to develop and enhance the use of data to support programs and services with evidence, informed decision-making, and to ensure accountability. This package includes provincial-level monitoring and evaluation as well as the accountability frameworks and deliverables associated with the labour market transfer agreements. For those that don't know, that is a package of federal funding under two separate agreements, which really comprises the bulk of the funding for the training work that we do in our department.

Workforce strategies will meet with the OAG recommendation through a two-phased approach to implement performance measurement, monitoring, evaluation on workforce strategies, programs, and services. This approach is expected to be fully implemented by fiscal year 2023, but I can say that, really, all of the processes for monitoring are in place. It's really sort of evaluating

the monitoring and reporting on the monitoring which are sort of the forward-looking steps.

I've got some of the detail, but I think perhaps, Maryann, if I could turn it over to you to add any additional comments or details that you wanted to.

**Ms Everett:** Yes. Thanks very much, Shawn. I just wanted to say that in addition to what you covered, Shawn, we've been really focusing on data collection and integrity. Looking back on the recommendations that came through the BETW strategy, we knew there was a lot of focus on outputs, but outcomes would require significant work on data collection and integrity. We have actually, even prior to the recommendations that came in through the OAG audit, started working on metrics across the four ministries that are using the labour market transfer agreement dollars and involved in training individuals and helping them with career and employment connections.

Over the last three years we have developed an internal metrics report that includes over 80 pages of key data. We focused on ensuring that we can compare apples and apples. We've also used our labour market transfer agreement dollars to put in new tracking programs so that we could monitor data. Given our focus on ensuring there was greater representation of underrepresented groups, within the workforce strategies division in particular we put a full-on training focus, mandating GBA plus and indigenous training to ensure that there wasn't any unconscious bias in the targeting of our programs. We focused on measuring increased access to programming, adjusted the way we did our contracting. We have now developed, as of '18-19, some baseline data that we are continuing with that helps us identify across the programs which demographic groups are using our programs, and starting in April 2020, we'll be able to do an even better job on that.

We've also been tracking outcomes across all of our programs and are just in the process of completing an internal program review that will look at where there are further opportunities to improve our program data collection, in particular identifying outcomes. We've also used operational excellence across all programs to identify any steps or aspects of a program that aren't getting us to intended outcomes, and we've made adjustments.

We have been reporting and working very closely with the federal government. Every October, every year, there's an annual report that goes to Canada on LMDA and WDA spending. Every May we start, with the federal government, working on our annual plan, which involves all of the ministries that are involved in the training work. I guess that in addition to that, it's been an ongoing process of working with contractors to also ensure that they are collecting data and also are ensuring that we've got a broad representation of individuals in our programs. We're starting to see some evidence of some improvement there.

There's a lot more that we could say. It's a pretty exciting area that we're very proud to be able to make some progress in. Obviously, it's very important, in the context of that, to maximize the value of those dollars, so we've also been working with contractors to remove any barriers to people participating in our RFP calls and also ensuring that we can train more people with a lower cost per client in increased outcomes. I'd be pleased to provide any additional details if people are interested, but there's a lot of work ongoing in this area.

**Ms Gray:** Wonderful. Thank you very much. It sounds very, very busy, and a lot of what you just said sounds fantastic. I'm glad to hear the GBA plus application, particularly, to remove unconscious bias and with the ministry's focus on indigenous training and priorities.

In his opening remarks Deputy Minister McLeod highlighted training for work's success. I was wondering if you might be able to elaborate a little bit more on training for work, the 72 per cent of trainees who were then employed or in further training 90 days after training. That is a broad category, but perhaps even just a couple of examples of programs in training for work that you would highlight for reasons of popularity or uniqueness.

**8:30**

**Ms Everett:** Yeah. Just to highlight some of those areas from training for work, as you may recall, there are several component parts. Our most successful subprogram in training for work is integrated training, where 78 per cent of individuals are employed 90 days post training completion. We had been tracking six months after the training was completed and had identified that basically there was no shift in that result. We have now actually followed up a year later and are seeing some good results there as well.

In integrated training the outcome rate is 78 per cent. With our immigrant bridging candidates, it's about 79 per cent that are still employed after 90 days.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you. We'll need to move on to the next rotation.

For the government side, we have MLA Toor.

**Mr. Toor:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the department for coming in and providing this important information. On page 58 of the annual report there's a table which states the percentage of Alberta immigrant program nominees who were surveyed and who report that they're still residing and working in Alberta one year after obtaining permanent residency. We all know that the Alberta nominee program is very important when it comes to immigration, and it plays a very important role in attracting newcomers. To me, it appears that we are doing quite a good job in retaining immigrant nominees. The question is: can the department explain our success in retaining nominees when it comes to giving them a nomination and them deciding to reside in Alberta and be a part of our workforce?

**Mr. McLeod:** We certainly can, and thank you for the question. The AINP is an economic immigration program that has historically focused on nominating individuals who are currently working and living in Alberta or have family ties to Alberta. This helps the program select those who are most likely to stay in Alberta and who already have strong economic ties to the province. Alberta has historically had a high employment rate and offered a variety of economic opportunities for immigrants, so that is an additional tool that has allowed us to both attract and retain people, in particular, in this circumstance. The department also usefully provides prearrival information and services to the AINP express entry nominees who are overseas to ensure that they have a better understanding of living and working in Alberta before their arrival and which supports the retention of these immigrant nominees once they arrive.

I just wanted to point out that we certainly are always considering in our annual report what the performance measurements are and these types of things. Sometimes, you know, if you just read this on a page, you might think to yourself: well, you know, there's another 88 per cent sort of number. But I do think it's truly, truly important to our immigration scheme and in particular our provincial nominee program that we have the ability to not only attract people to the province but to keep them here. Certainly, one of the considerations in immigration is people coming and then going somewhere else. I really want to applaud the folks in our department, who have for many years now had that as a significant focus and, as the statistics

certainly bear out, have really gotten some good results for us in terms of the province of Alberta.

I would add that, as I indicated in my response, the strength of the economy is one of the tools that allows us to both attract and retain people. That just emphasizes the importance of ensuring that we maximize that strength on a go-forward basis, because immigration is a significant part of, you know, sort of the go-forward plan for all of Canada but Alberta in particular. I just wanted to add that point.

**Mr. Toor:** Yeah. Well, despite this, still it's true that there are some immigrants who, after getting a nomination, I think, decide to leave Alberta. Can the department explain: what is the reason for those nominees to leave Alberta?

**Mr. McLeod:** The AINP follow-up survey does not specifically collect information on reasons that nominees leave, so I don't have sort of a data answer to give you, but I can say that when we think about the reasons why people come – economic opportunity, family connection, a job in the province, all of these types of things – I think it's certainly reasonable to assume that one of the reasons why they leave is that one or more of those connections to the province goes away. Whether it's a family move, whether it's the loss of a job, a lack of strength in the economy, any one or a number of those things can contribute to that. Unfortunately, at this time we don't have sort of specific data that talks to that. It's something that we will certainly consider, based on your question, as to whether we can include that in the survey.

**Mr. Toor:** My next question will be: how does the department compare to other provinces when it comes to retaining immigrant nominees?

**Mr. McLeod:** I'm just going to ask Andre.

From the most recent IIROC report, from 2015-2017, which you folks don't have but which I will just briefly summarize – as Andre has reminded me, it's on the back of this page – traditionally Alberta has had one of the highest retention rates in Canada compared to other provinces. I should note, following up on my comments on the economy, that recent economic conditions in Alberta over the last few years may have resulted in a reduction in these numbers. Certainly, when I look at this chart – and the years in question are 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015, and this is the most recent information we have before sort of the, you know, financial and economic headwinds that Alberta faced – we were consistently at the top ranking across the board: 95 per cent, 96 per cent, 96 per cent, 94 per cent, and much, much, much higher than some of the other provinces in Canada. It's an indication of our success as well.

**Mr. Toor:** Thank you.

We all know that we are going through challenging times. Given that these are challenging times in Alberta, too, but it's still a very attractive place to move for other Canadians, does the department know if immigrant nominees from other provinces are moving to Alberta?

**Mr. McLeod:** I don't think we have a real good handle on that information. The provincial nominee programs issue nominations to individuals who intend to live and work in the particular province, whether that's Alberta or elsewhere. If prior to landing – i.e., receiving permanent resident status – a nominee indicates that they plan to live somewhere else, I think the typical result for most provinces is to pull the nomination because they would like to use their nominations to get people to come to their province. Once a nominee has landed, they do ultimately have the freedom to move

wherever they want to in Canada, and the AINP currently does not have the ability to track the movements of those immigrants, in part because of immigration being a federal responsibility.

Once again, we'll see what we can do in terms of the survey that we issue, because I do think it would be important for us to both know the numbers who have left, which we certainly do, but also understand the reasons why they're leaving.

**Mr. Toor:** Thank you.

Let's move to pages 59 and 60, which have a discussion on the employment prospects of landed immigrants in Alberta. According to the data landed immigrants have the highest employment. My question is: can the department explain the success our landed immigrants have in the labour market and the value they are bringing?

**Mr. McLeod:** The value they are bringing is really – maybe I'll just start off with sort of some more informal comments – just very significant. When we look at both the economic contribution but also contributions in many other ways that newcomers to Canada bring, it's just vital that we're able to continue that and ensure that it proceeds and continues.

New economic immigrants, in addition to a variety of other things, bring typically a high level of education, skills, and work experience. It's one of the things that we look for in the AINP program, and it's one of the things that those folks bring. They are either selected by Alberta employers to fill specific roles, or they choose Alberta as they see opportunities to work and contribute to our communities. Over time they are able to support the growth of Alberta companies through providing new insights and drawing from their previous experience. As I say, it's just a rich background that they bring to help make Canada a better place and Alberta, certainly from an economic perspective, a more competitive economy and a growing economy.

8:40

**Mr. Toor:** Thank you.

Alberta ranks near the top in the nation for the participation rate of landed immigrants. Can the department explain what Alberta does well on this matter and how it can be better to be number one?

**Mr. McLeod:** I won't repeat some of the comments that I've already made to date, but I will point out that Alberta is a leader in credential recognition through the international qualifications assessment service. We call that IQAS within the department. We are the only provincial government in the country to have this assessment service, and we think it's a real competitive advantage to us in terms of attracting people to the province.

What this program does is assist immigrants in having their educational credentials recognized both anywhere they want to use the recognition and certainly for the purposes of coming to Alberta. We also support professional regulatory organizations to continuously improve their recognition processes. Certainly, this current government has brought forward legislation in the last session dealing with that, and it is, both from a substantive perspective but also a process perspective, really important that professional regulatory organizations allow a smooth transition in particular for professionals to come and work here so they can have their credentials recognized as quickly as possible and allow them to start to contribute to the economy.

We also support robust settlement services offered across the province to assist economic immigrants and their families to integrate into working communities. We will continue to refine our immigration approach, tailoring it to the needs of communities and employers. One example is the creation of the new entrepreneur

streams in the Alberta immigrant nominee program. As I've been told, we're principally backwards-looking at this committee, so I probably won't get into too many more details there.

**Mr. Toor:** Thank you very much.

How much time do I have left? Twelve minutes? I'll pass my time to Member Guthrie.

**The Deputy Chair:** All right. MLA Guthrie, on the phone, I believe.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Yes. Thank you. On page 44 of the annual report, under Employment and Training Programs, it states: "A total of 180 training programs, employment services and Indigenous programs and services helped Albertans across the province in 2018-19." Can you kind of break down for us the categories which these 180 programs are in?

**Mr. McLeod:** I can, and thank you for the question. The reference to the 180 programs relates to the department's First Nations training to employment program, which is an on-reserve training program that the department funds and is very proud of; the aboriginal training to employment program, which is an off-reserve training program; and the training for work programs as a bundle, which I can certainly have Maryann talk to a little bit more if you're interested.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Sure.

**Mr. McLeod:** Certainly, on the training for work programs in particular, they comprise about half of the total spend that we have on an annual basis in our department on training and employment. Through these programs there were 84 grants issued and 96 contracts entered into, totalling 180. This consisted of, in the FNTEP program, 65 grants; in the ATEP, the off-reserve, 19 grants. In addition, there were 96 training for work contracts supporting Albertans throughout the following services: transition to employment services, workplace training, immigrant bridging, integrated training, and self-employment.

I know that when I first started and even sometimes today – I've been with the department for just over a year – we have a lot of acronyms and a lot of language. Would you be able to give just a brief description, Maryann, of those five: the transition to employment, workplace training, immigrant bridging, integrated training, and self-employment?

**Ms Everett:** Certainly. Thanks, Shawn. I think my video is activated now.

Transition to employment services is largely used by those individuals who were recently employed. Maybe their job occupation has been impacted. They need to transition to something else. We have a number of providers across the province where someone can go in quickly. Someone can look at their resumé, help them with some interviewing skills, connect them up with some employers that are available locally, basically help them to be able to reinvent themselves with the skills and abilities that they have already. That is one of our lower cost programs. There are a lot of individuals, many of which are recently receiving employment insurance, that are using that program.

The next one, workplace training, is actually almost sort of like a wage subsidy program. This is for individuals that need some specific exposure and experience in the labour market. Sometimes we will combine that with another kind of training for work program – we also have specific programs that are just about workplace training – but it's basically to get that experience, to give

somebody that opportunity to demonstrate what they're able to do and expose them to employers.

Immigrant bridging is primarily focused on newcomers to Alberta. Sometimes people are coming, maybe having a background in engineering or accounting or something like that, and they may need some very specific supports to be able to transition them to the occupation that they were involved in and for which the training they have, you know, occurred in a previous location and help them adapt that to the local market. Those classes tend to be a little smaller, quite focused, and provide some additional supports.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you. We'll have to continue that line of questioning at the next rotation.

Back to the opposition side for a 10-minute rotation. MLA Schmidt, please.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you. I do want to actually continue on the discussion around these programs that MLA Guthrie had started. In the annual report it says that throughout 2018-19 more than 8,100 Albertans received these services through the government-funded training programs. Can you give us a sense of what the eligibility criteria are for being accepted into those programs?

**Mr. McLeod:** The eligibility criteria vary, certainly, as the program type varies, and certainly when we take into account some of the other grant and training programs we have, in particular the aboriginal training grant programs we have, those criteria vary. What I will say, maybe before I turn it over for some more specific detail from Maryann, is that the criteria are really meant as a tool to establish a number of things. One is people who are going to benefit from the training. A second is identifying people in areas where the demand is needed both from the labour market's perspective but also from the individual's perspective. It's sort of a combination of those things that allows us to develop the programs generally but also, then, the criteria to establish who has access to the programs specifically.

Maryann, can I turn it over to you? Can you also maybe start your answer with a little bit of a description of how we use our RFP process to solicit ideas for the programs themselves and then maybe transition to the answer about eligibility?

**Ms Everett:** Thanks very much, Shawn. Just dealing first with the RFP process, one of the things we've been really working on over the last little while is trying to have as many proponents participate in the RFP process so that we can get two things: ensure that we've got proposals that are very strongly linked to the demands in the labour market – as you can appreciate, Alberta is a series of individual labour markets, so local knowledge is really important in connections there – and then the second thing is making sure that there weren't any barriers in the RFPs that would limit participation from certain proponents. We've really been working on that to get as wide a range of proposals as possible.

I guess, in terms of eligibility for the programs, most of our programs are for people who are unemployed, but the Canada-Alberta job grant can be used for those that are unemployed or also those that are currently employed, may need to, I guess, improve their skills or may need to transition to another job in that particular organization. In some cases that can increase productivity for the organization, the individual, or also prevent a potential layoff.

8:50

In terms of our programs for unemployed individuals – First Nations training to employment, aboriginal training to employment – the individuals basically participate as part of a training proposal

that is provided by the indigenous community and involves industry partners and others to ensure both that the individuals are selected appropriate to the training that would be involved and also that there will be jobs available when they complete.

The training for work programs: those are almost all entirely delivered by third-party training providers that are given pay-for-performance contracts with very specific criteria. Certainly, the first item would be that the individuals are unemployed, that they're ready, willing, and able to work. In some cases they may be receiving employment insurance, or we may be able to provide learner benefits to support them. But in every case we're looking for individuals that are interested in participating in the labour market and can benefit and are well suited to the particular program.

To continue on with the description of the programs that I started earlier, integrated training is actually the one that gets some of the best results. It's a well-rounded support. It tends to be for individuals that have got maybe some more challenges getting into the labour market – maybe they need some foundational learning skills or some language training in addition to skills training – and can also, through that program, get some work experience. The criteria for that would be somebody who's on employment insurance, maybe receiving learner benefits, and is willing, basically, to engage on a new training opportunity.

Self-employment: those individuals tend to be self-selected although there is screening that's done by the proponents to make sure that they have a viable business plan. Those people participate over a series of weeks of training to basically flesh out their business plan, resulting in a viable business that employs themselves and others.

I could explain in a lot more detail. Each program has different criteria, but really we're trying to make sure that people are prescreened for their success and are very closely connected to jobs when they finish.

**Mr. Schmidt:** The annual report identifies that 8,100 Albertans receive these services through these types of training programs. Does the department know how many Albertans applied? I'm just curious to know what the demand is for these kinds of programs and what percentage of people who are seeking these programs is actually accepted into them or, I guess, was in the 2018-19 year.

**Mr. McLeod:** I don't have a specific answer to that, and I'll ask Maryann whether she does. What I will say is that part of the reason we use this RFP process is to solicit ideas from those folks who are closest to the community. We have workforce consultants across the province that help us try to identify the specific needs in specific communities, and then we use this RFP process to allow sort of, for lack of a better word, experts in the field to come forward with solutions. They certainly have a strong incentive for a variety of reasons, including sort of, for lack of a better word, the pay-for-performance component of some of these programs, and that certainly presents them with a significant motivation to have the programs be successful and to offer programs that are in demand.

Maryann might be able to provide some specific data. What we try to do is minimize the programs that really have very little demand and maximize the programs that will have sort of maximum demand through that process that I just described.

Maryann, do you have a specific number in terms of applicants versus people who participate?

**Ms Everett:** Thanks, Shawn. I don't actually have that handy, but I can expand a little bit on what you described there. As people can appreciate, the labour market is quite dynamic, and a lot can shift between quarters. We have a series of contract service co-ordinators

that follows up very closely to support our contractors and is constantly monitoring to see how the progress of the contracts is going. That could include everything from: there are no applicants for some reason, so they'll look and see what the challenges are, or it could be a very large demand; for example, in some of our software development courses and that kind of thing. In the event where there's a program that is not seeing applicants, we will look at why. Sometimes, you know, there's a change in labour market conditions or that kind of thing. We would work with the contractor to see if there are any adjustments to be made. In a case where there is significant demand, we would look to see if we could expand the number of seats available. We may also bring on other contractors, again resulting from a request for proposal process.

Certainly, more training could be done. We are limited by the dollars that are available in the budget, which is another reason why we have really been looking to get the best and most innovative proposals so that we maximize those dollars every year.

**Mr. Schmidt:** So it would be fair to say that demand exceeds supply when it comes to these kinds of training programs, by and large. Is that essentially what you're saying, Maryann?

**Ms Everett:** Yes, I would say, in some cases. Probably the most interesting program to watch is self-employment. That tends to ebb and flow, so sometimes there'll be huge demand, and then other times that may drop off, basically depending on what's going on in the labour market.

**Mr. McLeod:** If it's useful, Andre was just hoping to add some information for us.

**Mr. Rivest:** Yeah. Thank you. I just thought I would add that in the '18-19 fiscal year, when it came to training for work, you know, because there were the 8,100 that referenced both training for work and First Nations training to employment, aboriginal training to employment – those programs certainly are demand driven each year. Just to kind of supplement that, in '18-19 we fully expended the budget of the training for work program, and we overspent on the other two because the demand was there.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you.

We'll move back to the government side. MLA Guthrie to continue his line of questioning. Thank you.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Yeah. Thank you, Chair. Back to the employment training programs that we were talking about previously. Like, it seems like a lot of programs there, and I'm just wondering if the department has looked at any efficiencies they may be able to achieve through consolidating some of these programs. Is there overlap where we can, yeah, come up with some efficiency?

**Mr. McLeod:** As I indicated, I've been in this job for just over a year, and when I first came, the volume of information generally was enormous, but certainly in this training area it was significant. It's one of the questions that I raised. We have many, many programs aimed in many directions, I would say, both in terms of the recipients of the program, the employers involved, the industries involved, and the location in the province. So it naturally raises a conversation about sort of a tension, I guess, that might exist between efficiency and sort of specificity, if I could use that word.

I think where we have come to in the past – and I certainly think there's a lot of merit for that argument – is that this process we have whereby we have many programs for many purposes actually does deliver in terms of responding to specific needs. Obviously, the larger the program is, the more consolidated it is, the less it can be

responding to individual needs and, in particular, individual needs across the province, which – as Maryann indicated and I think we all know sort of intuitively, at any given time within the province we certainly have microeconomies where some parts can be hot and some parts not so much so.

It is an issue we've looked at. It is an issue that Maryann and I specifically have had conversations on, and it's one of the things that I think we need to continue to do because we are really in all cases – and we have many conversations within the department on this – trying to get the biggest or the most bang for the dollars that we're expending. I think that's the best I can do in terms of an answer to your question.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Okay. When you have 180 programs, you know, from a metrics perspective of measuring success of these programs, do you have specific metrics for every single program, or do you have sort of a generic template that you run? Like, how do you measure success, I guess, within those programs?

**Mr. McLeod:** I think it depends on the program. As I sort of indicated and as Maryann has indicated, the Canada-Alberta job grant program, for example, is an application-based program where employers are looking to we sort of call it upscale their workforce to both allow people to continue to work and advance within their employment and simply retain their jobs, depending on the economy. We have both of the indigenous streams of programming that I mentioned, and then we have a host of other programs. It certainly depends on the individual program, the recipients, and what the intent of the program is. It's obviously all intended to get people back to work, but it's sort of more nuanced than that when you take a look at the individual programs.

9:00

I can say that some of the programs do have sort of more clear and objective measurements of success. The training for work programs, in particular, where we use this RFP proposal and we have effectively a pay-for-performance model in place, as I say, provide great motivation to have people be successful. Certainly, it's my experience over the last year, following up and hearing from Maryann in particular on these programs, that we have not every one of those programs meeting the metrics but the vast majority of them, and we're able to transition away from those ones where we're not successful towards the type of programs where we are successful.

Maryann, can you add anything to that answer?

**Ms Everett:** Yes. Thanks very much, Shawn. I guess what I would add is that when you hear 180 contracts, that sounds like a bunch of individual programs, but I think, as you were trying to point out, Shawn, there's a very small number of programs. Actually, a lot of them follow the federal policy that's aligned with the dollars that we're spending, which is the labour market transfer agreement. We do have a number of contracts within those programs that basically are delivered across Alberta and focus on different kinds of occupational opportunities. They all have similar kinds of metrics in terms of employment outcomes. All of the training for work programs: that's ultimately what we're targeted at, so that is the metric.

In terms of the intake criteria somebody applying to an integrated training program may require more support. Someone applying to transition to employment services is looking for that fast re-entry to the labour market, but there are really a very small number of programs that apply across Alberta to individual Alberta situations and provide training related to occupations where there are actually jobs.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Okay. Thank you.

Moving on here to the training for work portion, again, on page 45 of the annual report. In there it states that “in 2018, new approaches to delivering training programs were implemented through 11 new contracts in rural and urban communities.” I guess the first question I would have, then, is, like: how many total contracts are currently in place, and are those broken down into regions? Do you have that available?

**Mr. McLeod:** We do have that information available. Presently there are 82 contracts in place, with a number of new contracts starting up in the next several months. The breakdown of contracts by region consists of: the Athabasca-Grande Prairie-Peace River region, 2; the Banff-Jasper-Rocky Mountain House region, 4; the Calgary city, 28; Camrose-Drumheller, 7; Edmonton, 14; Lethbridge-Medicine Hat, 14; Red Deer, 9; and Wood Buffalo-Cold Lake, 4.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Okay. I’d like to kind of ask the same question as I did there previously about, you know, looking for efficiencies in these programs and number of programs and then measuring that success. Yeah. Can you just elaborate?

**Mr. McLeod:** Well, I sort of have some of the same answer, I guess. Each program, obviously, has a different purpose, which makes consolidation, at least, a challenge. As I’ve indicated, the programs are intended to respond to specific labour needs, both in terms of the recipients of the program but also the employers and also the region and the industry itself. They are typically identified to serve regions across the province, as sort of the numbers that we’ve just talked about indicate. The final thing I guess I will say is that we are moving towards more, and potentially more in the future, online types of activities. Maryann, maybe you can talk about that, maybe just a little bit about our experience with that recently but the possibilities of that on a go-forward basis.

Also, I’ll just throw it open – and I throw it open to the member, I guess, asking the question – whether it would be useful to have some background in terms of sort of this LMTA funding that I talk about, which has a WDA agreement and an LMDA agreement under it, and sort of the basket of funding. If you’re interested, we could certainly provide the committee with an overview of that. That is the bucket of money that comes to Alberta from the federal government, which is then shared amongst four different departments, ours being one of them but ours being the principal department that’s responsible for the total distribution of those funds.

**Mr. Guthrie:** That would definitely be helpful. Yes, that would definitely be helpful.

**Mr. McLeod:** Okay. Well, why don’t we do that?

**Mr. Guthrie:** Sure.

**Mr. McLeod:** I think I’ll probably – well, maybe I’ll start with some very high-level comments. I’ll then turn it over to Andre, and he can give us just a little bit of financial data.

And then, Maryann, maybe you can draw a distinction between the WDA and the LMDA funding in particular and sort of the restrictions in one versus the other.

At a very high level – and Andre will help me here – there is roughly \$300 million in this pool. It is distributed between Community and Social Services, Labour and Immigration, Advanced Education, and Indigenous Relations. Our portion of those funds comprises somewhere in the neighbourhood of about \$60 million. [Mr. McLeod’s speaking time expired] We can continue that in the next round.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you.

We’ll move back to opposition rotation for 10 minutes, please.

**Mr. Schmidt:** I just have one more question on the contracts that are put out for delivering these training programs. Do you have a prequalified list of organizations or companies that respond to RFPs? Can you give us a little bit of insight into the RFP process that exists for awarding these contracts?

**Mr. McLeod:** Maryann, you’ll be able to provide a bit more of a detailed answer on this. I’ll start out with a bit broader answer. Really, the information I’m getting is principally from Maryann in any event. I think for a time there, whether they were prequalified or not, we sort of felt that we were seeing the same folks over and over again and perhaps not getting the breadth of ideas and the breadth of solutions that we might be looking for, so there’s been a concerted effort over time to ensure that we are getting more people to the table in terms of responding to the RFPs. Those people, of course, are bringing in ideas and solutions for both, you know, the people that they focus on, whether it’s newcomers or existing Albertans, whether it’s rural, urban, whether it’s industries that we might see in Lethbridge versus industries that we might see in Fort McMurray. That is certainly one of the things that has occurred over time to try to ensure the success of those programs.

Maryann, once again, if you wanted to add anything to that but in particular if you can comment on the prequalification question.

**Ms Everett:** Sure. Thanks, Shawn. We have actually made a lot of changes since we started working on all of these contracts. The first thing was to remove barriers. To give an example of a previous barrier that ties in with that limited list of proponents, it used to be a requirement that a proponent have previous experience with Mobius, which is our internal tracking system. Obviously, if you haven’t had a contract with us previously, you wouldn’t know how to use it. It effectively was a barrier to participation by other proponents, so one of the things was to remove that.

The other thing we’ve been doing is really taking advantage of industry expertise that we have within our division so that we can put together the proposal requests in a way that helps various industries better understand how to put forward a successful proposal. For example, our recent call for proposals for the technology sector: we worked with somebody who had some knowledge of that sector to put together an RFP that would be meaningful to that group.

The other thing is that because the labour market varies, we don’t have a list of prequalified individuals. Things sort of ebb and flow. So when we are ready for new contracts, we basically put out an RFP, and the proponents apply. We put together a multifaceted team to review the proposals so that we reduce any bias that we may have. I guess the other thing that we try to do is make those RFPs as simplified as possible.

**9:10**

We have also been combining certain programs. For example, we have one now where we have combined a proposal call for both immigrant bridging and integrated training because we think that we may get some interesting proposals that are a combination of those two programs. So there are some examples of some things that we are doing differently.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Great. Thank you.

Moving on to the bottom of page 45, the annual report addresses the work adjustment service and coal transition programs. These were programs that were put in place in 2018-19 to assist Albertans

who work in the coal industry and related industries to transition to new work. Of course, this was prompted by the federal government's move to transition Canada away from coal, but the federal government left it to the provinces to aid people working in that industry in the transition. To your knowledge did other provinces that were impacted by this federal government decision to transition away from coal have any kind of similar transition programs?

**Mr. McLeod:** I'll go out on a bit of a limb. I think that from memory my understanding is that there were not other programs put in place across the country.

Maryann, I think you're much more familiar with this and the history of it than I am, so could you either confirm or deny that?

**Ms Everett:** Thanks, Shawn. We know that there was a report. I'm sorry; I don't know the exact name of it. The federal government was looking at it, and a recommendation was made that the federal government potentially could consider a program of that type. To my knowledge at this present time there is neither a federal support program or any other provinces and territories that are providing support.

**Mr. McLeod:** I can just add, in terms of a note I have here today: it says that neither the government of Canada, nor any other province impacted by the phase-out has implemented such a program.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Okay. I want to congratulate the department, then, at being so forward-looking and supportive of people who are impacted by this federal government decision.

The program identifies three grants that were available through the coal workforce transition program: the bridge to re-employment program, the bridge to retirement relief grant, and the relocation assistance. With respect to the bridge re-employment relief grant what was the amount of money that was available to each person who applied for the grant, and what were the criteria for being eligible for the grant?

**Mr. McLeod:** I'll start off. I don't have actual amounts of money, but the bridge to re-employment grant combined with employment insurance provides financial support at 75 per cent of employment income for up to 45 weeks. I think it depends on the initial earnings, so to speak. That's the basic description of the program.

Maryann, are you able to add anything to that, or is that all we have?

**Mr. Rivest:** I can, Shawn.

**Mr. McLeod:** Okay. Andre is jumping in.

**Mr. Rivest:** Yeah. Sorry. Just to add to that, as Shawn mentioned, it would have been based on the individual's income at the time, so it varies. But on average we found that with the bridge to re-employment program, for the average applicant around \$45,000 was the grant that was received. For the bridge to retirement it was a little bit higher, around \$75,000 per applicant.

**Mr. Schmidt:** How many people were accepted into those programs?

**Mr. Rivest:** For the '18-19 fiscal year there were 128 clients in the bridge to re-employment. That was by far and above sort of the

greatest, the most popular stream, I guess you could say. Nine clients were for the bridge to retirement, and there were two who applied for the relocation support, which was \$5,000 for each of those.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Sorry. The relocation assistance was \$5,000?

**Mr. Rivest:** Yeah. Sorry; \$5,000 per individual for the relocation support. All that put together in the '18-19 fiscal year: roughly \$5.6 million is what we incurred.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Okay. Where did the money that funded those programs come from?

**Mr. Rivest:** In the '18-19 fiscal year the coal workforce transition program was entirely funded through revenue coming in through the climate leadership plan that was in place at the time.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Was there any planning done in 2018-19 that involved the continuity of the program?

**Mr. Rivest:** I could speak to that a bit, and if Maryann has more, she can supplement. Certainly, as we were looking forward, I suppose, in '18-19 and planning ahead for future years and as part of Budget '19, the decision was made, obviously, to carry on with the program and to continue to deliver the program. There was a bit of a transition then within sort of – I know this is forward looking, but in Budget '19 the transition was that the expenses incurred on the program would be offset by funding that the government received through the technology innovation and emissions reduction system, or the TIER system, and that's what's in place for both '19-20 and now for the '20-21 fiscal year as well.

**Mr. McLeod:** I could also maybe just provide some background facts. Our assessment: there was some internal policy work done, obviously, but there are also these workforce transition committees. Our best estimate: there's potentially about 1,100 workers that could be affected by the coal phase-out. To date I believe the number is 258 individuals that have received assistance for a maximum payout, assuming those who are on the program now continue to get it, of about \$12.1 million in grant funding.

It's an interesting program from a budget perspective because it's really purely demand driven. Depending on what happens in the industry, we can see fewer or we can see many more folks, so we do our best to estimate it. We continue to keep in touch with those employers and the unions involved.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now move to a government-side rotation for 10 minutes. We have MLA Stephan to proceed, please.

**Mr. Stephan:** Thanks, Chair, and thanks for coming out and discussing your stewardship.

I want to talk a little bit about youth employment and ask some questions around that area. Page 60 of the annual report has some commentary on the participation rate of youth in the labour market. It says that the participation rate in 2017 was 66.4 per cent and that it actually fell in 2018 to 64.3 per cent. I note that page 27 of the annual report sets out that the minimum wage increased between 2017 and 2018. I was wondering if the department could comment on the relationship between the minimum wage and youth employment.

**Mr. McLeod:** As indicated, the economy continued some recovery in 2018-19 although there were, obviously, still some higher than wanted unemployment numbers and, in particular, Alberta youth

faced difficulties in the labour market in terms of finding work. Certainly, usually during a recession youth tend to be one of the first groups laid off and sometimes the last folks hired, so they are certainly slow, as I said, to get the opportunities on the upside when things pick up.

As probably everybody in the room is aware, from 2015 to 2018 there was an increase in the minimum wage from approximately \$10.20 to \$15 by the end of '18. It's certainly a sort of multifaceted problem, and it's sometimes difficult to assess what contributed to any given labour outcome in terms of the employment rate. The overall strength of the economy is certainly one factor, but another factor is, if I could describe it more broadly, the price of labour. I think there is some information that the department has internally that would suggest that there was an impact with respect to youth unemployment with respect to the minimum wage.

**Mr. Stephan:** Thanks. What steps is the department taking to support Alberta businesses in looking at hiring our youth?

9:20

**Mr. Schmidt:** Sorry. Point of order, Mr. Chair. I think the member was making reference to future plans for the department. If I could just ask him to focus on the 2018-19 year.

**The Deputy Chair:** Absolutely. Thank you to the member, and if I could ask the member to rephrase his question to look back at the reports that we are addressing today.

**Mr. Stephan:** Sure. We see in the annual report on page 60 that youth employment in 2017 was 66.4 per cent and that it fell to 64.3 per cent in 2018. In respect of those poor results, what steps, what supports will the department have to support our Alberta businesses in hiring our youth?

**Mr. Schmidt:** Again, Mr. Chair . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** I think you have to reframe this in the context of the past, so: what do they already have in place to address this? If you could just rephrase the question so it addresses what is currently in the plans and also in the scope of the department in terms of their planning for the future that they already have in place.

**Mr. Stephan:** All right. Well, it sounds like what they had wasn't working as well as it should have been, so maybe what I'll . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** Then you could ask them about that.

**Mr. Stephan:** I'll ask a different question.

**The Deputy Chair:** Yes, please.

**Mr. Stephan:** It states that Alberta ranked sixth, tied with British Columbia. Can the department explain our national ranking for youth employment?

**Mr. McLeod:** Once again – and I'm sort of giving, I guess, a similar answer – the issue with respect to youth employment is sort of multifaceted. It's a combination of a variety of factors. It even starts beyond just sort of the pure labour market. It starts with what we're doing in terms of both, you know, primary schooling, secondary education. There's a variety of pieces that feed into the mix.

The principal impact, I would say, is the economy. I've already discussed a little bit about the price of labour with respect to youth employment. What I can say is that the department for a number of years and certainly during the 2018-19 time period had a variety of

levers, I guess, at hand, and the ones that we principally certainly focus on within our department are the training levers. One of the things that youth need is a variety of things that we offer in terms of the training market, whether it's the simple ability to get a resumé together, whether it's interview skills, whether it is upgrading some particular skill component. Less so in our department, but trades-based skill training.

There's a variety of tools that we certainly can use. I can give some statistics in terms of that. The training for work programs that we offer – maybe some background facts is a more accurate description – are open to youth over the age of 18 and who have been out of school for 12 months. I won't talk about subsequent years, but in previous years we have had a reasonable percentage of folks involved in the training for work suite of programs that Maryann has discussed, and those programs in particular are open to youth who are 18 to 24 years old.

In terms of some of the other things, to help them gain employment there are obviously scholarships, student loans, career planning tools as well as specific programs for indigenous Albertans. I can certainly provide some information on where you can find some of that information.

Maryann, are you able to add anything in terms of an answer to that question?

**The Deputy Chair:** You may have to unmute, Ms Everett.

**Mr. McLeod:** Let's keep going.

**Mr. Stephan:** Yeah. That's fine. I appreciate those programs, and I look forward to those programs to the extent that they have a proven record of success being improved and enhanced and to other initiatives in the future.

I'm going to ask a few questions now about WCB and the annual report for December 31, 2019. On page 19 of the report it states that "Albertans continued to face challenging economic times in 2019. In recognition of this, our Board of Directors used our strong funding level to offset what would have been a significant increase in employer premium rates." I guess the part that concerns me is the "significant increase in employer premium rates" in a time of, as it says, in 2019, "challenging economic times." Can the department explain what drove premiums up from the prior year? Why were they set to be increased significantly?

**Mr. McLeod:** Our understanding – maybe I'll just back up. The Workers' Compensation Board is, obviously, a significant organization with a very significant budget and has a reporting structure, well, a structure generally but a reporting structure which is outside the financial structure of the department's reporting. While the minister is clearly responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board and their legislation and while the department is involved with the Workers' Compensation Board on a somewhat regular basis, we don't have the day-to-day sort of line of sight that we might with some of the other work that we do.

As a result of that – and we certainly discussed it before we came – we are probably not in the best position to answer specific questions with respect to the WCB and their financial statements. We certainly would be happy to take away any questions that you have and get answers to those. Once again, I'm not completely familiar with this process, but I think we were sort of expecting that if there was going to be a detailed discussion about some of the WCB stuff, we might have got notice to bring them along. Having said that, they're not here today. Once again, I'm happy to take any questions you have away and provide answers, but we're probably not in a great position to get into some of the details of their reporting.

**Mr. Stephan:** Sure. I respect that.

I do have one other question about WCB. Of course, if you don't have the specific information and would like to get back to us, that would be fine. Page 26 of the annual report for WCB states that claimed benefit expenses for 2019 were over \$1.2 billion.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, Member.

We will move on to the next rotation, to the Official Opposition for 10 minutes. MLA Gray.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much. I just want to say that I really appreciate all the discussion that we've had around the training programs, but I'm going to switch tacks to our occupational health and safety team. Specifically, on page 25 of the 2018-19 Labour annual report it describes the apprenticeship industry and trade inspections, where "OHS officers were delegated Apprenticeship Industry and Trade . . . legislated authority" so that they could also "monitor 10 compulsory trades" while they were doing work-site inspections. I was wondering if you could speak to how that contributed to the outcome that it's listed under, "workers are protected by a modern and balanced labour environment that promotes safe, fair and healthy workplaces."

**Mr. McLeod:** Beginning in January of 2018, 35 OH and S officers were delegated apprenticeship industry and trade, AIT, authority to monitor 10 compulsory trades. A compulsory trade is a trade where workers are required to be certified or registered as an apprentice to work in the trade. In 2018-19 eight work-site inspections were conducted, which resulted in two assignment referrals to AIT. That's really the information I have with respect to that particular part of the report.

Myles, did you have anything that you wanted to add to that?

**Mr. Morris:** No, I don't have anything further.

**Ms Gray:** Okay. My understanding of that program was that occupational health and safety officers who would be on-site at construction sites or otherwise doing the work that they do, whether that be proactive or reactive, would then be able to check trade certifications where the workers were often apprentices, they might be of younger ages, and so it was a matter of efficiency and contributed to health and safety. Does that sound accurate? Would you agree with that description?

9:30

**Mr. McLeod:** I think that is accurate. I think that was sort of the foundational thinking for the policy or the program when it was developed.

**Ms Gray:** Perfect. Thank you. That sounds very positive.

Again, in the kind of occupational health and safety section and including employment standards, I note that in 2018-19 there was a much higher volume of inquiries, calls to the contact centres, anonymous tips, and inspections happening. That was likely for a variety of reasons, but I would suggest that because the belated legislation was being updated, it improved awareness. I imagine that put a great deal of strain on the department, but we've already heard that the department was able to find efficiencies and actually increase the number of employment standards complaints resolved. I believe there were similar positive improvements within occupational health and safety to respond to the demand. I just wondered if you could talk about the operational excellence and the processes that were put in place to respond to the increased demand from Albertans and to make sure that Albertans were being kept safe and their rights were protected during this time period.

**Mr. McLeod:** One of the things that certainly is very important in terms of both employment standards and occupational health and safety is really outreach and education, so that is one of the tools that was used. There was a whole variety of things, everything from website changes to online presentations to remote presentations. We have a whole variety of ways to communicate with folks in terms of what I sort of describe as information bulletins. We have an e-newsletter, which addresses a variety of things, in particular the occupational health and safety area. Because we had at one point in time a very significant backlog in terms of employment standards complaints, the department undertook a variety of measures to deal with that. Some of those measures included increased staffing, but some of those measures were also simply looking at the systems that were involved. I'll turn it over to Myles and perhaps Maryann because Maryann is sort of our operational excellence guru, if I could describe it that way.

There were a variety of specific changes to the way those applications were processed and dealt with. One of the key changes is that an early resolution letter was established and implemented. I don't know what the expectation was at the time, but the results were really just fantastic. There were a number of employers, especially with smaller issues and smaller claims, that when it was simply brought to their attention that sort of occupational health and safety or employment standards in this case was involved and the offer to try to resolve the matter was presented, many of those complaints were resolved. That's obviously a win-win for everybody. It's a win for the employer to put behind them what amounts to a complaint but also a time-consuming and potentially resource-intensive process; it's particularly valuable for the employee because for the most part these cases are dealing with money, so they're getting their funds; and it's good for the department, too, because we can come to committees like this and say that our backlog has been dealt with.

In terms of the operational excellence piece of it or anything else, Myles, that you wanted to add, or Maryann, I'm happy to do that. This is certainly not to undermine Myles' credibility in any way, but as I've indicated – I've been here for just over a year – Myles has been here for just over a month, maybe two months. But luckily for us he's worked with the department in the past, so he's got a great foundation of knowledge.

**Mr. Morris:** Well, thanks for setting those expectations. Just to build on Shawn's comments, I think that first off I would agree that the changes in the legislative landscape at that time certainly drove increased activity with respect to our contact centres as being kind of our first point of contact with Albertans on employment standards and occupational health and safety matters.

In terms of ensuring timely and quality service delivery, yes, certainly additional officers helped, but that wasn't the end of it. It's also how we used those officers. With respect to employment standards it was more or less an all-hands-on-deck approach to attack the queue of complaints that were simply sitting there waiting to be assigned to an officer and at the same time changes to our process both in terms of internal administrative churn, removing steps that don't add value or move us towards resolution of matters, and also new tools, as Shawn had mentioned, including the early resolution letters, which have been a tremendous success.

All of that allows us to serve Albertans and their employers better in a more timely manner, get things resolved so people can move on. Also, the weight of that queue off our backs provides us with opportunities to reimagine how we use those resources going forward.

**Mr. McLeod:** I'll just add two quick facts if I could. The employment standards queue in 2017-18 was in the range of 1,700 applications, and in 2018-19 that had reduced to 600. The average days to begin an investigation in 2017-18 was 130, and that had been reduced to 90 by the time of 2018-19. So those are obviously both significant and important numbers.

**Ms Gray:** That was phenomenal progress, and kudos to all involved in tackling the backlog and improving the processes. I'm thrilled, particularly hearing – as you said, employment standards complaints most often involve financial compensation. So being able to make sure that Alberta workers are getting any money out to them in a timely way I think makes a really big difference in their lives.

Mr. Morris, you touched on this briefly when you said, "Additional officers helped." From page 17 of the annual report, commitment to front-line service delivery, would you be able to speak to the committee about why staffing levels for occupational health and safety officers is vital and how that contributed to the overall outcome?

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you. I'll have to move that to read-in. We move back to the government side. MLA Stephan, please.

**Mr. Stephan:** Sure. With time being of the essence, I'll just ask for a written response to my final question. At page 26 of the annual report for the Workers' Compensation Board it states that claim benefit expenses were \$1.2 billion for 2019, and that is an increase of over \$140 million from 2018. It states an increase of 12.7 per cent. Like, that's a very, very substantial increase. It also adds on the same page of the annual report that there was a \$278 million deficit from employer premiums paid. Essentially, it sounds like the board dipped into their reserves in what otherwise would be a very large deficit.

I was wondering if the department could provide us, in writing, to explain what, if any, regulatory or policy changes were made by the government between 2018-2019 that would have led to this very substantial increase in costs.

**Mr. McLeod:** We'll definitely do that.

**Mr. Stephan:** Thanks.

With that, I'll cede my time. Thanks.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you.

Moving to MLA Reid.

**Mr. Reid:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the members of the ministry for your time this morning. I appreciate it and look forward to your answers. I want to start on page 57 of the annual report. I want to focus in a little bit on the immigrant nominee program. Your performance indicator 3(b) shows the number of immigrants who come to Canada and choose Alberta as their final destination. I'm wondering if the department can explain why we've seen a decline in immigrants choosing Alberta as their home from the highs we saw in 2014.

9:40

**Mr. McLeod:** Yeah. We have looked at that issue and done some analysis of it. We have a certain number of slots effectively delegated from the federal government to use for our provincial nominee program. AINP has issued a relatively stable number of certificates since about 2013. However – I have a graph here that's not included in the annual report – the family size of the nominees has decreased. Therefore, there are fewer accompanying dependants coming with the nominee to Alberta. Our analysis

suggests that that's really the driver here. It's not the number of people who are coming; it's the number of people who are coming with them. I'll just give an indication. It's been a slow, downward trend for, really, almost 10 years now. In 2010 the average size per family of the nominee was 2.71. I'll fast-forward five years. It was down to 2.07 in 2015, and by the time we get to 2019, which are the latest numbers we have, that number is down to 1.87. For every nominee that comes, that's almost a full person less that's coming with them.

**Mr. Reid:** Thank you.

Related to that, I know, having looked at AINP programs in other provinces versus Alberta, it seems like the number of spots that are available in other provinces, like Saskatchewan, compared to what are available in Alberta have made Saskatchewan more attractive for newcomers to pursue that route. Do you think that that has played any role in terms of seeing those reduced numbers as well?

**Mr. McLeod:** Yeah. I don't know whether we have it or not. Maryann, maybe we can get you involved here. I'm not intimately familiar with what Saskatchewan's numbers are, but I do think that at least in terms of the numbers we've had up to most recently, in the neighbourhood of about 6,000 positions, we've been very successful in filling those. So at least on our side of the fence we've done a pretty good job. It has, once again, been a multifactored thing, I think a lot due to the good work of people within the department but also in part because of the strength of the economy. It's been traditionally a place where people want to come. Unfortunately for us, it's a little bit more challenging now, but even today there's still a group of folks that want to come to Alberta, so I think we're very fortunate in that regard.

**Mr. Reid:** Right. Also, I guess, as a bit of a follow-up to that, on page 57 the annual report states:

The number of immigrants granted permanent resident status and who choose Alberta as their final intended destination in a given period is dependent on a number of factors, which we've been discussing,

some of which are out of the province's control.

What are some of the factors that are in the control of the province in attracting newcomers to Alberta?

**Mr. McLeod:** As I think we've mentioned and you alluded to, the number of immigrants who land in Alberta is ultimately controlled by the federal Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship of Canada, IRCC. They make the final decisions on all applicants for permanent residence. The year that a nominee lands is dependent on when the IRCC makes that decision on that application for permanent residence.

I've already talked a little bit about some of the things that we do to try to choose the right people, so to speak, both those that are interested in coming and those that would want to choose to stay once they're here. We do have some control over that. We adjust the criteria – for example, work experience, language levels, education, occupational background, occupational history, those types of things – to select individuals we nominate. By adjusting the numbers of nominations that we issue each year in a given year, we can control that number. Most years recently the AINP has opted to issue the maximum allocation of certificates given by IRCC.

It's also important to note that there is a lag between the time that a nomination is issued and when the nominee and their family actually receive their permanent residency. Again, this will fluctuate based on the number of applicants that are processed by IRCC in a given year. Certainly, because of that, it can take several years for sort of the net results to show up in the data that we have.

**Mr. Reid:** Thank you.

I want to focus a little bit about the newcomers who are looking at coming in. Have we seen a change in trend of countries of origin in 2018-19? You know, what are some of the key countries we're seeing newcomers come to the province from? Any indications or anything that the department can give us in terms of the educational backgrounds that our newcomers are coming with in terms of their ability to participate in the economy and that? I know that in my past experience a number of new Canadians that we hired were coming with advanced degrees and university degrees but were working in entry-level positions. In working to encourage them to find those roles that are related to their education, have we been successful in terms of helping new Canadians find employment in their areas of expertise?

**Mr. McLeod:** Yeah. I'll do my best to answer your question. I just want to talk to Andre for a second.

Okay. In terms of where the folks have been coming from, that certainly has changed over time. Just by way of example, in 2015 the Philippines was the number one source of people coming into Canada. About 27 per cent of the total group that came were from the Philippines. India was second, at 26 per cent, China at 11 per cent, Korea at 6 per cent, and Mexico at 2 per cent. If I fast-forward to 2019, India is now top in that group, at 41 per cent – so they went from second, at 26, to top of that group, at 40 per cent – the Philippines down from almost 30 per cent to 10 per cent, Nigeria at about 8 per cent, China at about 6 per cent, and Korea at about 3 per cent.

Sorry. In my attempt to make sure I had the information – your second question was with respect to background and educational qualifications?

**Mr. Reid:** In terms of, yeah, successful employment in their fields of experience or expertise in their home country.

**Mr. McLeod:** Okay. The educational profile of sort of most of the AINP nominees is primarily comprised of bachelor's degrees and diplomas. Maybe I'll fast-forward to a later year here. For example, in 2019 ...

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you to our presenters.

We now move to the read-in round. We'll start with three minutes for the Official Opposition to read in any questions they may have.

**Ms Gray:** I believe we'll start with Marie Renaud on the phone.

**The Deputy Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

MLA Renaud.

**Ms Renaud:** Great. Thank you, Mr. Chair. My questions are about the GBA plus analysis. I really want to get a sense of that. Out of all the programs – and there are so many categories of programs that we've talked about – I'm wondering if you can give me an outline in writing as to how this analysis was used, particularly as it relates to people with disabilities. What were the benchmarks? What was the progress? What were the targets?

My other question was: was there any consultation with established ABCs that were set up to provide this kind of advice like, say, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities?

Also, I wanted to know if there was any work or any measurement that this department has done to look at poverty reduction in terms of, let's say, using the GBA plus tool; for

example, women earning 80 cents on the dollar. I'm wondering if there are any metrics in place to show progress.

Thank you.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you. I'll take over. I'm wondering: with respect to temporary foreign workers, protection of workers, whether or not in the agricultural sector in particular, on-farm or food processing distribution workers, who's actually responsible for the standards for employment there? Is it the federal government and provincial government? Who actually reigns supreme for responsibility to enforce these regulations with respect to wages, overtime, sick time off, occupational health and safety, housing issues, et cetera? I wanted to know if federal-provincial jurisdictional issues have impacted enforcement of these regulations.

I'll turn my time back to MLA Renaud.

9:50

**Ms Gray:** On page 17 you talk about employment standards and that the standards apply to approximately 85 per cent of employment relationships in Alberta. If you wouldn't mind providing the committee with the 15 per cent to whom the code doesn't apply.

As well, the report talks about the employer liaison service. It stated that the pilot project was set to expire in March of this year. Did that pilot project end? If not, have there been any modifications or changes?

Finally, pages 59 and 60 report the labour participation rates throughout the province. This includes those looking for work. Overall labour participation in Alberta increased every year 2014 through to 2018, and targeted strategies to increase that participation of underrepresented groups such as aboriginal people and persons with disabilities we know contribute to positive growth in the labour force. Can you speak to the strategies to target some of these groups that the ministry undertook in 2018-19? Were there any that were in the process of being delivered?

**The Deputy Chair:** Time is up.

We'll now move to three minutes for the government side, starting with Member Reid.

**Mr. Reid:** Just a couple of questions related to the coal workforce transition program for you. Thank you for the numbers in terms of those that participated in the bridge to employment program. I'm wondering how many of those folks were able to actually find gainful employment in their community of origin and not having to relocate and then the overall success of those employees, again, finding gainful employment after the transition.

Finally, can the department tell us what kind of impact the coal transition has had on the local labour market in those communities?

Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** Moving over to Member Rowswell.

**Mr. Rowswell:** On page 59 of the annual report there's a table of information stating the labour force participation rate for all Albertans, aboriginal Albertans, immigrant population, and Alberta's youth. Given that Albertans are working longer than the traditional age of retirement, can the department tell us if they track labour participation for Albertans over the age of 64?

Page 60 states that Albertans have the highest labour participation rate in the country. Can the department explain why Albertans are the most likely people in the country to participate in the labour force?

Page 60 also states that Alberta's off-reserve aboriginal population participation in the labour force is fourth behind the

three Atlantic provinces. Can the department explain why Alberta's labour force participation is near the top in Canada for our off-reserve aboriginal population?

Can the department also elaborate on the gap between the aboriginal participation rate and Albertans in general, and what programs are in place to address the gap? For any program in place to help our aboriginal population, how does the department measure its effectiveness?

**The Deputy Chair:** Moving over to Member Rosin, please.

**Ms Rosin:** Okay. Given the attractiveness of Alberta to immigrants with investable capital can the department tell us what federal or provincial programs were in place during 2018-19 to help immigrant entrepreneurs come to Alberta?

Further, can you please tell us which organizations in Alberta were authorized to process immigrants applying under this category and if there are any programs available other than the international start-up visa program, and what restrictions are placed on them with respect to qualified industries or sectors?

**The Deputy Chair:** Great. Thank you.

Are there any further questions from the government side?

Seeing none, I'd like to thank officials from the Ministry of Labour and Immigration for attending today and responding to committee members' questions. We ask that any outstanding questions be responded to in writing within 30 days and forwarded to the committee clerk.

Are there any other items for discussion under other business today?

Seeing none, the next meeting will be Municipal Affairs, July 21, 2020, starting at 8 a.m.

I'll call for a motion to adjourn. Would a member move that the meeting be adjourned? Members Dach and Reid. All in favour? Any opposed? On the phones? Carried.

Thank you, hon. members, and thank you to our guests for attending today and for your very thoughtful answers.

[The committee adjourned at 9:54 a.m.]









