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Solicitor General and Public Security  
Consideration of Main Estimates

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[Mr. VanderBurg in the chair]

**Department of Solicitor General and Public Security**  
**Consideration of Main Estimates**

**The Chair:** Good evening, everyone. Welcome to our last meeting for this standing committee. At this time I'd like to go around the table and do some self-introductions. Minister, I'll get you to start, and you can introduce your staff here.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Sure. Thanks, George. We always save the best till last.

**The Chair:** That's right.

**Mr. Lindsay:** With me tonight are Brad Pickering, the Deputy Solicitor General and Deputy Minister of Public Security, on my right; Jim Bauer, who's the assistant deputy minister of corporate services; and on my left Gerry McLennan, who's the CEO of the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Kang:** Darshan Kang, MLA, Calgary-McCall, vice-chair.

**Dr. Brown:** Neil Brown, Calgary-Nose Hill.

**Mr. Sandhu:** Good evening. Peter Sandhu, Edmonton-Manning.

**Mr. Anderson:** Rob Anderson, Airdrie-Chestermere.

**Mr. Jacobs:** Bryce Jacobs, Cardston-Taber-Warner.

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

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Good evening. Teresa Woo-Paw, Calgary-Mackay.

**Ms Calahasen:** Pearl Calahasen, Lesser Slave Lake.

**The Chair:** Brian Mason, from Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, has joined us as well.

Good evening, everyone. I'm George VanderBurg. I'm the MLA for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne. As you know, the vote on the estimates will be deferred until Committee of Supply. That'll be tomorrow. I'm sure it will be short. We'll be dealing with that vote as well as any amendments that may have arisen over the last few weeks, which will also be short, I'm sure.

We have an opportunity, Minister, for you to make some opening comments. The members around the table will address their questions to you, and if you need some staff assistance, we'd still ask you to answer the questions. We have three hours to deliberate this evening, and we'll recess at 9:30.

Minister, all of us have the opportunity to get up and have a break during the meeting. If at any time over the next three hours you need a break, just let me know, and we'll have a short recess. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm certainly pleased to be here tonight to present an overview of Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security's estimates and the 2009-2012 business plan. Over the next 10 minutes I will provide you with highlights of

my ministry's '09-10 business plan and the services and supports that Solicitor General and Public Security provides to Albertans. I will also provide an overview of the services and programs provided by the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission. As you indicated, following my presentation, I'll answer any questions you might have. If time runs out, I will provide responses in writing.

In regard to the business plan my ministry's mandate is to ensure Albertans have safe and secure communities in which to live, work, and raise their families. We achieve this by providing Albertans with services and supports in the area of policing and crime prevention, secure corrections facilities for offenders, and assistance to victims of crime. Our business plan identifies seven goals: provide leadership for effective and innovative law enforcement; ensure crime prevention and safety programs support a safe Alberta; ensure officials and infrastructure in Alberta are safe and secure; provide secure and efficient custody and community supervision; ensure offenders have the opportunity to access rehabilitative services and programs; ensure victims of crime receive assistance, information, and support; and ensure Alberta's liquor and gaming activities are conducted with integrity and in a socially responsible manner.

In support of these goals we received an increase of \$42.7 million in our budget for '09-10, which brings it up to \$627 million, and it breaks down as follows. There's \$20 million for salary settlements, inflationary pressures, and dedicated revenue initiatives; \$18.1 million for safe community initiatives, which are a priority for the Premier and for this government; \$10.6 million in federal funding as part of a new police officer recruitment fund designed to help provinces and territories hire additional police officers across the country; and \$2.3 million for the Alberta police integrated information initiative, APIII. It is offset by targeted reductions of \$5.7 million and correctional services reductions of \$3.4 million in general supplies and services.

I will now address my ministry's two operational divisions, the public security division and the correctional services division. The public security division is responsible for policing, sheriffs, and the victims of crime fund. In Budget '09 this division received an increase of \$31 million, for a total of \$363 million.

Within the division policing received \$297 million, including \$177.3 million for the provincial police service agreement, which is an increase of \$13 million over last budget. This represents our contract with the RCMP to provide policing for communities with populations under 5,000, counties, municipal districts, and Métis settlements; \$13 million for the second wave of the 100 new police officers, part of Premier Stelmach's commitment to add 300 officers over the next three years; \$10.6 million for the four integrated gang enforcement units under the Alberta law enforcement response teams, ALERT; \$2.5 million for the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team, ASIRT, which investigates allegations related to the actions of a police officer which may have resulted in serious injury or death or are of a serious or sensitive nature; and an additional \$500,000 to address the serious problem of repeat offenders, with a unit that's going to focus on 60 of the most chronic criminals we have in the province.

The sheriffs branch receives \$64 million, including \$17.5 million for protection and investigative services, which includes programs such as FASST which work with local law enforcement to apprehend offenders at large on outstanding warrants; \$34 million for security operations, including court security; \$12.6 million for traffic safety; and an additional \$1.2 million to bring the safer communities and neighbourhood investigators, SCAN, to a full complement of 29. These investigators are having considerable success working with police agencies to shut down properties used for illegal activities,

used for drugs, gangs, and prostitution. Since SCAN was launched last October, investigators have received almost 230 complaints about problem properties, and more than half of these have already been resolved.

The victims of crime fund ensures that eligible victims of crime receive prompt financial benefits and helps community groups and organizations establish programs and initiatives that meet the needs of victims of crime. Budget '09 provides \$27 million for the victims of crime fund, an increase of \$1.5 million. This includes \$1.3 million for victims' services program grants, resulting from a higher volume of application for grants.

The correctional services division receives \$207 million, an increase of \$8 million. Included is \$136 million to operate our four adult corrections centres in Fort Saskatchewan, Peace River, Calgary, and Lethbridge and our four remand centres in Edmonton, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, and Calgary; \$23 million for the young offenders branch, which operates centres in Edmonton and Calgary; and \$46 million for community corrections, including the hiring of 30 more probation officers as part of our plan toward 110 new probation officers over the next three years. This is in addition to the 50 officers that we hired last year. These probation officers enhance supervision and support for offenders who are in court-ordered community supervision or have been released from a corrections facility with community supervision to follow.

This year the correctional services division will realize savings of \$5 million by no longer placing inmates at the federal Grande Cache facility and by closing three underused correctional facilities: the Grand Prairie Young Offender Centre, the Alsike camp, and the Métis Nation wilderness camp. Youth at the Grande Prairie Young Offender Centre have been moved to the Edmonton Young Offender Centre, where they have access to the same or an enhanced level of service as was available to them in Grande Prairie. Inmates from the Alsike and Métis camps have been moved to the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre.

We are currently identifying opportunities to redeploy staff from the Grande Prairie Young Offender Centre to other positions within the corrections division. Staff from Alsike have been deployed to the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre and community corrections. The Métis camp is a contracted facility and has no department staff.

Budget 2009 also provides an additional \$20 million for salary settlements and inflation. Unfortunately, we did not get funding this year to proceed with the construction of a new police and peace officer training centre. However, this is still an important initiative, and we continue to evaluate our options with respect to funding it as a private-public partnership.

**6:40**

I will now touch on some of the major initiatives we are pursuing as part of my ministry's mandate to provide safe and secure communities for all Albertans. Our current provincial policing model has many inequities and does not take into account the changing face of crime, so in consultation with our policing partners and municipal leaders we are proposing an innovative new framework for law enforcement that touches service delivery, governance, and funding.

Under service delivery our goal is to provide equitable policing across Alberta. The proposed framework reflects law enforcement as a network of services that are co-ordinated, seamless, integrated, and closely connected to the community. This is not about replacing the RCMP as our provincial police force.

Under governance we are also taking a hard look at the current policing governance model. Our plan is to establish provincial

policing standards for governance and oversight entities. This will help ensure consistent civilian oversight and a uniform complaints process.

In regard to the funding the municipalities are looking for a more flexible funding model to ensure they can continue to deliver policing services appropriate for their communities. The new law enforcement framework would ensure that funding for police is more equitable, and my ministry is using input received from stakeholders to develop a draft framework that I will present to cabinet this fall.

In regard to the gang strategy we are preventing and reducing gang crime as another key area for my ministry. Our gang crime suppression initiative is part of government's response to the recommendations of the safe communities task force. This initiative is being co-led by myself and the Minister of Justice and co-ordinates the work of seven government ministries to help reduce crime in Alberta communities. A series of stakeholder meetings across the province have just been completed, and the input from these meetings will drive discussions during the gang summit being held at the end of June. The gang strategy will be presented to government later this year.

With regard to the network radio system, work continues on two other important initiatives. Our province-wide network radio system will help ensure that all first responders can communicate easily with each other in the event of an emergency. Potential vendors are preparing bids for this contract, and a vendor will be chosen in the spring. Construction of the new system is expected to begin this fall.

APIII, our Alberta police integrated information initiative, will give front-line police officers near real-time access to province-wide policing information. This comprehensive new police information system will make it easier for them to collaborate and improve their ability to reduce and prevent crime. I expect the prototype to be launched by the fall of 2010 and that all agencies will be on the new system by the end of 2012.

In regard to our share for the RCMP traffic pilot program and in response to Alberta's ongoing concerns about traffic safety, RCMP and Alberta sheriffs are collaborating on a traffic pilot project to help ensure ongoing safety on Alberta's highways.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. We have the next hour for the Official Opposition, and it would be an advantage to everybody if you would do a back and forth on this.

**Mr. Hehr:** That sounds very fair to me. We can go on that basis. I might rattle out some questions that maybe could be answered in general by the Solicitor General, and then his staff can fill in the details as long as I can get it on the record.

**The Chair:** MLA Hehr, in your first hour if you don't have enough time, let me know, and I can put you on the speaking list for further debate.

**Mr. Hehr:** Will do. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Go ahead. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. I'd first like to thank the Solicitor General and his staff for always keeping me well informed and briefed and the way he handles things in a professional manner in both question period and otherwise, realizing that we both have a job to do. That's very refreshing, that we can sometimes separate both of our respective roles yet realize we're both trying for the same thing. I really appreciate that.

Now, to jump right in, now that the niceties are out of the way, let's move into some of the questions here. I guess if we look at some of the things that have happened since we had an opportunity to discuss budgets probably around a year ago, we've had some discussion in this House as well as by politicians around the province, mostly the mayor of Calgary and, I know, the two police chiefs, who have brought up, particularly in and around the September, October time frame, that to their belief they were significantly understaffed in terms of police officers. I believe Calgary Police Chief Rick Hanson had made passionate arguments that Calgary was short 400 police officers compared to other cities of this size, and Edmonton – I'm not sure – was even more significantly understaffed. I guess, this statistic sort of backs up what they were saying. It was from StatsCan, and it was done around November 16, 2007. Of course, it's a little bit dated, but I think it serves to sort of at least validate their claim that Alberta has only 165.1 police officers per 100,000 people. This is one of the lowest values nation-wide and certainly the least of any of the most populous and economically dynamic jurisdictions.

Anyway, I'd just like you to tell me if this is true, where these esteemed gentlemen are wrong or if they're wrong. If we could start off with sort of clarifying that and what we're doing in that regard, if anything.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, Mr. Chairman, let me get some niceties out of the way as well. First of all, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo. I recognize that he has been victimized by a criminal act and that he has a passion for crime prevention, and I certainly appreciate his comments and his energy in this regard. I assure this hon. member that this ministry is doing everything that is possible to ensure that Albertans remain safe.

In regard to the chiefs of police requests for more funding and their belief that they require the numbers that they spoke to, we've looked at that, and our Premier has committed to 300 over the next three years. We're actually ahead of the curve in regard to that. Then on top of that, we've also utilized our federal monies that came for the next four years, and we're putting together four gang units, which will be made up of another 67 members. So we believe that we are addressing that in a very meaningful way.

**Mr. Hehr:** I guess if I could, then. Like, 300 police officers. I understand that you believe that they're addressing it, but we were supposed to get 400. Their belief is that they were short 400 in Calgary, and in Edmonton I believe it was an even larger number. If you could tell me: of the 300, then, that are going to be provided by the Alberta provincial government, how many of those will be to Calgary, how many of those will be to Edmonton, how many will be to other jurisdictions?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, as it turns out – I can't remember the exact number – 41 went to Calgary the first year. I believe we committed to another 41 the second year, and the third year hasn't been allocated yet. It will depend on how things roll out. Certainly, you know, the allocation was pretty much based on population, and we believe that they got their fair share. Again, the 400 number that they talked about is their number. It's certainly nothing that we committed to. When I look at the funding we provide through our grants and then also one of the two jurisdictions that return \$97 million a year through fine revenues, we believe that we are being responsible in helping these folks in their fight with crime.

I also want to mention that in a lot of regards the stats that you talked about, the crime rates, are really in no way reflected in the

number of police officers per population because some of the lowest crime rates also have the lowest number. In Alberta we also have a unique situation where we have about 2,000 peace officers who also have a role in law enforcement that other jurisdictions may not have.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. I accept some of that. If Edmonton saw 35 new members this year, how many will they be provided the next year and then the year after?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I think that in year 2 we committed again to another 35, and the third year would probably be similar to that, but we haven't rolled that out yet.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Did you say that 68 more officers were provided with the federal money this year?

6:50

**Mr. Lindsay:** Sixty-three, I believe, is the number of officers that will make up the four new gang units going across the province. One of them will be in Calgary and one in Edmonton. Another one will be in Red Deer, and then there'll be one for rural Alberta, I believe.

**Mr. Hehr:** Is that with the money that was provided federally?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yes.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. The announcement was made in November. Those officers still haven't hit the street.

**Mr. Lindsay:** That's right. Those officers will be hitting the street, I believe, this month or very quickly, in any event. We had to recruit them and train them.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Do we have a breakdown of where those officers – those are part of those various teams, but where will they be primarily stationed?

**Mr. Lindsay:** As indicated, there are four teams: one in Calgary, one in Edmonton, one in Red Deer, and one that will transfer around the province as required. Fort McMurray is an area that we will be working in and Cold Lake, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Hehr:** Is there federal money coming next year?

**Mr. Lindsay:** The federal money, I believe, was a five-year program. Again, one of the concerns we had with the federal allotment of money was that it's great for five years, but what happens after that? So we're working with them to try to encourage them to make it long term because, otherwise, I don't have the budget to sustain it.

**Mr. Hehr:** You haven't decided if you're going to return that money to policing next year or what you're going to do with it?

**Mr. Lindsay:** That's committed for the length of the commitment that the federal government has made.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Well, thank you very much.

Medicine Hat and Taber got four new members. They're probably going to be similar, again, going forward?

**Mr. Lindsay:** You know, we haven't rolled that out yet. Again, it depends on whether they have the capacity to take them or not. At

the end of the day there will be a hundred across the province, and we'll review that.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. If we could just talk about the police funding formula a little bit. The funding formula for communities over 100,000 is fairly simple. I think it's \$16 per capita, and the funding for this comes at line 2.2.4, page 354 of the estimates. This is slightly more than \$1 million from last year's allotment of \$47.9 million. In Calgary and Edmonton that means they receive virtually the same funding as last year. Do you feel that this amount of funding, given it's the same, is adequate given that there has seemingly been an increase in violent crime and gang crime in the last year? I understand, though, that the overall crime rate may be going down, but we've been inundated with a seemingly more insidious form of crime.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, the grants that the cities receive are based on their population, so we haven't changed the amount per capita. However, the increase reflects the change in our population. The other thing I'll mention at this time as well is that this whole funding formula will be looked at under the new law enforcement framework.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. You're getting to where I'm going. Mayors in the AUMA have sought increases up to \$35 per capita. What I'm hearing is that the province wants to centralize the hiring of police officers and send them down to the cities. Or is there going to be a move to see cities still do this and increase the police funding formula to somewhere along those lines? I know it's difficult to bind your ministry to anything, but I just wonder if there's a philosophy on that.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, when communities reach that population level where they can incorporate their own police service or contract the RCMP, that's really their decision. How many police officers they believe they require to police their community is also their decision. The only centralized thing that we have ever considered is that when we get the police college built, we could train police officers under a standardized method. It'd be available to all policing agencies across the province. Of course, by standardizing the training, then they would be more capable of working together in a more seamless method than they can now based on the fact that today they have different levels and different standards of training.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Is there any modification of a funding formula for Alberta municipalities that have a population that is greater than, say, 5,000?

**Mr. Lindsay:** We'll be looking at that under the law enforcement framework. We recognize that, you know, when you're at 4,999 you pay nothing, and when you hit 5,000, all of a sudden you get hit. We want to look at that to make sure that it's fair for everybody, and that'll be covered under the new law enforcement framework.

**Mr. Hehr:** I guess it's evident from your materials that labour shortages remain in finding police officers and with retirements, and this is expected to continue. How many retirements were there this year amongst the police forces in Calgary and Edmonton?

[Mr. Kang in the chair]

**Mr. Lindsay:** I'm not sure if I have that number, but that has actually changed in regard to recruitment. I believe that over the

next 10 years in Alberta we're still going to need to replace and hire about 3,400 police officers. In regard to recruitment, you know, we did set up a fund to assist the policing agencies with that, and from all the reports that I've got from all the policing agencies, recruitment is no longer an issue. In fact, even the RCMP nationally are not having any problems recruiting the numbers that they need. So that problem is no longer there.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Well, then, just let me get a couple of these on the record, and you can handle them, or maybe the staff can get them at a more appropriate time, or maybe you'll just answer them. I'd just like to get them out in case they'll be able to help us out a little later. How many more, if any, retirements were in each of these cities this year compared to previous years? You say that there probably hasn't even been any more. How many retirements were faced by police services and other municipalities that exceeded 50,000 people? What is the total number of members from Calgary and Edmonton and the RCMP that found employment elsewhere, like, within other jurisdictions, in the department in the last fiscal year? Just some things like that. If you can just give me those in writing at some point in time, that would be all right.

In that regard, I guess, too, whether hiring is an issue anymore. I know that last summer you guys rolled out a plan at the universities to help create an interest among university graduates to go into policing. If that's not an issue now, is that program looking to be scaled back or cut?

**Mr. Lindsay:** First of all, I'll answer the question around the number of retirements, which is really a question that you would need to ask of all the policing agencies in the province, because they don't provide us with that data. So we don't have that. We have the general data as to what the trend is.

In regard to the program we put together, you know, with all the universities and colleges across the province, I think it has been successful, and we will continue that until that grant runs out.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, I think it's a little early to call it successful. You just rolled it out this summer. But you think it will be a success.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, it's been going all right. It's successful in the way it was developed and the interest that was expressed in it.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. I didn't think it was worth much, but that's my opinion, and we're not going to solve that debate here.

If we talk about correctional facilities here in the province, we've had approximately a 60 per cent increase in the number of people who found themselves in provincial correctional centres in Alberta since 2001. Recent Criminal Code amendments and increased enforcement have impacted inmate population pressures throughout the province. Other changes to federal legislation have been implemented or planned. Especially if they do get rid of the two-for-one sentencing, it will increase Alberta's adult custody population. If we are going to get that reduction to two- and three-for-one sentencing, which I'm all for, the thing is that that might actually pose a little bit of a problem for us in that my understanding is that the jails are pretty full. I'd just like to hear some comments on that.

[Mr. VanderBurg in the chair]

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, I certainly don't dispute, obviously, the numbers that you're mentioning there. We've never put up a no vacancy sign, and we don't have any intention of doing that. That being said, you know, we are in the process of building a new

remand centre in Edmonton. It's ahead of schedule. It should be opened up in the fall of 2011, and that'll free up 1,944 spaces. Presently because of the overcrowding in the Edmonton Remand Centre, we have some of our remanded inmates in some of our provincial facilities. That will allow us to get them out of there and create more room in our sentence facilities.

7:00

Again, we will evaluate as time goes on. Depending on the numbers, we also have the current remand centre, which could be utilized for some of these people as well if we need it. Again, the 1,944 that we've got coming on stream we think will address that.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. And you're on schedule with that?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Actually, a little bit ahead of schedule and on budget.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. During the last year have you increased the number of prison guards you guys have hired?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I'm not sure if we've substantially increased them because there really wasn't a need to. Status quo. You know, if there were some positions that became vacant, we filled them, obviously, but I don't think we've made an effort to increase. There's really been no need to because we haven't increased our number of facilities.

**Mr. Hehr:** You guys are also taking part in the national changing face of corrections study to determine how the correctional population has changed and how these changes are affecting correctional services across Canada. What is that study? What is that pertaining to? What are, sort of, the findings or direction?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, one of the things that we're aware of – it's going right across the country, and we're seeing the same trend – is that we're getting more and more gang members in our facilities. They tend to do a lot of recruiting when they're in there. There's also a need to segregate them when they're in there so that they don't do harm to each other. Based on that, again, that's a challenge, finding space to keep them segregated and away from each other. We are progressing quite well in that area. We've also put some intelligence in our correction facilities to monitor activities so that we know what they're going to be up to when they get out of there.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. What percentage of our current correctional population is aboriginal?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I believe that in Alberta it's approximately 35 per cent.

**Mr. Hehr:** I guess with Alberta, obviously, having an increased number of people coming into the province still and temporary foreign workers of all nationalities and Alberta being the third-highest new immigrant population in Canada, is there difficulty with them? Is the ministry providing services to both victims and perpetrators of crime? Is that being accommodated?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, we're doing what we can. Obviously, regardless of where people come from coming into Alberta, approximately 2 per cent of them decide to live outside the laws of the land. We address them through our facilities. In regard to the different cultures and the languages that we're faced with in our facilities, we recognize that.

**Mr. Hehr:** Is there any money budgeted, I guess, for taser testing on a regular basis in this budget?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yeah. It's our intention to set up a regular program so that we will be testing those particular pieces of equipment on a regular basis.

**Mr. Hehr:** Have you set up this system? Do you have any confirmation on how often this would be? Once a year or once every two years?

**Mr. Lindsay:** No, we haven't set that up yet. We're still working on a memorandum of agreement with both NAIT and SAIT to do that testing for us. We'll develop that shortly. We're still analyzing the results from the tasers that we tested and are still testing some other ones, taking them out of service and getting them tested. We will put together a program on that fairly shortly.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, I think that's good news.

If we can turn to look at the victims of crime fund, if we look at what's been going on there, it says that victims of a listed crime receive a certain amount of money for different injuries or property-related losses incurred as a result of the crime. How many people are using the victims of crime fund a year? What other programs are you supporting under this initiative? It seems to be a fair bit of money, and I know you keep a fair bit of money in there to, I guess, pay out everyone if they all made a claim, much like an insurance company, which is probably prudent. If you can give me some background of, sort of, what is being funded, how many people are applying, how many are being accepted, rejected, and all that sort of stuff.

**Mr. Lindsay:** What I can tell you is that under the victims of crime fund grants program, which are allocated twice a year, organizations that are supported by their communities and assist victims of crime can apply, say, twice a year to the victims of crime fund. In '08-09 the ministry provided over \$9 million in grants to the victims' assistance programs throughout the province, which actually reflects an increase in excess of \$3 million over the previous year's funding. The financial benefits program provides eligible victims with payments based on the severity of the injuries that they sustained. In '07-08 the ministry provided financial benefits for the victims of crime, putting in the amount of \$9.7 million to victims of crime.

Then we have a victims of crime protocol, which is the first ever in Canada. It was introduced and distributed in '07-08. The protocol lets victims know what their role is, what type of information they can receive, what services they can expect when a crime is reported and when the offender is released, et cetera.

So that's kind of what the program is all about. I don't have the specific numbers. Here we go. Let's have a look. The number of applications received and for financial benefits in 2007-2008 was 2,122. The financial benefits expended on those applications was \$9,727,000. In '08-09 the number of applications we received was 2,385 with \$11,623,000 expended.

**Mr. Hehr:** Do you keep track of how many claims were rejected?

**Mr. Lindsay:** We don't have that here. No.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. I guess if you could just catch me up to date. It might be in the materials, it might not be. What are the net assets of the fund right now?

**Mr. Lindsay:** The net assets of the fund at the year end last year was \$44,702,000. This year it's up to \$46,734,000, and that's interesting because the fine revenue was higher than what we expected. That's the reason for the increase even though we increased the number of grants to programs, et cetera. The fund is growing, and again we'll be looking at that.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. How many sexual assault centres apply annually for funding?

**Mr. Lindsay:** How many which? Sorry.

**Mr. Hehr:** Sexual assault centres applying annually for funding.

**Mr. Lindsay:** I don't have that information here. We'll have to get that for you.

**Mr. Hehr:** On that front, what's the average grant awarded to sexual assault centres? You can get me this at your leisure or whenever. What is the number of requests for funding that were received from groups that address domestic abuse? Are there any plans in the near future to change the grant amounts or the manner in which the fund is administered? It's going in the direction. It seems like the fund is building up. Even though it didn't build up by much last year, it is building up, and if we could, you know, get that money to some people who need it or to build programs or whatever around that, that might be something worth doing. Those are just the general questions I had.

**Mr. Lindsay:** We'll get the specifics that you asked for in regards to your general questions around programs. We're always reviewing our programs and what programs we offer and what we could offer to ensure that the needs of Albertans are met, and we'll continue to do that. Again, in regard to the growing amount of money we have in the surplus, you know, we hear from you guys all the time how we need to be saving more, so this is one area where we are. But that being said, if there are missings out there, we don't want to be holding money in surplus when it can go out to communities, and we have substantially increased the amount of money going out to organizations.

7:10

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, hey, if you wanted to toss in the heritage trust fund, I wouldn't say anything about that, so go nuts if you want to put it in savings. I was just asking.

**Mr. Lindsay:** One change we did make last year was that we now include an annual payment to victims of crime who have suffered a brain injury, one of the areas that we have responded to.

**Mr. Hehr:** It's my understanding, and I could be wrong on this, that people have difficulty applying for or receiving, I guess, benefits for therapy after they've been domestically abused or in other situations. Is this a truism or just some myth or rumour I picked up from my travels?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I'm not sure if that would be in relation to victims of crime or whether it would be if they're experiencing trouble, you know, if there hasn't been a crime committed.

**Mr. Hehr:** The whole thing.

**Mr. Lindsay:** It's pretty hard – if they qualify for the program, I certainly haven't heard that concern.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. On that account, maybe you guys do through the victims of crime fund because we know a lot of these situations may go unreported because of a marital or close relationship. Would your organization, I guess, look at some of that stuff for possible funding at times?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, the victims of crime program is specific to victims of crime, but speaking about domestic violence, we have set up under ALERT ARTAMI, which is the Alberta relationship threat management initiative, which works with people who have experienced domestic violence, et cetera, and works with those families to address that problem. So, again, that's another program that's very successful. Then there's also the victims' services units, which are out in our communities, that do great work as well.

**Mr. Hehr:** I guess, if we sort of jump around here a bit, if we go to page 258 of the ministry's business plan, on the establishment of the peace officer training centre mentioned there, is that still in Fort Macleod, or are you looking at other options?

**Mr. Lindsay:** No. I'm still committed to Fort Macleod. You know, we went through a long process to pick the site we thought would be best suited for Alberta, and I still stand behind that process and stand behind the decision that we made to pick Fort Macleod. It's really where policing started in this province back, I think it was, in about 1873, 1874. I believe that tradition is a big part of policing, and I believe that there's no place more suitable for that particular facility than Fort Macleod.

**Mr. Hehr:** I hear you.

Now, these are also little horror stories I pick up along the way. This may or may not have kernels of truth to it; they may be outright falsehoods, but maybe you can correct me while I have the Solicitor General here in person sort of to answer this. I hear that Calgary Police Service and Edmonton Police Service and many other police services or some elements therein don't really want it in Fort Macleod and that they're all competing for the same personnel. If they want their people, they want them trained in Calgary. If they're in Edmonton, they want them to train in Edmonton.

Why do they want them training out in Fort Macleod? They seem to think having it out in Fort Macleod may be tougher to recruit people. Not that I wouldn't like to go to Fort Macleod for my six months of training, but some others there are not as open minded as I may be. You know, I've heard those things from time to time. I was wondering if you could comment on whether you have heard those things or if those are just some grumbling soldiers I meet along the way.

**The Chair:** I just want to clarify that. Are you talking about if the minister has heard that you're open minded?

**Mr. Hehr:** Yes, I would be very open minded to going down to Fort Macleod for my training . . .

**The Chair:** Okay. I just wanted to clarify that.

**Mr. Hehr:** . . . if I was going to become that, yes.

**Mr. Lindsay:** I'm not one to spread rumours and innuendos. Let me answer the question this way: if the RCMP can train all of their officers in Regina, Saskatchewan, we in Alberta can train all our policemen in Fort Macleod. I'll also tell you that aside from rumours and innuendo we have letters of support from every police chief in the province of Alberta for the Fort Macleod site.



**Mr. Hehr:** Fair enough. That helps me, and I'll tell that to the next police officer that tells me otherwise.

How much money was spent last year on initiatives, including media associated with the Alberta police college in Fort Macleod? Do you guys have a number?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I don't think we have that number spelled out. You know, it was part of one of our department's initiatives to do some work in that area, so we just covered off under that. It certainly wouldn't be huge dollars. Certainly, we had resources that were working on funding models.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. I know there's been a little bit of a retraction out of the government on always going to a P3 model. Is this project still slated for a P3, or is the government going to use its own dollars to, I guess, build this?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, you should ask that question of the President of the Treasury Board because that's their decision. We just tell them what the needs are, and they decide where the money is going.

**Mr. Hehr:** Thank you very much. How much money has been spent to date on the project? If we could get that number.

**Mr. Lindsay:** We don't have it here. I'm not sure we could come up with a firm number, but we could probably come up with a pretty good estimate. It's been money well spent, in any event.

**Mr. Hehr:** I hear you. We all want that.

Will the Fort Macleod facility be built by 2012? What are your estimates now for having Fort Macleod up and running?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, I don't want to speculate on that because in looking at the present economic situation world-wide and here in Alberta, our government has a lot of priorities and a lot of things that we have to deal with. Things have to be prioritized. It's the number one priority in my ministry, and when I go to Treasury Board, I'll try to convince them that it should be one of the top priorities of our government. I don't want to speculate on how that might turn out, so I can't give you a firm date on when construction will start.

**Mr. Hehr:** That's fair enough.

We'll move on to sort of another discussion. We may come back there a little later, depending on time. It's the management of Alberta's gaming and liquor industries. That's on page 257 in your 2009 business plan. I guess I'd just like to say that now the responsible gaming choice is available to me inside of 12 or 13 blocks from my home. In fact, in a V from my home I can go 12 blocks in one direction and hit the Calgary Stampede Casino, and if I'm feeling tremendously adventurous, I can go 16 blocks and make it to the Elbow River Casino. I'm pointing out a little bit of a fact here that we're starting to get an awful lot of gaming choice in this province, and on that I'm just sort of looking at whether we're hopefully going along responsibly and in a reasonable fashion. Sometimes I wonder. If we look at that, what performance indicators are used to look at the adequate operation of the current model?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, there are a number of things that we look at. You're accurate in pointing out the fact that over the last few years we've brought on a number of new casinos, and that's why we put a bit of a moratorium on the licence applications until we have an opportunity to review how they are performing in the community and making sure that those organizations that benefit from the

operation of those casinos are benefiting to the best of their ability. We don't want to oversaturate the market.

I can tell you that the industry is well regulated. We're committed to providing gaming entertainment in a very socially responsible manner. In fact, in a 2008 survey of Albertans over 92 per cent of them were satisfied with our provincial gaming activity that they participated in. They were convinced that it was provided fairly and in a responsible manner, and 74 per cent of Albertans were satisfied with the availability of gaming products and activities. From that, I'm not sure if the other 26 per cent felt that there should be more or there should be less. In any event, 74 per cent were happy.

As I mentioned, we have decided to defer reviewing any new applications until we have an opportunity to conduct an assessment of the industry and our capacity for new gaming facilities. We want to make sure we don't oversaturate. I can tell you that in '07 and '08 there were nearly 5,000 charities across our province that shared over \$325 million from licensed gaming events. In addition, \$1.5 billion of gaming revenue benefited Albertans through Alberta lottery fund initiatives.

7:20

**Mr. Hehr:** I know that, and I guess that is good stuff. Nonetheless, Alberta right now has the highest per capita revenue from gaming of any jurisdiction. That's \$871 for every adult resident in 2007 and 2008, while the national average is \$547. Even with our population it strikes me that this is getting to be a problem area and a problem area for, I guess, many people. We know that the statistics are that three-quarters of the revenue in our gaming funds are provided by less than 19 per cent of the users – maybe you could correct me on that statistic – and they're disproportionately the ones going. Do you really see any social gains or social good in these dollars brought to gaming compared to the havoc they seem to be wreaking with their abundance?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, to put in perspective the \$871 per capita versus the \$547, Alberta has one of the youngest populations in our country, and also we have the highest wages and income in Alberta, so there's more disposable income. I think that pretty much explains the difference in those numbers.

In regard to the social responsibility side, the numbers I have indicate that approximately 5.5 per cent of those who gamble could be defined as problem gamblers. Probably about half of those would be addicted. We do have a number of programs in place to help those folks out.

First of all, our staff all receive training so that they can pick up on people who have problems. We have responsible gaming centres in our casinos, in the majority of them. We have Responsible Gaming Awareness Week, which highlights the industry and, again, brings to light, if someone is experiencing problems, where they can get help. We have a voluntary self-exclusion program here in Alberta, where someone who feels that they are in trouble with gambling can ask to be excluded from our casinos, and if they do that, that works fairly well. We have a number of programs. One of them would be Deal Us In training for staff, which, again, helps them identify people who are in trouble. Both Sides of the Coin is another program, and that strategy was developed to ensure that Albertans who choose to gamble have the resources they need to make an informed decision to minimize gambling-related harm.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, you know, you can stop there. I know we're putting a lot of these programs out there and spending quite a bit of money on voluntary self-exclusion, responsible gaming information centres. Maybe I haven't done enough research on it, maybe I'm too

new, but I think they're worth jack. I think that if people want to gamble, they're going to gamble, and especially with 5.5 per cent of the people spending most of the money on this stuff, I think they aren't worth the paper they're printed on. What I think – and this is only my philosophy, basically – is that a 12-step program, when they reach rock bottom or ruin their family or have done something, is the only thing that really gets these people off. Nonetheless, I could be proven wrong if I do more research on this matter, and I really hope I am.

But given that that's sort of my philosophy, that moves me into my second thing. Maybe you can confirm to me: how many slot machines do we now have in Alberta?

**Mr. Lindsay:** A little over 12,000. Actually, 12,700.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. That's on top of how many VLTs?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Six thousand. We've got 6,000 VLTs. That number has been frozen for I think at least 10 years.

**Mr. Hehr:** Are you willing to admit here that they are essentially the same machine?

**Mr. Lindsay:** You know, it's an interesting comment because as technology progresses, they are becoming quite similar, and that's why in one of our pieces of legislation that we're changing, we're changing legislation to reflect that. So, yeah, in a lot of ways they are becoming quite similar in how they operate. The difference is where they're located.

**Mr. Hehr:** With that I will agree. I'll tell you what. I philosophically would much prefer these in gaming institutes, casinos than to have them in every bar, liquor store, and corner store on the block. Nevertheless, there does seem to be an abundance of VLTs. Do you guys have a breakdown from last year's revenue of how much came from VLTs, slot machines, and how much came from the other table games?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yes, we have that. While they're digging out that information, I'll just make a comment on the fact that the VLTs are placed in licensed establishments around the province. They're not in every corner store. That's why we froze that number at 6,000. We have not changed that.

**Mr. Hehr:** Excuse the hyperbole. Sorry about that.

**Mr. Lindsay:** In any event, just to set the record straight. Actually, right now, you know, any time a new licensed premises opens up and requests VLTs, there's about a two-year waiting list to get one. Anyway, that's kind of where it's at today.

In regard to the revenues this is what we're estimating for '08-09. VLT revenues are \$679,115,000, slot machines at \$851,992,000, ticket lotteries at \$214,013,000, for a total revenue of \$1,745,120,000. Operating costs: \$228,702,000, for a net revenue of just a little over \$1.5 billion.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. But I didn't hear in there whether you could break down your casinos into what's being raised from the slots and what's being taken out of the tables. Did I miss that? If you could just help me with that.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Okay. The slots are \$171 million; table games, \$48 million; and electronic bingo, \$24 million. That's the money that goes to charities.

**Mr. Hehr:** That's the money that goes to charities. So we know what comes into the government coffers. Is that all that comes into the government coffers?

**Mr. Lindsay:** No. This is the money that goes out to the charities, so it doesn't cover that off. But I did mention the money that came in under slots. I didn't put the table games on there.

**Mr. Hehr:** If we could get that number at some point.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yeah. We can get that for you.

**Mr. Hehr:** That would be great.

Again, I guess there is a major socioeconomic study out there. When will this be complete?

**Mr. Lindsay:** That's the study that's being done by AGRI, and we anticipate that that will be done in the summer of 2010.

**Mr. Hehr:** When did they get started?

**Mr. Lindsay:** They got started approximately a year ago. This research is fairly detailed. It takes a long time to get it together.

**Mr. Hehr:** I hear you. Much like reading that report on the LRT or the transit train from Edmonton to Calgary. I learned about that in question period today. But I digress. Many things take a while.

Now, I just want to turn more to the granting system. I have a little bit of a problem with the granting system, and I'll give you my philosophy on it. It's primarily related to schools, but you can extrapolate from there. Many different schools right now sign up for casino revenues, not all of them but some of them, to take part to fund their programs. Good on those people for getting out and being organized enough to go do that. Many schools maybe are not as organized, not as fortunate to have as many organized parents. Maybe they work two jobs. I'm not sure. But, needless to say, given this sort of factor there are certain groups who maybe tend to get more funding in this model than others. I realize that there's a reward principle in play, and it does save the Solicitor General's office money to have these volunteers do it. Nevertheless, has there ever been any thought to adding at least some casino revenue to the Education budget and maybe then distributing it to all school districts alike? I just find it a little bit problematic that so much money is doled out through this system. I'd just like to hear your comments on that.

7:30

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, I just spoke about the one revenue stream where we have volunteer groups that come in and actually work a casino event. There is also money that goes out to the different ministries from the lottery fund, including the Department of Education. In fact, looking here at the '08-09 budget for Education and their share of lottery funds, \$60,800,000 went to public and separate school support for operational funding; school facilities infrastructure received another \$60,300,000 on the basic education program initiative; high-speed Internet, they received another \$8,000,000. So a total of \$129 million of funding that they receive where they don't have to come to a casino and volunteer.

**Mr. Hehr:** No. I know that. But I understand that some of this money does find its way into various pools of money. Has the Solicitor General looked at any other ways of staffing casinos that maybe has all this revenue going into the Alberta government

coffers instead of doing it in the manner that the money is now given out? I just don't see – and here's why. There are not the performance measures in place. Right now we take in more money from this than all of the hullabaloo from all the oil sands. Okay? Hopefully that'll change some day, but right now that's the simple fact of the matter and, I think, a bit of a shameful fact of the matter, actually. But I'm just asking you on that: shouldn't that money maybe be provided all the way into government revenues and distributed in some manner with some performance measures attached to it?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, let me back up to when we first started the gaming model here in Alberta. Albertans spoke loud and clear on the fact that they wanted that money to be visible, and they wanted that money to go back to Albertans, and that's exactly where it goes through a number of programs. That being said, you know, we continue to look at the programs we offer. One thing I'm hoping to look at fairly quickly here is what you're talking about, the number of volunteers that come in and work at a casino to get their fair share of revenues that are generated while they're there. With a lot of volunteer groups, as we know, parents are working one or two jobs, and they don't have a lot of time to volunteer for these activities. So at the end of the day are they really adding value while they're there, and is there a better way to do that? We are going to be taking a look at that.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Thank you. I guess if we can just move on. How much time do I have left on this? Ten? Perfect.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Time flies when you're having fun.

**Mr. Hehr:** You got it, my friend. You got it.

Can we talk a bit about the Law Enforcement Review Board? Who staffs this board? What makes up this board and all that stuff?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, the Law Enforcement Review Board is exactly what it – you know, it's a board made up of public members who review matters that come to them based on an incident that would involve a police officer and a member of the public when they are not satisfied with the results that they get going through the process with either the chief of police or the police commission. They have the right to appeal that to the Law Enforcement Review Board. They deal with all complaints that come their way.

**Mr. Hehr:** How many cases involving conduct issues with members of the Edmonton city police were heard by the board last year? Do we have that number?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I don't have those numbers here. We can get them for you.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Is the system the same in Calgary?

**Mr. Lindsay:** The system regarding the Law Enforcement Review Board is exactly the same across the province. The thing that could be different is internal disciplinary actions and how they deal with them within the particular policing agency.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. At present most Canadian jurisdictions except B.C. and Alberta utilize independent review boards at the municipal level to address police misconduct and civilian complaints. If we look at strategy 1.1 of your ministry's plans, I would think that means that your department will be developing independent civilian

bodies to conduct police oversight for municipal police forces. Is that correct?

**Mr. Lindsay:** We're always looking to enhance the public oversight that we have now in police and the oversight of police regarding the public confidence in our police. We already have in place – first of all, the municipal council of the jurisdiction puts together a police commission to oversee policing in their municipality. The police commission interviews and makes recommendations as to who they believe would be the suitable chief of police. Normally, they're appointed by the council, so that is the public oversight body. What we're talking about in that message is making sure that we have standardized methods across the province for training for police commissions so that they deal with these issues in a manner that's standardized across the province.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, I know that. But those are not stand-alone, independent civilian bodies to look after a policeman's conduct.

**Mr. Lindsay:** I'm not sure how anybody could say that a police commission that's appointed by an elected body would not be independent and represent the public. That's what they're there for.

**Mr. Hehr:** I hear you. But who makes up the LERB board, and who are the people who sit on that board? Explain it to me like I'm a six-year-old. Why does the Edmonton police chief want civilian oversight and not this existing system?

**Mr. Lindsay:** First of all, my understanding is that it's not the chief of police; it's the head of their association.

**Mr. Hehr:** Sorry. My apologies.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Anyway, that's fair enough. Just to clarify that.

Again, I guess the comment I will make is that I am not going to strip authority away from a chief of police, who is really the CEO of a huge organization in Edmonton, 1,500 members. I believe that they have authorities that they need to exert in regard to discipline regarding their members, and we have suitable programs in place if the members don't agree with that disciplinary process.

**Mr. Hehr:** Nevertheless, then I would say that your ministry is behind the curve of the general direction of the way policing has gone and should go. At least that's my humble position, and I respect your opinion that way. It just seems to be against general principles of good police organizations.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, everyone is entitled to their opinion. Let me say that, you know, when we set up ASIRT, the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team, again, that's an independent body set up to investigate these serious incidents that occur from time to time. But it's impossible to just appoint members of the public there when these people are conducting investigations which could end up in a court of law and a criminal charge. Again, you need to have that police training. In our particular case ASIRT is headed up by a Crown prosecutor not a policeman, so we believe that it functions very well.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Before I go again, get back on the list, I'll actually just pass my remaining time over to my friend to make an amendment here.

**The Chair:** It doesn't work that way, but we'll pass it on.

**Mr. Hehr:** It doesn't? Oh, okay. I thought it could work that way.

**The Chair:** During the first hour you can. Yeah, I stand to be corrected.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to move an amendment if I may. I'll pass it on. Okay. Here's the original copy.

7:40

**The Chair:** Does everyone have a copy? Go ahead.

**Mr. Kang:** I'm going to move that the estimates for corporate services under reference 1.0.4 at page 354 of the 2009-10 main estimates of the Department of Solicitor General and Public Security be reduced by \$15,000 so that the amount to be voted at page 351 for expense and equipment/inventory purchases is \$601,301,000. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you. As I said earlier, we'll be dealing with these amendments during Committee of Supply tomorrow. Since this amendment is on, we could be sitting a little bit later, and I'm sure you'll speak to it tomorrow night. Thank you.

We'll move on to Brian Mason.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister and officials, thank you very much for being here and answering our questions. I'd like to start with the issue of law enforcement and the number of police officers that we have in the province. I see that the plan is to add another 100 front-line police officers in 2009 as part of a commitment to add 300 new officers over three years. So there's an increase of \$30 million this year, from \$267 million to \$297 million, and that includes funding municipal, First Nations, and provincial policing programs as well as crime prevention and organized crime programs. That additional 100 officers does not include sheriffs, is that correct? These are all sworn officers, police officers.

**Mr. Lindsay:** That's correct.

**Mr. Mason:** Okay. But Alberta still has fewer police per population than the average by quite a bit. The Canadian average is 196.5 per 100,000 population, and Alberta has 163.3 per 100,000 population. As far as my understanding goes, nobody has a lower ratio of police officers to population than Alberta. One of the things that we've advocated for some time is that there should be a program to bring us up at least to be at the average. I'm wondering what your view of that is. Do we need less police in Alberta per population than other provinces?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I think to answer the question, we need to put it in the right context. First of all, in Alberta we have approximately 3,000 peace officers who also are a level of law enforcement, underneath police officers granted, but they certainly contribute to the peace and safety of Albertans, and on top of that our ALERT, which was set up two years ago, and a number of specialty units that we have in there. Some of them are made up of sheriffs, and we hear all the time comments from our police agencies about the great investigative work that they're doing. So I think that if you include the sheriff's branch breakdown of over 400 in security, 105 in traffic, we have 11 under FASST right now, 14 under SCAN, under surveillance operations another 26, protection services has 72, if you include all those in there, that probably doesn't bring us up to par with the number you're talking about, the 163, but I believe that that has to be taken into account when we talk about that.

**Mr. Mason:** Presumably, though, some of the other provinces have some of these.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Not to the same extent that Alberta has.

**Mr. Mason:** I don't think they have the sheriff program.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Even peace officers. Some of them have them but not to the same extent that we do.

**Mr. Mason:** Okay. When is the RCMP contract up for renewal between the province and the RCMP?

**Mr. Lindsay:** The existing contract expires in 2012.

**Mr. Mason:** What are the department's plans for the development of the sheriffs branch between now and that time? It's interesting that a number of units have been added to the sheriffs branch, which would indicate to the untrained eye like mine that you're building a full-fledged police force. There are security operations, traffic operations, protective and investigative services. They've got surveillance support, security and strategic intelligence, and just a lot of divisions that you would expect a full-fledged police force to have. What do you see as the development of this in the next several years?

**Mr. Lindsay:** First of all, let me start off by saying that it's our full intention to ensure that the RCMP remain our provincial police force here for many, many more years to come. They have a proud history here in Alberta as well as across Canada. They're still recognized as one of the most elite police forces in the world. We believe that we're well served by them. I don't want anybody to get confused with the role of our expanded sheriffs program, that it in any way is set up to replace the RCMP.

With that, in regard to our sheriffs program, the new law enforcement framework and the framework that we've been developing over the last number of years, probably three or four years, with ALERT is moving towards more integrated, more co-ordinated policing across our province. In my mind, that's the future of policing in our province. We have to get our policing agencies out of the silos they're in. We've got to get out of the reactionary mode of policing into a more proactive mode. We have set up under ALERT and under our department a number of specialized teams of sheriffs who do very specialized work, and they're very trained in the work that they do.

Again, we could say that, well, we could provide that same service with members from the Calgary Police Service or Edmonton Police Service, but looking at the nature of crime in the province and the fact that these criminals move across the province, it's important to have an organization that has the ability to move in and out of jurisdictions and right across the province in a more co-ordinated fashion. The sheriffs that we have working in these specialized units can do that and are very well received by all the policing agencies across the province.

In fact, if we heard any concern from some Albertans, I guess, it was in relation to the traffic sheriffs that we put on the highway because of the growing carnage that was happening on our highways and the speeding. Again, it was at a time when the RCMP were struggling to meet the recruitment requirements that were necessary, so the highway sheriffs were implemented. They've always had co-operation with the RCMP, but we now formalized that with the four pilots that we have in place, at Whitecourt, Airdrie, Wetaskiwin, and Olds, working in conjunction with and in the same detachments as

the RCMP. Again, that partnership is growing and providing very effective traffic control in our province. So we plan on continuing with that model.

7:50

As to how much we're going to be expanding the number of sheriffs, again, that would depend on how things, I guess, go forward with ALERT and also with the law enforcement framework that we're developing now. Again, in the future I see a lot more integration between policing agencies. I see an ongoing role for sheriffs in the fact that some of the duties that they perform – court security, where the majority of them are, or prisoner transport – are duties that were in the past conducted by police officers, and by the province taking over that role, it frees up our police officers to do a lot more criminal investigation than they were able to do in the past. So, again, we believe it's a model for success in the future.

**Mr. Mason:** Okay. Thanks very much. I want to deal with the handling of complaints against police. You know, I recognize the difference between oversight, which is the police commissions, which in fact is civilian, and the question of complaints. We get complaints at my constituency office from time to time. There have been some high-profile cases: the case of the police officer who repeatedly used a taser on an unconscious man, Randy Fryingpan; then the case publicized with all the pictures in the paper, a police officer assaulting a young woman in handcuffs during the hockey excitement on the street. These people are not dealt with. That's clear.

It seems to me that not only police disciplinary procedures are at fault, but the prosecutors won't prosecute them, the judges won't convict them, and then they're back on the street in uniform to do it over again. You know, it really strikes me that we need to deal with this problem. We need to have our police treat the public appropriately. I'm wondering if we cannot take some steps in terms of discipline so that there's some process for the public that actually results in officers who break the law in the performance of their duties being dealt with not only in a disciplinary sense but through the justice system as well.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, those are good comments, and I'll make an overall comment, I guess. Justice isn't served when there's a long waiting list for these things to be dealt with, and in a lot of cases it's the length of time it's taken to get conclusion on some of these issues that you're talking about. That being said, with any complaint that goes to a chief of police or the police commission, if the public is not satisfied with the result of that complaint, they all have the ability and the right to take it to the Law Enforcement Review Board. When I speak about delays, that's where justice isn't served, when some of these things take two or three years to get resolved. We have taken steps: increasing the number of members on the Law Enforcement Review Board, giving them the ability to conduct hearings without having to have every particular member of that board in a room at any one time, so they can actually hold two or three hearings at the same time. We believe those are steps in the right direction and address the concern you're speaking to.

The other complaint that we heard over the years was in regard to when a serious incident did occur involving a police officer and the public, another policing agency would come in to conduct an investigation. Again, the assertion was that here you have policemen, you know, reviewing and making decisions, so it was the police, really, reviewing police actions. So we set up ASIRT, which, granted, includes some members on that particular team that were previously employed police members, but again the person who

heads up that team is a Crown prosecutor, so we believe that that's a very fair team. The reports that we're getting back from people are that they're gaining a lot of respect and conducting their investigations in a very independent and nonbiased manner. So we believe that we are addressing that concern and that things will certainly improve. I know that the complaints that we've had in our office over the last couple of years in regard to some of these incidents that you were talking about certainly have been reduced substantially since we've taken these steps.

**Mr. Mason:** I hope so. The public perception, I think, that's left by that is that some of these police officers can violate their duty, if not the law, with impunity, and I think that that would be a very unfortunate perception to allow to remain.

I notice that there are increases in the budget in general, Mr. Minister, but one of the first things that happened when the budget came down was that the young offenders centre in Grande Prairie was closed. I'd like to get your comments on that, how much is being saved by that but also the concerns that have come from the community because it serves a region, not just a city, and the inability of family members to visit some of the youth that were in that facility once they've been transferred to Edmonton or somewhere else, which makes it, of course, more difficult for the young person to resolve their behaviours and so on without any family support. This is a difficulty. I wonder if you can comment on that. First of all, how much is being saved by doing that and whether or not there's not some other alternative.

**Mr. Lindsay:** First of all, let me comment that closing the Grande Prairie Young Offender Centre certainly wasn't something that we took lightly. We've been reviewing the concern that we had with that centre for a number of years, and that's in regard to a centre that was developed and manned to house 32 inmates, and we've been averaging 10 and 11 per year. It's always been a concern of ours. Of course, being tasked with ensuring that we invest taxpayers' money to the best of our ability, we were left with the decision – and I believe it was a prudent decision – to close that particular facility down. I believe the saving in that one facility alone is in the neighbourhood of \$3 million.

That being said, it's not all about the money, but we certainly have to consider that. We also took into account, you know, the extra travel time and that required for family members to visit these youth. I will say that they will get as good, if not better, programming in the Edmonton Young Offender Centre as they would in Grande Prairie. We're setting up video conferencing for visiting as well, which will help that. Again, sometimes we have to make the tough decisions, and this was one of them.

**Mr. Mason:** So it's underutilized, but you didn't tell me how much we'd save.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Three million.

**Mr. Mason:** Three million. Thank you very much.

Your budget shows an increase to equipment and inventory of \$245 million, from \$180 million to \$425 million. Can you tell us what that's for?

**Mr. Lindsay:** It's \$245,000, I believe, not \$245 million.

**Mr. Mason:** Oh. Did I drop a few zeros?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Mr. Mason:** Okay. Sorry. Then don't answer it. It's not that much. I apologize for that.  
How's my time?

**The Chair:** Three.

**Mr. Mason:** Three minutes? My goodness. Thanks.  
You produce an awful lot of money. You're the only department that I can see that actually runs a profit here.

**Mr. Lindsay:** We're doing a great job.

**Mr. Mason:** I think it's great to mix the police and the prisons with the vice because it makes it very profitable.

I wanted to ask about the funding for the horse-racing industry. I couldn't find it, and I'm only assuming that it's in this budget. I know that it came about as a result of some disagreements about how much Northlands and the Stampede could keep from VLT revenue, and it's being returned to them in a separate program. Maybe you can just point that out to me.

8:00

**Mr. Lindsay:** I remember seeing it. We'll dig up what page that's on. I know it's in there because I remember seeing it. What we have out here – and you've probably already seen this – is the horse-racing and breeding renewal program of \$35 million a year. Again, that's the industry's share from the racing entertainment centres that they run across the province.

**Mr. Mason:** So it's only \$35 million this year?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Let's have a look here. It's reduced. In the '08-09 budget it was \$48 million. That was the budget. We're forecasting the revenues to only be at \$38 million, so it's a lot less than what we budgeted for. The '09-10 estimates are at \$35 million.

**Mr. Mason:** Is there a sunset clause on that program?

**Mr. Lindsay:** No.

**Mr. Mason:** Should there be?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, again, you know, it's an agreement that we have on the licensing arrangement for them to run racing entertainment centres to help them continue making Horse Racing Alberta a sustainable enterprise in the province. No, we don't have a sunset clause in it. Like every other program, we review it. Like every other industry, horse racing is changing in Alberta. We'll see what happens in the long term.

**Mr. Mason:** Okay. It would take away a good issue for the opposition if you did that.  
Those are my questions, Mr. Chairman. Thanks.

**Mr. Lindsay:** There is a sunset clause. The funding agreement expires in 2016. It was a 10-year agreement that was put in place, I assume, in 2006.

**Mr. Mason:** That's longer than NAFTA.

**The Chair:** Also, on page 362 the footnotes kind of clarify it a bit.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yeah, that's the page I was looking for. It's really there. It's their return on their fair share of funds they raise through their racing entertainment centres.

**The Chair:** We'll move on to Neil Brown, followed by Kent.  
Mr. Mason, did you want on the list again?

**Mr. Mason:** No.

**Dr. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we could, we would apportion the 20 minutes back and forth between the minister and me.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Sure.

**Dr. Brown:** Minister, I'd like to start the conversation regarding your mandate to support safe communities as set out in your business plan. In the past month or so Statistics Canada has come out with an index of serious crime and an index of total crime which sort of apportion different weightings of crime according to seriousness and whatnot. I took the liberty of digging out some of those statistics in advance of the Minister of Justice's appearance before this same committee. Both of those indices show that we were below the national norms, and particularly our major cities, Calgary and Edmonton, were both below national norms, although we weren't in the low ranks for the western provinces. Yet on page 260 of your business plan your statistics seem to show that the crime rate for both property crime and violent crime is above the national average. I guess I would start by asking whether or not there is, in fact, a dichotomy there in terms of the measures that you're using – what is the true picture of crime in our major cities and in our province compared to comparable cities and provinces across the country? – and whether or not we have any intention of changing the indices that we use for measuring those crime statistics.

**Mr. Lindsay:** First of all, the new indices came out after we did our budgets. Again, numbers are numbers, and how they put them together I'm not all that sure, but we certainly welcome the new information. It gives us another tool to look at and understand the trends behind crime and criminal behaviour. The information in the new index will help us ensure that our policies on crime prevention and law enforcement continue to address the realities of crime in our province.

Again, you know, our numbers are based on what we were seeing before this particular information came out. It was a fairly detailed study done by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, and we haven't had time yet to go through that in great detail to analyze how they arrived at what they did. We all read the newspapers here, and we know what's going on in our communities with organized crime, gangs, et cetera. Then listening to feedback from Albertans, we know we're not where we want to be, so we're going to continue – in my mind it doesn't matter. I mean, these are great stats to have and to look at and to justify some of the things that we're doing, but at the end of the day our mandate is to keep our communities safe, and we're going to continue working at that.

**Dr. Brown:** Well, Minister, your comments just raise another question sort of in anticipation of what I was going to ask you about later, but I'll get into it now. You mentioned that the coverage in the news media about crime and whatnot and the perception of the public seems to be that things are getting worse. I don't think statistics would bear that out. According to Statistics Canada the crime rates both for violent crime and crime overall, Criminal Code offences, are actually not increasing. One of your performance measures is the perception by the public of safety in their home and in their communities after dark. I wonder whether or not you've considered that we need in some way to counter that communication

gap that happens with the news media to reassure Albertans that, in fact, things are not as bad as they seem in the press and on the television set with respect to rates of crime and whether or not that might affect your performance measures. When people perceive that there is a problem, I guess perception becomes reality.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, I certainly don't disagree. Perception is reality. How we can ever counteract people's belief from information that they gather from their newspapers and TVs is a whole other challenge. I can tell you from some of our safe communities consultations that we've done across the province and some of the community meetings that I've attended that people in Alberta recognize that putting more policemen on the street, which is a great initiative, certainly is not going to get to the root of our problems unless we start addressing some of the addictions that we're seeing.

Also, communities need to start getting to know their neighbours more. As one police member pointed out to me, I believe it was in Calgary, one of the worst things we've done in regard to community safety is put attached garages so that people drive in off the street and shut the door behind them and go in their house. They never get to know their neighbours. They never get to know the kids in the neighbourhood. Like any other community, Albertans are going to have to take their communities back and get to know each other and support each other and keep an eye out for each other before we can ever get to the bottom of the things that we're seeing.

**Dr. Brown:** Why is it that we never see, then, a news story or a press release saying: Calgary among safest cities in Canada? Why don't we see things about counteracting this perception? In essence, there is a danger not only of creating that perception in the public's mind but also in the fact that the resources that you're allocating there may be in a sense not directed to where people really think that they ought to be.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, again, you know, we have a lot of good-news stories in Alberta, but according to a lot of the media good-news stories don't sell newspapers, I guess, so they always want to report the more gruesome details of things that happen in our community. Again, by getting out in the community and having our police out in the community and getting to know the communities that they live and work in, we believe that that's going to go a long way to improve things.

8:10

**Dr. Brown:** Well, Minister, I'd like to follow up on another one of your comments. You mentioned, you know, dealing with addictions and whatnot and people who are incarcerated. We know that rates of incarceration don't necessarily translate into safer communities. Well, we only have to look south of the border to see that. The United States has the highest incarceration rate of pretty near any country in the world, yet their violent crime rate is far above what it is here in Canada. I wonder if you could tell us a little bit about how your resources in your budget are going towards remediating that situation and helping to lower the rate of recidivism in the criminal population. How are we rehabilitating people to lower the crime rate and dealing with these people who are incarcerated in a better way so we don't see them back again?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, the number one initiative in that area is the two-for-one credits, three-for-one credits that the federal government is addressing, you know, to turn some of these people's lives around, whether they're addicted to alcohol or illegal drugs, whether they need educational upgrading and an opportunity to

improve their education or training so that they can contribute to society when they get out rather than taking from it. We do have a lot of good programs in our facilities, but again we have to have them there for a long enough period of time so that we can get them to a point in their lives when they can be productive citizens.

Of course, another part of that, as well, is the workloads that we're under. Our probation officers are working on close to a hundred caseloads per probation officer. We're addressing that by increasing the number of officers substantially and reducing the caseloads so we can monitor the people a lot more closely than in the past and, again, help keep them on the path and keep them pointed in the right direction. We know that in a lot of these cases if the level of supervision isn't there, they tend to go back to their old ways, but if we can keep closer tabs on them, we'll have more success.

Our prolific offender program, where we're going to target 60 of the worst offenders in the province, is another program that is going to head us in the right direction.

You know, I agree with your comments. It's not just a matter of locking them up, incarcerating them, and turning them back out on the street. If we can't offer them the programs to turn their lives around, we're just spinning our wheels. I believe that in this province we have some good initiatives in place, and we're going to be improving on the record we've had in the past.

**Dr. Brown:** Does your department have any empirical data upon which to base some sort of assessment on what types of rehabilitation programs might be the most cost-effective; for example, a drug and alcohol treatment versus vocational training or some sort of educational programs in the institutions?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, again, I think it's a reflection on the person that's coming into the system. You know, we have life skills and anger management courses. We have academic upgrading, employment training. Then when you're in a position where you can offer them treatment for their addictions – and one of the things we are doing in corrections is turning our health care services over to the health department, which, in my mind, is a great initiative. The way it's set up now we struggle getting their previous history when they come into the facility and then again when they're let go to ensure that there's a continual treatment program set up for them when they get out. It'll be a lot better to have them looked after by the health care system right through the whole ambit of their time served and probation. The continuity should be a big thing.

**Dr. Brown:** Minister, I'd like to change the subject matter a little bit and come back to a topic that I've asked you about in question period on one occasion with respect to the sheriff's department. I know that you have some statistics which would show that there is a genuine efficacy in the sheriffs as enforcers of the traffic laws and whatnot. I'm just wondering whether or not you have determined whether or not you can assess some real performance measures there in terms of assessing the effectiveness in terms of reducing the number of fatalities, which are running in excess of 450 a year for the last few years, or the number of serious bodily injuries or the number of collisions. Any number of those various statistics I think would be extremely useful to us and to the public in justifying the resources that we put into the sheriffs' department.

I know that we don't have any statistics yet for 2008, but I think that even based on 2007 over 2006, you had at least some preliminary data which would indicate some performance measures there. I wonder if you could comment on where you're going with respect to performance measures. What is the efficacy, and how are we going to measure those things?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, the stats that you're speaking to, as you're aware, come out of the Minister of Transportation's department, and they're certainly one method that we use to evaluate how well we're doing in regard to traffic safety, but there are a whole number of variables that would decide at the end of the day how many fatalities we had, how many injuries. You know, they're valuable, and we look at those. But along with those, another way that we evaluate our program is that since our sheriffs have been on our highways, they've handed out over 225,800 tickets, they've attended at almost 800 traffic accidents, participated in over 600 joint operations with police services, and they've assisted in removing over a thousand suspected impaired drivers from the road.

Those stats alone tell me that they're being effective out there. When you couple that with the feedback that we get from Albertans sending us comments about how grateful they are that we've been able to slow the traffic down on highway 2, for example, and also comments we get back from our policing partners across the province, who also appreciate working with our sheriffs and their traffic enforcement agendas, those are things that we use along with the stats.

**Dr. Brown:** Well, Minister, 225,000 tickets is an impressive number, but I think that in order to counter, you know, some public perception that we're simply generating a cash cow here, we have to show not only that we've given the tickets out but that those tickets are effecting a real change in the behaviour of people on the highways. That's where I'm looking for some sort of a performance measure that would say: yes, the number of collisions on these roads that are being patrolled by the sheriffs has gone down by X per cent, and the number of injuries and fatalities has gone down by X per cent. There's a great economic cost, of course, to those injuries and fatalities to the Alberta economy, not only in the health care system but in lost productivity and lost wages and lost taxes to the government and so on. I think we need to get a better handle on what the performance measures are.

**Mr. Lindsay:** I don't disagree at all. The stats, as I indicated, are helpful. Again, from the feedback I'm getting from Albertans and what I'm seeing on the highway, there's no doubt in my mind that our highways are safer today because of the fact our sheriffs are out there patrolling. How much safer? I'm not sure. We can give the stats on the tickets, but again maybe we have to look at the demerit system and the fines as well. I mean, it's all part and parcel.

**Dr. Brown:** When you get those statistics back, I'm sure that there will be a very high ratio of payback from the monies that are being expended on the sheriffs' department. I don't know whether it'll be a multiple of three or four or five times, but I can guarantee you that there is going to be a very significant economic payback there, and I think what we need to do is to show that in terms of the dollars saved to the health care system, lost productivity, lost time, and so on in order to show that it's value for money.

I want to move on, then, if I could, Minister, to one other, final area with respect to traffic enforcement and reducing the carnage that we have on Alberta's highways, and that is particularly with respect to the use of technology. I do applaud the department for moving ahead with the increased use of technology. The speed-on-green cameras, I think, will be a very effective tool in some of the urban centres.

8:20

I'm wondering, as a very cost-effective way as technology changes and these instruments become cheaper, become smaller,

become much more available, why we don't use more of those things. I'm thinking particularly of things like the Queen Elizabeth II highway in Alberta. Why don't we have these photoradars on almost every overpass or maybe every fifth overpass and have dummies, little black boxes, sitting on four out of the five, and we just move them around now and again, that kind of a pervasive system where you do control it and you don't have to send, you know, live people out there that you're paying \$60,000, \$70,000, \$80,000 a year in salary and benefits to enforce? I just think that the savings are there. We've got remote sensing. Why can't we start using more technology to reduce accidents?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, that's a good question. You know, we always review our traffic safety plans to ensure that we're using the most up-to-date methods to ensure that our highways are safe. We have reviewed that a number of times, utilizing photoradar on a number of highways. At this point in time, as you know, we're not doing that, but it's something we revisit from time to time.

I know for a fact, from what I'm seeing, that photoradar does also slow people down. It's not just a cash cow; it's a deterrent. For anyone that complains to me about it being a cash cow, all they have to do is drive the speed limit, and they don't have to worry about it.

**Dr. Brown:** Thank you, sir.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll move on to Kent Hehr, followed by Pearl Calahasen.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you very much. Just a few follow-up questions. The hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill's comment really struck a chord with me. I was visiting the University of Lethbridge, and a gentleman – he was actually an expert; he taught accident safety and that at the University of Lethbridge – gave me a statistic that \$12 million a day is the cost to the government here in this province on traffic accidents alone in terms of, I guess, loss of productivity, injury, hospital, whatever you have. I don't know whether you guys have those numbers or whether you guys keep those statistics in your department, whether that is in or around sort of where the number is.

**Mr. Lindsay:** We have numbers that are not the same as yours. We do know how many people are killed, how many are injured, what the cost is to the health system, et cetera. Those numbers are available in the government. They're under the traffic safety plan, which is in another ministry.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Just as sort of a follow-up and not binding, obviously, anyone on my side of the House on this, just for discussion purposes, if we look at things like vehicle safety, have we looked at reducing the speed to 100 kilometres an hour? It also would do wonders for global greenhouse gas emissions and all the like. There are a lot of winners associated with reduction of speed, not only the reduction of car accidents but the protection of the environment that would be had by slowing the speed limit down.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Again, that's an issue to speak to the Minister of Transportation about. That's his role. You know, his speeds that are posted on our highways are for the maximum safe speed as per highway design. They're not the minimum limit; they're the upper limit.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Then just following up on some questions that are within your mandate, on your 60 most dangerous offenders or the 60 people who commit an abundance of crimes here in Alberta . . .



**Mr. Lindsay:** Repeat offenders.

**Mr. Hehr:** That program was rolled out in November to much fanfare. First, before I have some follow-up questions, do you have any statistics on its success, on whether these people have reoffended, on whether they have left the jurisdiction? Just give me a sort of background on that program.

**Mr. Lindsay:** We're still in the process of setting it up. It's not up and running yet, but it will be shortly. You know, we had to do a fair bit of work co-ordinating activity between Edmonton police, Calgary police, the RCMP, probation officers, sheriffs' surveillance, and the Crown, so there are a number of players there that have to make up these integrated teams. We should be rolling it out fairly quickly, but it's not quite there yet.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Do you have a date when this program will be rolled out?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yeah. We're anticipating we'll have it up and running in September, October this year.

**Mr. Hehr:** And most of the people on this force will be taken from existing police forces? They won't be new members to the force?

**Mr. Lindsay:** No. We're not looking at new members based on our budgets today.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. That's good to know. I thought when the announcement was made that it was going to get going right away, but I guess that as with all good things, sometimes you have to wait.

Anyway, we move on to, I guess, more of the corrective services available here in the province. It strikes me that many of the people, especially in our remand centres, tend to fall under the mentally ill or drug addicted. Do you guys have an estimate on the numbers that are currently in remand who would qualify under one of those two headings?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I don't think we have those with us – we do have those stats – but I will say that what we're seeing is a more unhealthy inmate population as time goes on. You know, some of those problems are people with mental health issues. Some have other health problems. Hepatitis C is one of them that comes to mind. We can get those numbers for you. I don't have the exact numbers here, but we're certainly seeing an increase.

**Mr. Hehr:** If you could, through the chair, provide them to all members of this group, that would be great, just almost any breakdown on any of those visible things like mental health, hepatitis B, C, whatever. AIDS is on the increase in our prison systems. You know, cover the gauntlet for me there. I guess that's an important number. I hear it's quite high.

On that note – and you've touched on it a little bit – through the community initiatives program and through the Ministry of Justice and some other things we're looking at more of an approach to reducing crime, which I commend you on. How is that going? Are there mental health services being utilized in the jails, or is this program still getting going with treatment programs, education programs, all that stuff?

**Mr. Lindsay:** For a number of years we've certainly had programs where we evaluate all our inmates when they come into our facilities and offer them the level of care that they need, whether it's mental

health care or care for whatever illness they may bring with them. Again, we will be offering that a lot more efficiently when it comes under the health services people.

**Mr. Hehr:** For instance, if you have a gentleman who comes into your correctional facility and says that he's addicted to, say, whatever opiate is his choice of the day, heroin or cocaine, can that inmate then receive help immediately? What's the process for that? What happens in that situation right now when a person comes into the remand system in that state?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, regardless of what their ills are when they come into the system, they are evaluated during admission, and whatever help they need, they're given it. If they're addicted to an illegal drug, for example, we have programs there that will help them through that.

**Mr. Hehr:** Is there a follow-up care program for them, or is that going to be set up through the safe communities initiative?

8:30

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, it wouldn't necessarily be a part of the safe communities initiative. There are follow-up programs now. Again, the fact that we actually offer an independent health service that's outside of Alberta Health Services today is one of the concerns that we have. We want to get that all in so that there's a lot better tracking of somebody so that when they're in our system and when they get released, the people they are reporting to in probations will be able to follow that a lot better. The health care will be a lot more continuous and a lot more effective and efficient than it is today.

Even when they come into our facilities today, they may say that they're on a certain prescription drug for whatever the ailment may be. Well, for us to go back and find out, for a lot of them: "Where'd you get your prescription from?" "Well, we're not sure. Some doctor on Jasper Avenue." Without having them actually having access to the system, it's hard for us to track that down. Again, next year we'll have that looked after.

**Mr. Hehr:** I was just wondering. You mentioned earlier there's an increased gang presence in our remand centres. Could you estimate what percentage of the population in our remand centres is gang related? Do you have those numbers?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I think it's in the neighbourhood of somewhere between 8 and 10 per cent of the people that come in are known gang members.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Just a follow-up question on that. The Alberta government has recently recognized the need to increase a treatment option, of course, for addictions. But we were just wondering whether there would be methadone treatment programs available. Is that being made available? Will it be made available, that stuff, right now?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yeah. We have it in the facilities now.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. I'm all right. Someone else can go here.

**The Chair:** We'll move on to Pearl, then Brian.

**Ms Calahasen:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to at least talk about the fact that I think that if anybody can do anything, it's you and your department because you've got some

really great staff. I have worked with them, so I want to say thank you for their vision and for trying to get things done.

I do have some questions, and I think that these questions are answerable because of the way that you've been able to deal with the various challenges. My first question has to do with the inmate populations. You indicated that there's been an increase of 60 per cent in correctional centres, and it's due to an increase in remand population. Of those 60 per cent that are in the remand, can you tell me how much of that would be aboriginal people who would be in there? I think it's the short term that we always are dealing with for the people in the aboriginal community who are in the correctional systems.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, I want to thank you for your comments about our staff. We do have a great staff here, and they do some pretty wonderful things with the small budget that we do have.

I do want to say, though, that overall about 35 per cent of our people that we hold in custody are aboriginal, and I don't think that that percentage would change whether they're in remand or in a sentence facility. It's a number that you and I both know is too high, and hopefully we'll be able to address that in a meaningful manner in short order.

**Ms Calahasen:** That would go to my next question, then, because you're talking about Alberta participating in the national Changing Face of Corrections and how the various correctional population has changed, and I think the changes are affecting the correctional services. This is good news. However, I don't see anything in there that talks about the very population I was talking about and asking about earlier. So I'd like to know what specific items you are looking at in terms of dealing with that specific population. That's on page 257.

**Mr. Lindsay:** If the question is around how we can reduce that number, they come into my world when they've already committed the crime, unfortunately. That being said, you know, we offer them the programming that can help them get on with their lives the same as any other inmate so that they can contribute rather than taking away from society.

Also, you know, we offer them opportunities to participate in activities regarding their aboriginal culture through sweats and visits from elders, et cetera. So we do recognize the unique culture of the aboriginals that we hold within our facilities and, again, offer them programs that will give them every opportunity to contribute to society when they get out.

**Ms Calahasen:** I like that strategy. However, when we look at how it talks about the collaborative areas that you're going to be working on with the federal and other provinces and territories with program delivery and infrastructure planning, I guess my question is: what kind of thrust are you going to make in making sure that we take care of that possible 35 per cent?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, again, we have great meetings and great discussions with our counterparts in other jurisdictions in Alberta. You know, the challenge isn't any different there in regard to the aboriginal populations and the numbers they're seeing in their facilities. Again, we talk about the programs that we're offering, the facilities that we have. In a lot of ways here in Alberta I think we lead the way in the things that we're doing. In fact, with our new remand centre we have visitors coming from across North America looking at it because it's a model that's going to work very well in

ensuring that, first of all, the safety of the public is looked after as well as the safety of the inmates and, again, their health and welfare while they're in our care.

**Ms Calahasen:** My second question has to do with the additional police officers that you want to work on your strategic priorities. I was really pleased that you are instituting the 300 additional police officers. From what I gather from page 258, you're going to discuss options for achieving this priority with the various policing agencies in the province. My question is: if there is a specific area and a specific region that looks like they should be getting more police officers but they can't seem to get the police agency to be able to do that, how can we ensure that those municipalities will be served so that they can get the additional police officers?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, if they're served by the RCMP in rural Alberta in communities under 5,000, the RCMP make that call as to where their officers go based on a formula, which takes into account such things as crime rate and population and a few other things. At the end of the day, if there's a jurisdiction or a community that doesn't feel that they have the right representation of police officers, there are a number of things they can do depending on the type of community. They can go to an enhanced policing model, where they can pay for extra members themselves. They can actually meet with the RCMP and explain to them the reasons why they believe that they're underrepresented, and they will address that as well. Again, they can also inform me of that need, and we will do everything we can to address it.

**Ms Calahasen:** Thank you. The other question I do have has to do with victims' services and the assistance of victims' service organizations. Your department has done an exemplary job in many of the instances, especially in northern Alberta, relative to victims' services. I just recently attended – and I just want to give you an opportunity. I was with the federal MP, and he went to announce the dollars that were given. What happened was that I indicated that we're going to match those dollars. So I just wanted to give you an opportunity to maybe make that correction publicly.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, the announcement that you attended there last week, yeah, that is a federal-provincial initiative. You said the right thing. In fact, it's important to get that message out because the federal government sometimes likes to take credit for all these great things, and in that particular program we do match those dollars. In most cases we already have programs ongoing that are above and beyond what they're already trying to do.

**Ms Calahasen:** Thank you. Now, on page 264, strategy 7.1, you're talking about implementing strategies to promote responsible use of alcohol. Can you provide us with maybe some programs or the policies that AGLC has implemented or intends to implement to be able to look after that specific area?

8:40

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, there are a number of programs we have in place where staff who work in these licensed premises are trained so that they serve in a responsible manner. ProServe is one of them, that was launched in 2004, which was mandatory for people working in licensed facilities to train up their staff. We followed that up with ProTect, which is training for security staff who offer security at these particular facilities. You know, based on the feedback we got, there were a lot of people offering security at these facilities who had great physiques but were too quick to turn to

removing people with strength rather than having the ability to communicate and resolve these issues before they escalated to violence. Again, that training has been quite successful.

We also have the Alberta Safer Bars Council, which we've established. They're a provincial advisory group which provides insight to the AGLC in regard to policy development and programs, again, to deter and reduce violence in establishments.

Then there is also the Alberta alcohol strategy, which is a partnership with Alberta Health Services and supports a co-ordinated approach to help prevent and reduce harms associated with alcohol use in the province by developing a culture of moderation, which is very important.

We also have a number of cross-ministry committees which the AGLC participates in, you know, which focus on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, injury control, prevention, traffic safety, and impaired driving. So we're doing a lot of things.

**Ms Calahasen:** Thank you. I have another question, and it has to do with the gaming activities. It's 7.4 on page 264. It talks about ensuring that the charitable gaming model and the Alberta lottery fund meet the current and future expectations of Albertans. As an example, a charity in rural Alberta gets to wait for 40 months before it can go for another kind of charity gaming. The cities wait 24 months is my understanding. Charities who go to the two larger cities get a higher take from the casinos. My question is: are you considering in any way pooling those casino proceeds for charities on a provincial basis?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, let me address – you know, I think your numbers are accurate in regard to the 40 months, 24 months, at least going back about two years ago, but we have adjusted that now. Now the time between groups across the province, whether it's urban or rural, is actually fairly equal. We have adjusted that.

In regard to the higher take of the urban versus the rural, again that's something that has shown up in the last few years. Going back five or six years, it was a lot more equitable than it is today, so we are going to be looking at that. Hopefully, fairly soon we'll be able to put a committee together to do a province-wide look at that. That being said, in my mind, although we'll see what comes back, I see the urban charities probably needing more money than some of the rural ones do, so I think there's always going to be a bit of inequity there. It's not going to be the same number of dollars if you work a smaller rural casino than you would if you worked a big, urban one. That being said, I don't think the formula the way it is today is serving all Albertans. We will be looking at that and hopefully adjusting it.

**Ms Calahasen:** Great. Excellent. I think that if you're a charity, it doesn't matter where you are; your needs are still the same whether in the city or otherwise. I guess I'm thinking that if we're looking at the equitable take, then we should be looking at how they can also take part of those specific dollars that would be coming up. That's just a recommendation, Mr. Minister.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yeah. One thing I'm hearing from the volunteer groups is that they're having a hard time getting the number of people required to work a casino. Again, I'm not convinced that there is great value there in some of the things that they're doing when they're at the casinos, so I want to take a look at that as well. Maybe we can reduce those numbers and reduce the workload on volunteers who step up to the plate and actually help build Alberta. We want to give them every break that we can.

**Ms Calahasen:** Thank you. On page 267, capital investment by program, ministry support services, if you look at the comparable '07-08, '08-09 budget and forecast, then there's the estimate, and then there are targets. Can you explain why there's a difference between the various times? Is it because you are doing different developments as you go forward?

**Mr. Lindsay:** When I find that page, I'll do my best to explain it to you.

**Ms Calahasen:** Okay. Page 267, Mr. Minister, Budget '09. There are also public security, correctional services, and victims of crime. Victims of crime stays the same. Correctional services stays the same. Public security changes somewhat. This is on the capital side. I just want to know if it means that there has been different development at different times and what the focus has been.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Some of those numbers are a reflection of bringing on our capital projects and, for some, the delays that we've had bringing them on. One example would be APIII, which is our new database. That's been somewhat delayed, so now there's money that's set aside and carried over. That's really what that is a reflection of.

Did that answer the question, or are you looking for some more information there?

**Ms Calahasen:** It's just that there are huge numbers, and then there are none. If you look at it, the actual '07-08 was \$1.598 million, '08-09 is \$23.79 million, then the '08-09 forecast is \$5.735 million, then the '09-10 estimate is \$35.061 million, and then there are targets. There must be some activity that you're going to be taking on.

**Mr. Lindsay:** First of all, the increase of \$29.3 million, again, is due to the reprofiling of cash flows for that strategic information technology initiative that I talked about, APIII. That, again, is to align with the procurement schedule for that particular initiative, so there have been some changes there. The decrease of \$18 million is, again, due to the reprofiling of cash flows for that same initiative, again to align with the procurement schedule of that particular program.

**Ms Calahasen:** Thank you, sir.

That's it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**The Chair:** We'll move on to Brian, then Teresa.

**Mr. Mason:** Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to talk about secure and efficient custody and community supervision, page 262 in your business plan, and a related one, goal 5, that offenders have the opportunity to access rehabilitative services and programs. One of the things that I think sometimes people don't think about is that almost everybody that goes into the corrections system comes out again at some point, back into the community, and it's a community problem; it's not just the corrections' and the police's problem. The question is: what shape do they come out in when they come out? Are they going to reoffend? That's really the question.

One of the things that I'd like to ask about is how you prevent recruitment by gangs, particularly of younger people who might be incarcerated for the first time. You know, I've heard lots of stories about how there's a young person who has maybe fallen into a bad crowd, who hasn't a great upbringing, substance abuse problem, or just made some mistakes, and he gets put in, and he comes out a

hardened criminal or on the road to that. I guess it's my view that we should avoid incarcerating people, particularly young people, unless it's absolutely necessary. How do you deal with that problem, making sure that our jails and our remand centres aren't simply breeding grounds for gang activity?

8:50

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, that's a concern that we are certainly aware of, and we address it in a number of ways. First of all, when they come to our facility, they're there – and I probably hear comments the other way, that all too frequently we don't give people a hard time in jail, and we let them go. That being said, obviously there are people who are in there for the first time, and we want to give them every opportunity, you know, so that they can get some training, improve their education, or cure their anger management, whatever help that we can give them.

[Mr. Kang in the chair]

We monitor the activities there very closely. We have excellent correctional officers in our facilities who do everything they can to prevent the intimidation. That's really where it starts. If you want, you know, to get access to certain things, you can be intimidated to share your meals or a whole bunch of things. So we monitor that fairly closely. Again, if it's a known gang member, in most cases they would be in a segregation unit, away from the general population, in any event. We do have ways of segregating them. But, again, it's always a challenge to monitor what goes on within those facilities to make sure that what you're talking about doesn't happen. That being said, we know that it does, and we're taking all the steps that we can to stay on top of it.

When you throw in the overcrowding that we presently have at the Edmonton Remand Centre, it certainly doesn't help the situation any. With a new facility opening up in 2011, again, that is going to give us an upper hand in that regard, and with the management style in the new facility, where we're going to have our corrections officers right on the floor with the people we're housing, we'll make sure that the inmates are not running the asylum, that we're on top of things there. We think that's a great management model and a great way to move forward.

[Mr. VanderBurg in the chair]

**Mr. Mason:** Okay. I'd like to ask what the department is doing to prevent the spread of HIV in the correctional facilities.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, all of our inmates are assessed when they come in as to whether they would have HIV or whether they wouldn't. Again, somebody who has HIV would be treated appropriately, and if it's required that they be in isolation, they would be. In regard to the activities that would lead to the spread of that, again, that's monitored very closely within our facilities.

**Mr. Mason:** So there are two parts here. One, there is testing, and then if someone is positive, they're segregated. Is that what you said?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I think it would depend on the nature of what we would find when they would come in there. I think it would be better, Brian, if we gave you a written response to that just so I'm not speaking out of school here. We do assessments. But we will get you a response as to exactly how we deal with that.

**Mr. Mason:** Yeah. Okay. I appreciate that.

You know, it's well known that needles are shared in correctional facilities, and all the monitoring in the world doesn't stop that from occurring. I wonder if there's any program for preventing the sharing of needles; that is, by providing inmates with disposable needles or bleach kits to clean them.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, we don't allow any needles outside of somebody needing an injection.

**Mr. Mason:** But they're there. You know they're there.

**Mr. Lindsay:** I'm not sure how often. You know, we find them when we have lockdowns. Based on the situation that occurs, they can be there. But, again, we certainly wouldn't want to be encouraging that type of activity.

**Mr. Mason:** No. I know you don't want to encourage it, but you want to prevent the spread of HIV, I assume.

**Mr. Lindsay:** We certainly want to do that.

**Mr. Mason:** I'm going to go to another difficult moral choice for you, Mr. Minister, and that is the distribution of condoms in correctional facilities to prevent the spread of HIV.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Again, there may be programs in the federal penitentiary, I believe, that would issue condoms. We don't believe it's necessary in our facilities. Again, we certainly don't condone those activities, and we monitor those things fairly closely. It's certainly not our intention at this time to issue condoms or needles to any people who we hold in our facilities.

**Mr. Mason:** Sometimes activity in prisons is not consensual. How do you address the people who have that kind of activity imposed on them? What do you say to them if they contract HIV? It's not anything that they've consented to.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, again, as I indicated, we monitor those activities fairly closely. That being said, there are instances where we have behaviour there that isn't condoned by the rules of the facility, and we have disciplinary actions that take place to address that.

**Mr. Mason:** Do you monitor the incidence of HIV in provincial correctional facilities? Like, do you track it somehow?

**Mr. Lindsay:** As I mentioned before, when they come into our facility, they very thoroughly go through, you know, a health inspection before they're admitted to the general population. So, yeah, we have a pretty good handle on the number of people in our facilities who have HIV, who are HIV positive, or not.

**Mr. Mason:** Maybe you could provide that to me along with the other written part. I would appreciate it. That goes through the chair to all committee members.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Mr. Mason:** My last question. This is kind of a beef I have from my days as a city councillor, dealing with crime. The area that I represent, you know, has had a number of problems related to drugs, prostitution, break and enter, that sort of thing. A lot of it stems from some of the hotels. There have been some problematic ones.

One is cleaned up now, and I don't mind saying what it is. It's the Cromdale Hotel. It's all boarded up.

My question is about your enforcement and what you do and how many people you have enforcing, whether or not the people that enforce on liquor premises are different from the ones that enforce on the gaming side or not. We found that the Gaming and Liquor Commission wouldn't pull the licences of premises that had repeated violations for overserving, for criminal activity on the premises. The police would come on the premises and make arrests for drug trafficking or prostitution, that sort of thing, but we couldn't get the Gaming and Liquor Commission to pull their licences and shut them down. I'm just wondering if you have any comment on that.

**Mr. Lindsay:** The comment I would make is that we have a very progressive system in place. If someone violates the rules of the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission in regard to the serving of alcoholic beverages, they can be – and I've seen evidence where we have shut them down. Again, the municipality is the holder of the business licence. They can pull it at any time as well. I know they like to put the pressure and put the blame on the AGLC. But to be fair, we've had some pretty good success working with the municipalities to address that over the last few years.

**Mr. Mason:** Yeah. In fact, with the Cromdale Hotel, ultimately it was building inspectors, I think, and fire inspectors that got it shut down. My recollection, Mr. Minister, is that when we raised the question of pulling the city business licence, we got a lot of push-back from the gaming and liquor board, who felt that it was very much in their jurisdiction.

**Mr. Lindsay:** I certainly haven't seen any evidence of that. In fact, any time that a municipality would pull a business licence, the liquor licence is pulled simultaneously. We don't fool around with that at all.

**Mr. Mason:** Okay. Those are my questions. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll move on to Teresa, then Kent.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question is on page 258 of the business plan. There's a section, a strategic priority, that speaks about implementing a gang suppression initiative to dismantle and disrupt organized crime activities. Can you talk a little bit about what's being done?

9:00

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, right now the gang suppression initiative has actually just finished up, in the last couple of days here, a round of consultations with communities across the province. You know, the whole focus is to put together a comprehensive strategy. I believe it's eight different ministries that are involved in safe communities, and that would include, obviously, the Solicitor General, Alberta Justice, Health and Wellness, Education, Aboriginal Relations, Employment and Immigration, and Children and Youth Services. So in conjunction with them, we're working with policing agencies and community groups to identify what programs are in place now and how we can avoid duplication and improve the co-ordination of services to address the concerns around gangs in the province.

At the end of the day, you know, we will be having a summit in June, which will bring together all of the information that we've gathered across the province, and out of that summit, then, we will develop a gang reduction strategy, which we will be jointly present-

ing to government this fall. I think we're going to have some good results from the feedback I'm getting on the consultations to date.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you. So while this is being developed, what other programs does the ministry have in place to address the increasing gang and organized crime activity?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, we have a whole number of initiatives, you know, starting with my ministry and some of the specialized teams I've spoken about earlier, the safe communities and neighborhoods units, which are very successful, very well received in the province. We started with one in northern Alberta, one in southern Alberta. We're putting together one more team so that we can get out to centres outside of Edmonton and Calgary.

I spoke about the 83 federally funded officers that have been approved for integrated gang units. Of those, 63 or 67 will be going, actually, into operational gang units. The rest will be going into other areas under ALERT to address gang issues.

Some of the other things we have going on are the Criminal Intelligence Service Alberta, which, you know, gathers intelligence across the province on gangs – they're going to receive 14 new positions – and the integrated child exploitation unit, which does some great work and has been recognized internationally, which is also going to get two new positions.

Then just recently, April 27 to May 1, our ministry hosted the 2009 western Canada gang and organized crime conference in Calgary. I just saw the initial summary of the results of that. We had over 475 law enforcement officers from across western Canada come to that particular conference, sharing information, sharing strategies and best practices. Again, we're going to be well served by hosting that conference as well. Some of those things will obviously play into our gang suppression initiatives that we will be hosting in June.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you. My next two questions are from the estimates, page 354, 1.0.4, corporate services. There's a \$1 million increase. Can you explain again – maybe you did earlier; I didn't catch it – the substantial increase there? Corporate services.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yeah. I'll find it. Here we go. Okay. There's an increase of \$0.7 million there, and that's due to \$0.5 million for various initiatives, legal and operational planning, and \$0.2 million is to cover the impact of the government-wide salary settlement.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Okay. Then there's 2.2.5, organized crime. I see that most of your line items pretty well stayed put, but there's some increase there as well. Can you explain why?

**Mr. Lindsay:** What page is that on again? Sorry.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Page 354, 2.2.5, organized crime.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Okay. That variance explanation. There's \$10.5 million there that relates primarily to federal funding of \$10.6 million for the police officers I spoke about, those four gang units. Again, due to timing delays in '08-09 that entire fund is being reprofiled over four years instead of five years, which commences in '09-10. Then we had an underexpenditure of \$8.5 million, which was again due to timing delays and lapse of federal funding for the police officers recruitment fund.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you. I'm back to the business plan, page 257. There's the Changing Face of Corrections study. When is it going to be ready, again?

**Mr. Lindsay:** We will be looking at this fall for that to be finalized.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Okay. Thank you. Under victims you talk about the changing immigration trend, so I'd like to know what strategy is in place, first, to respond to the issues identified. What strategies do you have in place to communicate some of these strategies with the impacted community or the . . .

**Mr. Lindsay:** Which page is that on? Sorry.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Page 257.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Okay. While we're finding those details, I will tell you that under victims of crime we were one of the first jurisdictions who published booklets in a number of different languages on how to access help. We launched that probably about a year and a half ago now, and it was very well received in the community and certainly helped a lot of people understand how to get the help that they required.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Then you also identify some gaps in services and accessibility. I'm very happy to see that you have identified to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse Albertans. So I'd like to know: what strategy and what resources do you have in place to address this and support this?

**Mr. Lindsay:** We'll dig that up for you. But in a lot of cases it's using volunteers from the community, incorporating them. I spoke about the handbook on how to access. We actually made that available in 11 different languages. In regard to a lot of those services it's working with the community to identify somebody who understands the language and can work with us to help those people who need the help.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Then on 258, the last paragraph, crime prevention. I'm really glad to see that your business plan included the need to address hate/bias crimes because Calgary now has the highest reported hate crimes in the country, and the number of hate groups is increasing in Calgary and in the province of Alberta. So I'm really pleased to see that your business plan includes that. I'd like to know what strategies and resources are in place to actually combat and address hate crimes in Alberta.

**Mr. Lindsay:** We don't have the details on that. But, again, a lot of that is based on education, you know, through the schools or the community so that people understand that it's not acceptable and what the consequences are and how to report it if you have been victimized by a hate crime. That generally is the strategy that we use.

**9:10**

**Ms Woo-Paw:** My last question. You also mentioned the need for culturally relevant crime prevention initiatives. Could you talk about what some of those initiatives are?

**Mr. Lindsay:** The question was on cultural . . .

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Culturally relevant crime prevention initiatives.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Again, a lot of that is just making the community aware and getting feedback from them as to what they're experiencing and putting programs in place so that they can access the system to have that addressed. For example, we have \$265,000 that will be

allocated to support crime prevention in First Nations communities. There are four crime prevention co-ordinators in First Nations responsible for co-ordinating a wide range of crime prevention programs at the local level and in partnership with community agencies, elders, and schools. We also provide funding and support for three enhanced critical community safety initiative policing positions who work with the surrounding First Nations communities of St. Paul and Wetaskiwin, and RCMP officers are dedicated to First Nations communities to ensure that there are positive role models and to help mentor youths who live on reserves to avoid a life of crime. That's kind of what that program is about.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Before we move on to Kent, for those who are hockey fans: Pittsburgh 3, Washington 2; Carolina 3, Boston 2, both in overtime. Kent.

**Mr. Hehr:** Thank you for that update, Mr. Chair.

Just a few more comments, following up on the comments made by the leader of the third party, you know, and also maybe a little story I shared with the Solicitor General the other week. Myself and four young lawyers in the city of Calgary were overserved last week during a Flames game at a pub on 17th Avenue. So this has jogged my memory as to how we're doing with the Alberta Liquor Control Board on the fact of overserving and how that is being tracked and how that is being enforced in our communities. I wonder if you have any statistics available on the number of charges laid, suspensions given, incidents checked, or any of that information that you could provide to me or this committee on incidents of overserving and whether pubs or bars are actually being shut down and the number of pubs and bars that have been shut down and what the lengths of their suspensions have been.

**The Chair:** There's also some obligation on behalf of an individual not to be overserved. I'll just remind you of that as well.

**Mr. Hehr:** The Solicitor General informed me of that as well in our conversation on the elevator. I do know that. I'm having a little bit of fun here, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, we won't elaborate on that, but we do all have to be responsible for our actions.

That being said, we have conducted in the last year 15,000 separate inspections of licensed premises. I can't recall exactly how many inspectors are out there. I believe it is 80. We'll get you the numbers on how many charges, et cetera, were laid based on those inspections. But we're out there.

**Mr. Hehr:** Are there separate charges? Are there weekend suspensions?

**Mr. Lindsay:** It could gravitate from a one-day suspension to loss of a licence at the end of the day, but normally they start out with a fine, and then it progresses up.

**Mr. Hehr:** If I could get the breakdown of those, that would be extremely helpful.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Yeah. We'll get that information for you.

**Mr. Hehr:** Thank you very much. Just moving on to sheriffs, could you explain to me sort of what oversight mechanism right now is in place for the sheriffs' department as it currently exists?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Sheriffs are peace officers, so their oversight is the same as a peace officer. Any complaint on a peace officer, including a sheriff, goes to the employer of that particular sheriff. If the accusation involves a criminal charge, then it's turned over to the policing jurisdiction wherever it happened.

In regard to the sheriffs and looking at the increase in the number of sheriffs we have had over the last few years, we are putting in place a system where we will likely have a civilian oversee particular complaints.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, that's good news. Is there any timeline associated with that civilian oversight?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, I hate giving you a timeline because then you want to hold me to it, but it will be soon.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. It will be soon. I'll ask about it, then, in about six months. That's my "soon" timeline if that helps you.

**Mr. Lindsay:** That's fair enough.

**Mr. Hehr:** One other sort of a question. It's a concept brought up by Police Chief Rick Hanson, and I was also spurred by the leader of the third party's comment. It's about his idea – I'm sure you've met with him on this – his safe jails concept, primarily more for first-time offenders or maybe troubled youth or parents who are in a difficult position and have nowhere else to turn and maybe turn to a safe jail when they know their son or daughter is in trouble with the law but they don't want to commit them. Is your ministry looking at this proposal, or are there any plans on that matter? Just some comments would be appreciated.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, we've certainly had conversations regarding that concept. Again, it needs to be fleshed out a lot more than it has been so far. One of the things we have to look at is whether, you know, the term "safe jail" would be the appropriate term because if it's referred to as a jail and it's under corrections, people only get into corrections when they've been sentenced. If it's something that's going to happen before as an alternative to a sentence, then it may have to be addressed through a different ministry. Those are all things that we'll work out.

It's an initiative that's certainly worthy of more study. It will be looked at in great detail because it's one of the things that we recognize as a concern. If we can keep people out of the justice system and from serving time and give them the help that they need to overcome their addictions by holding something over their head where, you know, they either toe the mark or there's an alternative for not toeing the mark, I think it could have some success. We will continue to review it. Hopefully, at the end of the day we'll see something happen there.

**Mr. Hehr:** Okay. Thank you for your time.

**The Chair:** We'll move on to Peter Sandhu.

**Mr. Sandhu:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. Over the last eight years the world has changed. My question is on business plan goal 3, page 261, 3.3. What are we doing on terrorism protection? It really bothers me when I drive by the big refineries in

the east part of the city of Edmonton, and the road is so close to the refineries. I didn't see any protective measures taken by us, so why are we waiting? What are we doing? I'd like to know on those ones.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, one of our top priorities is to ensure the safety and security of all Albertans. I have to say that we're recognized as a leader across Canada when it comes to counterterrorist activities. That being said, the Alberta Security and Strategic Intelligence Support Team, which we refer to as ASSIST, provides very timely information to stakeholders, companies, et cetera who own these facilities to assist them in identifying and mitigating security threats or events at an early stage.

You know, as you drive around the province, and you look at the thousands of miles of pipeline and the billions of dollars of infrastructure we have, and then you compare that to some of the security measures that are necessary in other countries, we're very fortunate here in Alberta. That being said, we're ever vigilant, and we monitor terrorist movements world-wide through our partnerships that we have with CSIS and Interpol, et cetera. Again, the risk threat in Alberta is low. We believe that our folks are very vigilant. If there is an imminent threat, hopefully we'll be able to identify it. We believe that we are doing everything reasonable at this time to do that. The threat in Alberta right now is low.

9:20

**Mr. Sandhu:** Yeah, but we've talked, I think, two or three times already on this issue. I don't know. Maybe I'm, you know, really afraid for that part. We've got a million people living in this city, and highways so close to the refineries. I don't know if we could put some kind of barricade up somewhere so that people can see that somebody's really watching this thing or we drive by more enforcement on highway 14 and 101 Avenue, those kinds of things, because they are big refineries.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, I can tell you that we monitor these activities to the best of our abilities. We believe that we're on top of these particular things. You know, we ensure that this particular infrastructure you're talking about is properly and appropriately identified. We also have methods where we're advised of any terrorist or extreme activity or increase in human-induced threats. If we get to the point here where the threat level goes up and we need to start barricading off these facilities and putting armed guards there, we'll address that when the time comes. We're not there yet.

As I mentioned, Alberta is a big province. We have infrastructure right across the province. We believe that we're being prudent by monitoring all activity, whether it's Internet activity or activity of people coming in and out of the country, et cetera. You know, I believe that we're on top of those situations, but again we can never be too prudent. We keep our eyes and ears open, and we do everything we can to ensure that Albertans are safe.

**Mr. Sandhu:** Second question. The Law Enforcement Review Board, how do people get appointed to that board? How do those people make up that board?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, again, it's one of the boards that's appointed through my ministry. It's a quasi-judicial board. We go out and advertise for members. They're normally appointed to either two- or three-year terms. We usually strike a committee to evaluate the applications that come in for people who wish to sit on the board, and we pick the most appropriate person. That's how it's done. That board is working quite well.

**Mr. Sandhu:** Another question is mental health. How are we doing with that part? I don't know if it's cross-ministry work with Health. I think about 10 days ago a guy, 18 years old, came to a store in the Mill Woods area and shot a person on the job site. An incident happened in the last year or so. I'd like to know: are those mental health?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, in my particular ministry, as I mentioned before, by the time we get to deal with those people, they've already broken a law and committed the crime, normally, unless the police have identified them earlier. Then we try to steer them in the direction that they can get the help that they require. I can tell you that when they enter our facilities as inmates, we provide them with access to the care that they require to get better.

**Mr. Sandhu:** Another one, Minister. Just last week a guy came and complained to me. He's a guy that drives taxis. His complaint was the timing on the traffic lights. He said that the police are setting up timing that's so quick from green to yellow, yellow to red that you get a lot of tickets. I don't know how true it is, but you're already here, so I want to read that question.

**Mr. Lindsay:** That must be a conspiracy of the city of Edmonton. That's their traffic safety division. You know, to be serious about it, they set up the timing of all their lights. Again, depending on the traffic volumes on the roadway, whether it's on 118th Avenue or whatever, they're all sequenced in. They have professional engineers who design that sequencing. Overall, I think they do a pretty good job of it. I don't think there's anything set up there as a revenue flow, to increase revenue to the city coffers. I believe that it's all about traffic safety. That's how they're all set up and running.

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

**The Chair:** Thank you.  
Final speaker, Darshan Kang.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. I thought you were going to ask us for a break.

**Mr. Lindsay:** I'm having too much fun to take a break.

**Mr. Sandhu:** He's our tough cop.

**Mr. Kang:** Tough cop? Yeah. I think you've proven to be a tough cop.

You were just whispering in each other's ears almost, so I don't know if you answered these questions here. Inmate populations at provincial correctional centres have increased by approximately 60 per cent since 2000-2001. What has triggered this increase in remand population since 2000-2001? Are there any stats kept on that?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, you know, we've had an increase in population. We had over a hundred thousand people coming into the province. Every year or so there are a number of people, on average 2 per cent, who don't obey the laws of the land, so they end up in the system. I think part of the reason as well was the two- and three-for-one credits, which, in my mind, have caused delays in the justice system, so that backs the system up, and we have to keep them incarcerated for longer periods of time in the remand centre. The biggest increase has been in remand.

Again, a sign of the booming economy. The booming economy creates opportunities not only for people who want to make a legitimate living, but it creates also an opportunity for those who want to make a living otherwise. The more of those there are out there, the more that we bring into the system.

There are a whole number of reasons for it. It's a trend that we think is going to continue to grow based on, you know, the steps that we're taking to reduce crime in the province and also based on some changes to the Criminal Code that are getting tougher on some of these crimes that are being committed. Again, we'll make sure that we have room for them when they come in.

**Mr. Kang:** Okay. My second question is about corrections officers. What kind of percentage increase have we had in corrections officers during that period of time? Were we keeping up?

**Mr. Lindsay:** I don't know if I've got those stats here, but obviously with the increase in population in the facilities there's also been an increase in the number of corrections officers required to maintain the appropriate level of supervision. I don't have those stats here. We can get them for you. I don't have them handy here. There's definitely been an increase in the number of corrections officers to correspond to the increase in population.

**Mr. Kang:** Okay. Thanks. Coming back to the victims of crime fund, I believe there's over \$40 million sitting in that fund. Why is that? Are people not applying? Or don't people know there's a victims of crime fund? Why is there a surplus sitting there?

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, first of all, the fund is based on a surcharge on fines. They're collected in the province through both federal and provincial legislation. This particular year, for example, the fine revenue that came from that surcharge was a little over \$2 million higher than we anticipated due to the good work of our police officers around the province. It's important to have a surplus. It's probably a little bit larger than what we'd like it to be, and we have increased substantially the payments to the programs that we offer through that program as well. We're going to continue to monitor that. For example, last year we increased the victims of crime funding by now making payments to people who have received debilitating brain injuries as the result of a criminal act. So they can now receive not only a lump-sum payment but also up to \$1,200 a month, I believe it is, to help them enjoy whatever quality of life that they can based on their injuries.

We're always looking at programs. We increased substantially the monies going to victims' service units across the province. Again, those are volunteers who do just great work in Alberta. We're going to continue to monitor those programs and make sure that we provide sufficient funds for those folks to do the great work that they do.

**Mr. Kang:** Domestic violence, usually because of the economic times – Albertans are losing their jobs, and that brings stress into the family. We hear about domestic violence going up. It's hard to keep up. How are we going to address that problem of domestic violence?

9:30

**Mr. Lindsay:** Certainly, we've seen an increase in domestic violence since the downturn of the economy and even prior to that. For whatever reason Alberta has a high rate of domestic violence, which certainly isn't acceptable to anybody. We have a number of programs in place to address that. One of the relatively new



initiatives is the Alberta relationship threat assessment and management initiative, which has been dedicated to reducing and preventing serious violence and death in domestic violence and stalking situations.

Again, when these things come to our attention, we put the steam onto the case and provide, I guess, basically a platform for the people involved to follow, and when they don't, then there are alternatives, and they could end up being in jail. We've had some pretty good success in offering anger management courses, et cetera, for some of those people who get involved at the early stages, and we will continue to work on those initiatives.

The other thing that we put together is a family violence investigative report for all the policing agencies across the province and offer training as well in that regard because one of the concerns was perhaps the lack of training for police officers when they go to investigate issues of domestic violence. We've offered some new training in that regard and a step-by-step report as to what to look for when they go into a situation involving domestic violence, that they consider cultural differences, language, just to make sure that they do get to the root cause and that the problems are addressed in a meaningful manner. Those are some of the things that we're doing to address that, and I believe they're going to be very productive at the end of the day.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. You've been very, very informative, I think, on almost all the questions. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Lindsay:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister, and to your staff. I know the Speaker sometimes likes to brag about a hundred questions back and forth, but you just covered 270 back and forth. So well done, all of you.

I want to thank the committee members and especially my co-chair for helping us get through the new procedure. I think it's been a good exchange over the past four or five weeks. To the staff from *Hansard*, thank you, and to our security folks that have helped us with the evening, the pages, and our right hand and our left hand, Jody here. She's done so well organizing before the meetings and after the meetings our packages of information. Well done, everybody. Thank you. [interjection] And they really liked the food tonight.

I'm going to adjourn this meeting. Thank you very much.

Minister, one last comment.

**Mr. Lindsay:** I just want to make one last comment. Again, Chair, I want to thank you for the way the meeting was conducted. I want to thank all the members for the great quality of questions that you asked tonight. Hopefully, the answers were close to being as good as the questions were. Again, I look for your support when we vote on these estimates in the next few days.

**The Chair:** Good. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 9:33 p.m.]





