Special Committee To Prevent The Abuse And Exploitation Of Children Through the Sex Trade

Hansard Verbatim Report

No. 5 – March 6, 2000

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Twenty-fourth Legislature

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO PREVENT THE ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN THROUGH THE SEX TRADE
2000

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Published under the authority of The Honourable Ron Osika, Speaker

The committee met at 9 a.m.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — My name is Arlene Julé. JoAnn, I'm a Co-Chair of the committee that we have established in Saskatchewan on the Abuse And Exploitation Of Children Through the Sex Trade. And we're very happy, as I mentioned, to have you with us. I thank you so much for taking the time because I know people like you have a fairly busy schedule.

JoAnn, I'm going to just do really quick introductions here, or have the people around the table in fact introduce themselves to you, and then we'll be most eager to hear your presentation. All right. Maybe I'll just start over to my right here.

Ms. Jones: — Good morning. I'm Carolyn Jones. I'm the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Harper: — Hi. Morning. Ron Harper, MLA, Regina Northeast.

Mr. Yates: — Good morning. I'm Kevin Yates, the MLA for Regina Dewdney.

Ms. Draude: — Good morning. I'm June Draude, the MLA from Kelvington-Wadena.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Brian, do you want to just keep on?

Mr. Williams: — Good morning. I'm Brian Williams and I'm with Social Services of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Pritchard: — Good morning, JoAnn. I'm Randy Pritchard. I talked to you on the phone a few times last week. I'm the technical adviser to the committee.

Ms. Woods: — And seated beside him, I'm Margaret Woods. I'm the Clerk to the committee.

Ms. McCartney: — I'm sorry, of where?

Ms. Woods: — The Clerk to the committee, Margaret Woods.

Ms. McCartney: — Okay. Hi.

Ms. Young: — Hi. And I'm Deb Young and I'm from Executive Council.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And, JoAnn, we have just had the other Co-Chair join us, Mr. Peter Prebble.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Hi, JoAnn. It's very nice of you to help us this morning.

Ms. McCartney: — No problem.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So, JoAnn, we're going to . . . I think it's been explained to you already what the committee, the work of the committee is. And, if not, it is simply to deal with the abuse and exploitation of children on the streets of Saskatchewan, and we have graciously had people from Edmonton and Calgary, as well as Manitoba, some people from Manitoba, acquiesce to joining us and giving us their views on what is happening in your perspective provinces and cities. We just are very happy that she'll be able to give us a perspective from the vice unit, if you would, Joanne.

Ms. McCartney: — Okay. Just so you know my background a little bit, I've been working in vice since 1988, for the most part, primarily investigating pimps and prostitutes and the whole background of how people end up in prostitution and how . . . what the cycle is like and what the lifestyle is like. So I did leave vice for about three years in the middle of that 12 years and that was to go to spousal violence investigation, which is essentially the same kind of thing. It's still abusive relationships. So that's just a little background about me.

Our unit has six detectives, four of whom try to get the know the women on the street and work with them, put the pimps in jail, and get the women to quit. That's our . . . our primary focus is get the women to quit on the street.

Prior to the legislation that was brought in last year, the PCHIP (Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution) Act, in Edmonton we . . . in 1998 we identified about 450 people working the streets as prostitutes and about 50 of them were children under the age of 18. So historically, it's been about 10 to 15 per cent of our population of working women, and we don't believe that we caught every one of them that year.

We certainly, since the legislation that's happened, we've identified much more than that. My partner and I ourselves have picked up about 57 kids and apprehended them under this legislation. And I believe it's somewhere up in the neighbourhood of 90 to 100 kids who have been identified in Edmonton as engaging in prostitution or at risk of engaging in prostitution.

At any rate, prior to the legislation, what we would do is get to know the women on the street, anywhere from aged 15 up because there wasn't a whole lot we could do with people aged 15 up unless, for some reason, child welfare would apprehend, and that was very rare. If we found kids who were under 15, we certainly could apprehend them and child welfare would get involved. That sort of thing.

Actually the youngest child I found working was from Saskatchewan and she was nine. She went back to the reserve in Saskatchewan with her mother and we haven't seen her since. So we would get to know the kids and we would get to know their pimps and their families and try to work with them and build trust to get them to roll on the pimps and then we could help them with better choices.

We worked very closely with Crossroads and with Catholic Social Services safe house people, because if you're going out and meeting these people and talking to them about alternatives you have to have alternatives to offer them. So the community . . . working with the community resources is really important.

Now that we have the legislation, it's made a big change. We

don't have . . . when it first come in, we would find a kid on the street almost every day. If we make a point of going looking for them, seeking them out, and we would find a kid — at least one kid every day — every shift, the four of us. Now we may find one a week, maybe.

And we're down to now where we have probably 15 or 20 who are chronic children. These are kids that were involved in prostitution before the legislation came in and are not willing or . . . it gets to the point where they're going to work despite us, to try and see if we can catch them.

So those are people, there's about 20 of them that are long-term. Until they're 18 there's going to be a lot of intervention, a lot of repeat apprehensions. But that's fine because every three days that they're in our secure house is three days that they're not overdosing on drugs and it's three days they're not getting beat up or killed by johns or pimps or whatever. So as far as we're concerned, every three days we can keep them safe is three more days that they're alive.

The other big change is that the legislation that we have now is helping to target kids before they hit the street. We've identified some individuals who . . . they're the kind of person that lets a runaway come and stay at their house, or lets a kid who's fighting with her parents come and stay there. And they end up on the street because it's the way that . . . For example this woman named Donna. I know of four individuals myself who'd been runaways, who'd gone and stayed with Donna and they all ended up prostitutes. So we now have enough documentation to show anybody staying at Donna's is at risk of engaging in prostitution and can be . . . there can be an intervention by child welfare.

And we have several individuals like that that we can target and identify and get to the kids before they ever hit the street, which is really important because if you can get them before they turn their first trick then it's easier to stop them from doing that and to prevent that from ever happening. So we work really closely now with child welfare as well because they have the power to do the non-emergency apprehensions.

And the biggest thing we do in Edmonton is we work together with the communities. We do a lot of case conferencing with individuals and sit down — forget the privacy of information — we're trying to help these kids, that sort of thing. So that's really important and in Edmonton we do that really well.

When it comes to the individuals staying in the safe houses, we three in Edmonton — two for kids 19 and under, and one for women who can bring their kids there.

We work really closely with those people too, with the staff there and with the women, on safety issues, on trying to help them get into programs or get resourced the way they need to be. We also have a program in Edmonton now that works with these women when they're pregnant to deal with fetal alcohol problems — if the women are drinking or whatever, they're going to have FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) kids — then it's a group of public health nurses who work one on one with them to help prevent them from having FAS kids, to help them not drink while they're pregnant.

So it's like a big community working together. We run our john school in Edmonton, so we're targeting the johns as well — and making, okay giving the opportunity for the johns who we charge with section 213 of the Criminal Code — we give them the opportunity to come to john school if they like. It's a very successful program. We send about 30 guys per month to john school and they pay $400 each for the privilege and the money goes to a foundation called the Prostitute Awareness and Action Foundation of Edmonton.

That foundation uses the money to support programs that help get people out of prostitution. It supports the victims. They pay for tuition, they'll pay bus fare home if the person wants to go home — anything like that. If the girl's glasses get broke by a date, then they'll pay to replace her glasses. And they keep cases and cases of diapers around and that sort of thing. So the money's very, very well put to use to help people that — poverty relief and that sort of thing — to help people get out of prostitution.

I guess just sort of to summarize, what we try to do in Edmonton is get to know the people. The legislation has given us a power to actually do something with the 15- to 18-year-olds. Where before we got to know them, we took them home, we hassle them; now we actually can intervene with them and we can force them to stop and think about what they're doing.

We've had several say that . . . like a 15-year-old last summer who said, she'd been in a secure house three times and she knew that for the next three years she was going to be in and out of the secure house unless she quit. So she quit. And that's something that's really powerful, it's really . . . Lots of the older girls are wishing that this legislation had been in place when they were kids so that they hadn't become long-term.

But we're really focused here in Edmonton on getting to know these people and finding out what's going on in their lives and getting the proper resources to help them.

You guys probably have lots of questions.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes, I'm sure they do have a lot of questions. The committee has been making notes, so I'm sure that they have questions. But I wanted to thank you so much for that presentation, JoAnn.

I just wanted to ask one question before I turn it over to committee members, and as you well know we have a bit of a time frame here, so I'm not going to go on too long.

I'm sure all the members have got somewhat of the same questions I would ask. But the PCHIP legislation is of particular interest to me in talking with Heather Forsyth over the last while. In fact the last year since it's been in, we've been . . . she's exchanging information. And I notice that you mentioned the word "forced", you know, you forced them into the secure home and so on.

And that's one of the concerns here in Saskatchewan with a number of people in our communities, is that, you know, the young people under 18 that are engaged in this activity will feel

that they're being really forced, pushed, and handled in, I guess in a way that is without dignity, and they've already experienced a lot of their life like that.

So from what Heather tells me, children that are seen as in danger by the police or social workers are taken to a safe house if there is a reasonable suspicion for the police to pick them up — reasonable suspicion that they're in danger and that once they get there there's, I guess, every evidence that a number of these young people are quite happy to be there. That they quite willingly change clothes, shower, and they seem to, you know, be feeling secure and happy that they're in a safe place. And so I just wonder if you could kind of clarify just . . . For instance, if you would see a child in danger on the street, the police would, and you would sort of have recognized her from before, or him, and you take them into a secure house, how do you approach them and how do you go about doing that so that they're not frightened, I guess?

Ms. McCartney: — It's kind of an individual thing. For example we have one woman who's 17, who's bound and determined to kill herself before she's 18. She's a drug addict, her mother died when she was 20 and she has absolutely no intention of living that long. She's native, she gets a large cheque from her reserve on her 18th birthday which is on the 23rd of this month, and intends to spend the whole — it's $18,000 she gets — and she intends to spend the whole thing on dope on her birthday, and kill herself that way.

So when we apprehend her, she's always armed with edged weapons. When we apprehend her, it's by force because she doesn't want to go into the safe house because she wants to kill herself. But every time we get her in there, and then she may get an extra week or ten days or something like that because of medical issues, she comes out of it so much calmer, so much happier, she is able to express things better; because on the street all she does is work and get stoned and work and get stoned.

So, for her, it's a forcible thing. For most of them, you talk about the fact that they may have to go to the PCHIP house. It's not necessarily the only answer because it depends on their circumstances. Sometimes they go home to family, sometimes they go to a relative, sometimes they go to a foster home. The secure house is only for those who . . . they need more investigation done before they can decide whether it's safe for them to be home.

So it varies. It depends on the child whether they're forced to stay in the secure house or whether they're convinced that that's the best place for them to be until they can figure out something longer term. So it's very individual.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So in essence then when force is used as such, it's basically to try to save a person's life. That's what you're doing.

Ms. McCartney: — Absolutely. And for some of them you have to do that, you have to put them there, because they may be dead in the next few days because the amount of dope they're doing or something like that. Some of them are a public health risk in that they're HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) positive, they don't care, they're angry and they're not using condoms. So it becomes a public health risk. And for that you have to forcibly put them somewhere, at least until you can do some kind of an assessment, then maybe an intervention will work.

So it's a very individual thing. Some of them phone up and say: "I've been working, I want to go to the PCHIP house because I need to clean up. I need a rest."

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. I'm going to turn it over to some of my colleagues here. And who would like to ask questions first?

Mr. Harper: — I have one question.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Just identify yourself.

Mr. Harper: — JoAnn, Ron Harper, MLA, Regina Northeast. You indicated in your presentation that the number of children on the street involved in the prostitution industry has dropped fairly significantly since the introduction of the legislation.

Ms. McCartney: — Yes. Very significantly.

Mr. Harper: — Now does that also mean that the number of children involved in the prostitution trade has dropped, or is it just that they're not on the street? Has it perhaps forced it underground or to use some other mechanism to disguise it? Just simply take them off the street but still involved in the activity of prostitution?

Ms. McCartney: — For the most part, no. Because the people that we've apprehended, we know where they are. The legislation provides for follow-up workers who stay in touch with these people, make sure they stay in their programs, that sort of thing. So like I said, there's about 20 who it's become a challenge to them to continue working.

Some of them have gone to telepersonals, chat lines. Of course, since the legislation came in the Internet porn and that sort of thing has gotten a whole lot more popular. We don't have any reports of those kids being involved in Internet porn, but we do know of some of them that are using telepersonals; or they'll stay inside; they'll go to a crack house and they'll do dates for their dope inside.

Any time that we find people like that, if they're working off a telephone or something like that, then we will set them up so that we can find them. For example, we'll set up . . . have somebody phone the phone number, pretend they're a date, and when she shows up to go on the date, she's apprehended.

So we've been able to keep track of most of the ones that we know of that are working, and lots who are at risk.

Mr. Harper: — Of the children that you've apprehended or dealt with that have been involved in the prostitution trade, what percentage say would be of Caucasian, what percentage would be Aboriginal, what percentage would be neither Aboriginal or Caucasian, say Asian or whatever?

Ms. McCartney: — I don't have the specific thing, but the last information I saw, which was a couple of months ago, was I believe 43 per cent Aboriginal and about 50 per cent Caucasian, about 7 per cent other.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — All right. Thank you. Kevin, did you have any questions?

Mr. Yates: — Yes. JoAnn, thank you very much for the presentation. I'm Kevin Yates, the MLA for Regina Dewdney.

I'm just wondering, are there any concerns that you have regarding problems or things that could be improved from the current legislation that was passed in Alberta? Are there things that we can work to do better?

Ms. McCartney: — Yes, there's still a couple of gaps. There's a couple of gaps. We need a longer-term drug rehab place that's secure. At least secure in the beginning until people come through withdrawal and that sort of stuff, and where you could stay longer as your treatment goes on. We don't really have appropriate facilities for that.

The other thing is if we had a facility that was for the most part specific to women involved in prostitution. Because the secure facilities we have, they mix the kids up with people who haven't been involved in prostitution. And the kids who haven't been involved look down on the kids who have been involved, so those kids don't admit it and they never address those issues in group therapy and that.

So we need to have secure houses that are specific to people apprehended from prostitution.

Mr. Yates: — Okay. JoAnn, have you experienced any difficulties with the legislation itself in the enforcement or problems for the . . . either the department or . . .

Ms. McCartney: — No.

Mr. Yates: — There's been no issues of constitutional challenges?

Ms. McCartney: — No. Well there was a constitutional challenge in Calgary and it has to do with a 17-year-old should have the right to work if she wants to. I don't know that it's age discrimination saying that at 18 you can and at 17 you can't. I don't think that's going to hold up because even the Criminal Code's got legislation that says at 14 you can consent to sex and at 13 you can't. That's not age discrimination; it's a requirement.

I think the reason that we haven't had trouble implementing the Bill is because we work so well as a team with the resources — with child welfare, with the different safe-house facilities, that sort of thing. So when we know of something going on, we talk to each other and we try to find something that's in the best interests of the child. So technically, we've had no particular trouble apprehending people or finding some kind of intervention for the kids that we know that are involved.

Mr. Yates: — So as a law enforcement officer, you're comfortable with the legislation and your ability to use it to your advantage to help children? You're not concerned about every time you go out there, that you may be . . . there's some loophole that you may be putting yourself at risk or something that hasn't been covered in the legislation?

Ms. McCartney: — No, totally comfortable with it. We're very happy with it.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you. Who's next here? By the way, JoAnn, can you hear us fairly well? Can you hear us well?

Ms. McCartney: — Yes, absolutely. Am I loud enough too?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes. June Draude has got a couple of questions for you.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much for your presentation. I just have a couple of questions right now.

The children that are involved in the sex trade: how many of them are males?

Ms. McCartney: — How many are males? We've actually only identified one who's been involved with us in the legislation and he just turned 18 —oh, it's the 10th he turns 18 — so he'll no longer be involved with that legislation.

We are looking at programs sort of like a pre-retirement from PCHIP program, where people who are coming up on 18 start looking longer term and planning for what's going to happen to them after 18. And the individual would work with the PCHIP follow-up worker to make plans for turning adult when they won't have the supports of the PCHIP legislation.

So that's . . . because some of them have turned 18 and they just sort of fall out of the system because they don't belong to child welfare anymore. So we're looking at something to make that change a little bit easier.

Ms. Draude: — Are you confident that you have the majority of the children in Edmonton?

Ms. McCartney: — Sorry, I can't hear you.

Ms. Draude: — Are you confident that you have the majority of the children that are involved in the sex trade in Edmonton? You said the number 57, I believe, and we felt that there was a larger number here in Saskatchewan so I was surprised when I heard the number of children you thought were involved.

Ms. McCartney: — My partner and I have apprehended 57. I think it's somewhere between 90 and a hundred who've been identified as involved in the sex trade in Edmonton by child welfare. We've haven't, my partner and I haven't actually apprehended all of them. There's other people that . . . sometimes the child welfare workers are doing the apprehensions.

We're confident that we have identified at least, between the police and child welfare, that we've identified the majority.

There's always the odd one who slips through that we haven't identified yet, but I know that we've identified and got something in place for the vast majority of kids who are even at risk.

Like I said, lots of kids that have been involved in this legislation haven't actually worked yet. It's intervening before they get the chance to work.

Ms. Draude: — I just have one other question. I know that your legislation provides for fines of $25,000. Can you tell me how many of those fines have actually been given out?

Ms. McCartney: — We've only charged a couple of individuals with the section 9(a), the "causing a child to be in need of protective services." We try to charge the johns that we identify with kids, we charge under the Criminal Code because for that you get fingerprinted and you go to jail, and that's a whole lot stronger penalty then even a $25,000 fine. I don't think the courts would actually assess that.

The couple of cases . . . I think one or two of them are still before the courts and there's been another couple that have changed their plea and pled to a Criminal Code charge and got fined. So we're not . . . that isn't our focus. We would only use that section when we didn't have enough evidence for the Criminal Code charge and we always try to get the Criminal Code, the section 212(4), we try to do that first.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you.

Ms. Jones: — Yes. Thank you for your presentation. Carolyn Jones from Saskatoon Meewasin. Much of what I've heard you discussing today, and perhaps it's because of your job, deals with older, 15-to 18-year-olds and people that you encounter on the street.

I'm wondering if you can describe any inroads that may have been made in terms of the younger children, the ones that aren't necessarily on the street, that perhaps their parents are involving them or someone is involving them in a trade and they're not actually on the street? Do you have any experience or advice in that regard?

Ms. McCartney: — There were a few kids like that. One young girl — she's 15 now, but she's been working since she was 9 for her mother. The legislation hasn't helped her as much because she was so ingrained in the lifestyle prior to the legislation coming in.

We have a couple of 12- and 13-year-olds who work fairly regularly. They're in custody or in foster homes — that sort of thing — except when they've run away. And then we go looking for them. And we know the houses that they hang out at, so they're generally not ever missing for any length of time.

But there are still some kids involved. And yes, sometimes it's because they work with their mothers. There's not a significant number of them; there may be four or five.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Do you have any questions you wanted to ask before I ask mine?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I just want to finish up after you're finished.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Sure. Okay.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — But you go ahead, and give me five minutes next.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — JoAnn, we're just working out time here. Peter Prebble . . . I'm the other Co-Chair of the committee. And thank you very much for your presentation.

I wanted to pursue Carolyn's question about children under the age of 15. There's a . . . I take it your legislation doesn't deal in any way with kids under 15. Is that correct?

Ms. McCartney: — Oh, absolutely it does. We apprehend them as well. There aren't as many of them.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Right.

Ms. McCartney: — And we always could apprehend them. Even under the old Child Welfare Act, we could apprehend them whenever we found them and take them to child welfare and an intervention would start. The PCHIP Act gives us the power to do something with the 15-to 18-year-olds, where we didn't have that power before. We always had the power for under 15.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Okay. In this province we've always got power with respect to children under 16. In other words, here, Saskatchewan Social Services can apprehend. What you've chosen to do though as I understand it under PCHIP is you . . . a child is placed in a secure facility for a three-day period. Up to three days, right?

Ms. McCartney: — Right.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And that only applies in your case to children who are 15 years of age or more? Is that correct?

Ms. McCartney: — No, it applies to any child.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Okay.

Ms. McCartney: — The only change was prior to the legislation, the 15-and-older children, child welfare didn't get involved; for the most part, child welfare didn't get involved and so they essentially could stay working on the street. And now child welfare does get involved for the older kids.

But prior to the legislation, we always could pick up the younger children and we still pick them up now and they're dealt with in the same way. They go to the PCHIP house, or we take them immediately to the child welfare crisis unit and a decision is made with talking to the family and the circumstances of where they're living and that sort of thing, a decision is made about where they're placed at that time.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I wanted to ask you about whether . . . You were making reference to the fact that you identified one Saskatchewan child who was in Edmonton and was age nine, have you found many other children from Saskatchewan in the course of your work?

Ms. McCartney: — No, not a large number. We get the odd one who comes through during Klondike Days, is about the only . . . We really have very few Saskatchewan people coming. Certainly, as children, there are not many — half a dozen maybe in the last year and a half. Maybe half a dozen.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Okay. Right. And I wanted to ask you one other question, and that was if you could elaborate on some of the early identification work you're doing that basically is geared at keeping children from ever getting involved in the trade.

Ms. McCartney: — A lot of that work is done through child welfare and the different social workers and workers at foster homes and group homes. They're now paying attention to, for example, if a child comes into a group home who has a history of prostitution, they pay attention to who she's hanging around with in the group home, what kind of things they're talking about, whether she's encouraging other children to become involved in what she's doing.

And if that's happening then those children are identified to child welfare and they may be spoken to by their social workers or by the PCHIP workers such Kevin Hood and Shauna Sager, to find out what's going on in their lives. And sometimes there are two or three 15- and 16-year-old girls who are in the child welfare system who do recruit other girls.

So sometimes it's just identifying the people that those recruiters are hanging around with and working with those kids to make sure that they don't intervene, or that they don't end up working.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — JoAnn, I understand that in Calgary for sure and I think there's a chapter in Edmonton, Street Teams, does quite a lot of work also as you know, in ID'ing young children and, you know, sort of a follow-up of where they are and so on. And also, they take the opportunity to warn, I guess, younger people out there about dangers. So is Street Teams set up in Edmonton also?

Ms. McCartney: — No, we have Crossroads and we like Crossroads better.

The Crossroads and Safe House do outreach in Edmonton. They drive around in a van every night and hand out a bad date sheet and hot chocolate and advice and that kind of thing. They're very active in that. They also do an awful lot of speaking at schools, taking survivors to talk to kids in schools, so public education. In the vice unit we do that as well.

There is actually a whole group of people from the public education system who have gotten together and are developing curriculums, different lectures to give to different ages of kids to talk about these kinds of things. It's like, the Don't Talk to Strangers program, but as you get older it's a different kind of stranger you shouldn't talk to.

So there is a lot of public education done by Crossroads, not so much by us but some by us. But that kind of thing does happen all the time. And Crossroads is great.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Good, thank you. Ron has one more question over here.

Mr. Harper: — Yes, just one short question. In all of your experience working with children involved in the sex trade, have you been able to identify any one common cause that would cause them to get involved in the sex trade?

Ms. McCartney: — One thing, period? Low self-esteem, low sense of self-worth. If they don't have a family to belong to at home, they will find themselves a family. And if it's the street and the people on the street, that'll be their family because they need somebody and something to make them feel a part of something.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you. Just one more, we have about two minutes left. And JoAnn I'm going to ask you to do maybe a bit of a difficult thing for you, but I would like, just so we have a better sense of the kind of necessity to address this problem and to certainly bring about some resolutions, can you help us out by describing to us, probably some of the times that you have had to take children off the streets, or a specific child, where you can tell us how crucial their situation was and, you know . . . Or else if you could just talk to us in detail about some of the things you look at everyday, that you see everyday in your work with these young children on the streets.

Can you think of a specific incident where you could describe a child's misery and what they're going through and their need for help?

Ms. McCartney: — Well what I was saying earlier about the one individual who is 17 and doesn't plan on living past her 18th birthday. She's got medical issues. I believe she's HIV. She's got hepatitis. She is a very, very heavy IV(intravenous) drug abuser. She works 24 hours a day. When she's not doing a date, she's shooting dope. And somebody like that, if we can keep her alive, if we can get her into something long enough term to get her off the dope, then maybe she'll have a clear enough mind that she can think about what she wants to do with her life. And maybe she will decide she wants to live past 18.

She did do a statement against her pimp, the person who had got her into dope and that kind of thing in the first place, and he was a very well-known, long-term . . . He likes to take girls who are 13-and 14-years-old and get them into drugs and get them so strung out that they have no credibility in court. And he's been charged before. Only one time did it ever get to court and she died of a drug overdose the week after she testified against him so it never ended up going to trial.

This individual, every time a court case is coming up we've been lucky enough to find her and get her a week or two to dry out prior to court. She has done an outstanding job in court which shows what she's capable of if she could just get away from the drugs.

So she turns 18 in three weeks and if we can get her through that so that she doesn't kill herself of drugs on her 18th birthday, then maybe she's going to turn a page and decide that she wants to do something more.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So self-loathing . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . self-loathing can turn to self-love? That's the whole . . .

Ms. McCartney: — Absolutely. Absolutely. We have kids . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I'm sorry I was just going to say . . . Okay, I'll let you go.

Ms. McCartney: — I just wanted to tell you: one girl, one girl who I used to chase in the early '90s — she was 16 years old, she was epileptic, she worked on the street all the time; we couldn't prevent that. I knew her family, I knew her pimp and chased her and chased her. Eventually she did leave and now she's a paramedic with the city of Edmonton. So you do have rewards and successes.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Very good. Well thank you ever so much Joanne. We appreciate what you've presented us with, and we also appreciate the answers you've given us to some of our questions. And good luck in your work.

Ms. McCartney: — Okay. Yes, if you need anything else, Randy has my phone number if you need something else.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, thank you.

Ms. McCartney: — And I see Kourch and Diana are here from Crossroads, so I will get out of the way here and they can start talking.

Mr. Pritchard: — Okay. Joanne, did Kevin Hood . . . is he there at all?

Ms. McCartney: — No, I don't know what happened to him. But if you like I can have him telephone you. Maybe there was an emergency came up this morning and I don't know what happened.

Mr. Pritchard: — Okay maybe we can fit him some other time. Okay, thanks Joanne.

Ms. McCartney: — Okay.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Good morning, Kourch.

Mr. Chan: — Good morning. I just want to see how to work this thing. Okay that's better, I think.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I'm Peter Prebble. I'm one of the MLA's in Saskatoon and I'm Co-Chair of our legislative committee. And with me is Arlene Julé who's the other Co-Chair.

Kourch, do you want to introduce the person who's joined you and we'll all introduce ourselves before we get started.

Mr. Chan: — Okay, well I introduce myself first to the rest of the assembly. My name is Kourch Chan and I'm the program manager of the Crossroads program here in Edmonton. And this is Diana Wark, she's one of our street outreach workers, but she's also a PCHIP follow-up worker. So her job is sort of mixed, so I think, if you have specific questions about the workings of the Bill as far as the day-to-day work in terms of the follow-up work that's done with the children, you feel free to throw questions in her direction.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Well thank you both very much for joining us this morning. We'll just go around the room and do other introductions. Maybe, why don't we start with you, Carolyn.

Ms. Jones: — Yes, good morning. I'm Carolyn Jones. I'm the MLA for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Harper: — Ron Harper, MLA Regina Northeast.

Mr. Yates: — Kevin Yates, the MLA for Regina Dewdney.

Ms. Draude: — Hi, I'm June Draude, the MLA from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Williams: — And I'm Brian Williams from Saskatchewan Social Services.

Mr. Toth: — And I'm Don Toth, the MLA for Moosomin.

Mr. Pritchard: — I'm Randy Pritchard. I'm a technical advisor to the committee.

Ms. Woods: — I'm Margaret Woods, the Clerk to the committee.

Ms. Young: — I'm Deb Young and I'm from House Business in Executive Council.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Kourch, do you want to begin with a little bit of a presentation? And we've got until 10:30 and I know that members will have quite a number of questions that they'll want to ask you, but did you have something specific that you wanted to present to begin with? Or did you want to start . . .

Mr. Chan: — I was actually given an outline here to talk about — briefly our program and what we do as far as outreach, some information about our safe houses, and some statistics, you know, sort of governing what type of population we serve. So I guess I'll start there.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Good.

Mr. Chan: — The Crossroads program was first formed I think in 1989, about 10 years ago, as a street outreach service. At that point in time it really came out of . . . Our agency also operates the women's emergency accommodation centre. And there were at that point, I think, a lot of women that were using the shelter and also were prostituting on the streets, so the Crossroads outreach started from there. And throughout I think these last 10 years, you know, we have really made contact and got to know

like over 3,000 women and girls and boys and men who prostitute in Edmonton.

The evolution is that at some point in 1992, it was really felt that there was a lack of immediate shelters that were available to help youth who wanted to make an exit or youth who are looking for a safe place to go away from the streets, and there was really a lack of that. And as a result of the program we're able to open and operate a safe house with the capacity of four beds to really help youths and make a transition away from the streets as well as to provide an immediate safe place that's accessible, that's quick, that's immediate, so that they can at least have their immediate safety concerns addressed.

Some point in 1995 it was felt that again there was a real shortage or a lack or gap in service for women. Edmonton . . . sorry, I mean Alberta, 18 is the cut-off point for a lot of the services provided by children, especially in terms of child welfare services, and now with the new PCHIP Bill as well.

And it's not that clean. You know, somebody magically turns 18. They may be undergoing issues which are, for example in a lot of cases these women are pregnant or they're getting prepared to parent, and so we felt that there was really a lack of services which were available. Because oftentimes, you know, you turn 18 and you turn to Social Services and you're asked, oh well just apply for benefits. And what ends up happening is that that's not the most conducive way I think for these women, for these youth, to really try to change for the better.

Oftentimes, you know, again referrals are back to the shelter which are, you know, back in the inner city or in an area which is not most constructive for them to make a positive transition. And so we were able to open up another residence specifically for women who are either . . . who have . . . already have some distance from the street, who really need some extra support to get past that point of where they're not going to return.

And as well as to pregnant and parenting moms who really need a hand, in some instances to demonstrate to the system that they're able to get their children back or attend addiction treatment or attend long-term therapy for all sorts of issues and trauma that incurred through their involvement in prostitution.

So as of today, that's pretty much the scope of the program. We have an outreach service, we have a safe house for youth, and we also have sort of a second-stage house for women and their children.

There's one other chunk that we do, and that is that we provide public education and prevention type of information for . . . directly to, I think, children that are at risk in settings like schools, or youth groups or group homes. But also we provide information to professionals, like social workers and teachers and nurses, who may be confronted with a situation of a child involved in prostitution or a child at risk. And we try to communicate in these sessions the reality of what street prostitution is like, what the myths are and attempt to dispel them; I think educate people on what are some of the signs; that if a youth is involved, what is the best way to respond, and so on and so forth. And we've done this pretty much, I think for — I don't know — probably eight or nine years as well.

So that's in a nutshell the entire scope, I think, of the program. Our objectives really are to . . . We recognize that change has to be voluntary. We recognize that the majority of women that are involved in prostitution became involved when they were children. And so we also recognize that the issue is very complex, so it's not like we, alone, can solve the entire problems so we attempt in all cases, I think, to work with the police.

And you've spoken to JoAnn earlier. The vice unit and ourselves have had a, I think, very close relationship probably for the entire decade. And that makes the work possible because police are able to, you know, do the legal end. And we're able to do the social support end and we help support each other as . . . You know, if somebody was going to press charges or go to trial then I think that sort of co-operative process, I think, really helps the woman and the girls.

But we recognize, going back to sort of our program standpoint, we believe in voluntary service because change, any sort of lasting change, we believe, has to come voluntarily. So what we do is that we attempt to simply say, hey, you know, we are a positive alternative, we're able to provide maybe some support and maybe some help and maybe some hope to you if you want our help. And that's sort of our stance.

And our objectives are to really just to reach the largest number of people — meaning children, women, men — who are involved in prostitution or at risk of becoming involved in prostitution. If they are hesitant to engage our services, we want to at least, whenever possible, reduce the harm that they can experience through prostitution, to give them, I think, tools and resources to increase their personal safety. And, I think, finally to help these individuals — children and adults — to make an exit. But that's something that they have got to want to do. But we attempt to try to really, you know, engage and show them that we're present and that we can help.

And finally, I mean we want to promote access to knowledge. I mean the more that prostitution is mystified, like *Pretty Woman* with Julia Roberts, the more people think that this is a, you know, a glamorous lifestyle — I'm going to get rich really fast. I'll meet a nice man; all those other the factors which draw children into this. We really want to promote access to knowledge, you know, which is real and which really I think in so many words spells out prostitution as sexual exploitation. Then I hope that people, you know, can be armed with this knowledge to react to, you know, what is really happening as far as prostitution is concerned.

So that's sort of a brief rundown of our program. I can get into a little bit more specifics about what we do on a street outreach level and what . . . We have an outreach van. I know that in Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon, Egadz has consulted with us. And initially when they were looking to start up some kind of outreach service, they came and met with us and talked with us about what that's about.

I would say that, you know, an outreach service is almost vital to reach this population because oftentimes because of engagement in prostitution, the individuals and the children are already stigmatized. They are even now in Alberta with the

proclamation of the legislation, a lot of the newspapers still write headlines like "Kiddy hooker" or "Teenage whore", and all those other types of labels that are just really inappropriate and I think damaging to what the reality is with regards to child prostitution.

And so, number one, I think they're stigmatized. Number two, often these children come from homes where they are abused or where there's neglect present, and a great many of them have child welfare involvement. So in this case the system has failed them already, and probably more than once, because they are now on the streets. It could be a situation where they are apprehended by child welfare and then placed into a placement in which further abuse, further neglect, or further discrimination happens.

And so as a rule, sort of a general rule, I think these kids are very difficult to reach if you're in a position of authority.

They probably have ingrained to them to run, because running has saved them really. It's saved them from abuse, it's saved them from an uncomfortable or an environment where their personal safety they felt is threatened. And running has served them.

And the streets — with the predator, possibly the pimps that are already present — has presented sort of a facade that, hey, you know, we can satisfy your needs; you know, you will be well loved, if somebody is trying to seduce them. Or if they run with a group of other youth who may be runaways or throwaways or involved in various criminal activities, you know there could be money, which is a big draw, to say, hey, you know, you don't need anybody. You can just hang out with us and we'll provide for all your needs. And often that's how that whole process starts.

So we felt that an outreach approach is vital because these people are not going to come to you. In many cases, they're going to do as much as they can to avoid, I think, the services that are in place.

Unfortunately the reality is that the streets are extremely dangerous to their physical well-being in terms of incidents of violence. We have, I think in general, probably at least 15 assaults, sexual assaults and other acts of violence — you know, people being thrown from cars, people being abducted, people being tied up and raped — usually at least 15 of these incidents reported to us through our registry every couple of months. Now for every incident that's reported, I mean you know that there are incidents that are not reported. And so it's an extremely dangerous environment.

As well as long-term health effects, oftentimes these children are exposed to drugs, they're exposed to malnutrition, they're exposed to unsafe sex, and STDs (sexually transmitted disease). They're exposed to, I think, the risk of pregnancy at a young age. A great many of the clients that I have worked with — I can speak from experience — have had, you know, abnormal growth cells in their cervix, where they have to go for laser treatment, and maybe cancerous to sort of early cancerous growth. I mean this is . . . you know, the health effects on these women and these girls are just detrimental. I can't say enough about this.

And so unfortunately oftentimes, because of where they're at, they will let things slide, you know. Because if you're addicted on drugs, you're not going to feel any pain. You're just going to be on this cycle where, well you know I have a problem, I'll just drink some more, I'll take some more drugs. And the health issue further deteriorates.

There are also other factors which, like for example if somebody spends, you know, three or four years in the street, they're three or four years behind in terms of educational opportunities, skills that could be an asset in terms of gaining employment. All of those things are lost and you know they're that much further behind, I think, in terms of being able to integrate, I think, into society to be able to support themselves, to be an independent person.

So an outreach service is really what we felt is necessary to offer that maybe one point of contact which is positive, that says hey, you know, we understand what you are going through. We've seen hundreds of women and girls that have walked down the same path. If you need any help, you know, we have a 24 hour service that you can call and I think in the meantime, you know, if you really want, if you are going to continue to do this, well you know, please keep a lookout for violent offenders. And we pass out a registry of that.

We give condoms to people, you know, to really advocate for safer sex practices. We also provide in some instances clothing. If it's a cold winter day, we give out gloves. We give out beverages in the street, you know especially for those people who have been . . . you know, who, let's say, have to make a certain amount of money before they can go home, let's say. Or someone who is working because they have no basic . . . they don't have the basic needs in place and they're working to buy food because they've used their allotment of, let's say, food bank support that they are allowed, you know, in this current month.

And I think we are also able to, I think, provide a high-risk registry, a high-risk homicide registry which the woman tells us information. We tell them that if you are murdered — and the risk of being murdered, you know, while you're engaging in prostitution is much higher than if you're not — then we will have the information to pass on, you know, to the police to hopefully identify your murderer, your killer, and in which your next of kin can be notified.

And so these are the kind of things you know, I think we try to do on the street that, immediately, that I think offer the women a chance . . . an opportunity to understand where we're coming from as well as to understand the severity of the danger that they are, you know, involved in.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Kourch, would it be all right with you if we pause now and members of our committee ask you and Diana some questions? I just wanted to ask if Diana had anything she wanted to add. Unfortunately we're . . . we'd like this to be a lot longer than it is so we're operating under some time constraints, and I know you understand. But Diana was there anything that you wanted to add?

Ms. Wark: — No I don't think so, not specifically, not specifically. I wear both hats. I do the community follow-up with the kids that we've identified but I also drive around in the van and help identify them, so I do both jobs. So questions regarding either, you know, I'd be willing to answer. I don't think there's anything I need to add though.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Sure. Would it be all right with you if we asked some questions?

Mr. Chan: — Yes, absolutely.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Good, so I'll open up the floor to members of the committee who would like to ask questions. Kourch, thank you for a very thorough presentation. We really appreciate it. And I'm going to start with Carolyn Jones.

Ms. Jones: — Hi there. I'm wondering about the resistance that you have met from communities and how you have dealt with it. It seems to me that we . . . every time we want to establish a safe house in a community, there's a public outcry against, you know, "not in my backyard" kind of a scene.

And there's also a lot of criticism from people who kind of live in neighbourhoods where — we call it the stroll here — where the children might be working. And it's difficult to engage the community in the good of the work that's attempting to be done. And I wonder if you have any . . . if you experienced the same problem, and indeed, if you have any helpful hints for us to try to address the community concerns when we're dealing with that.

Mr. Chan: — I'll answer this question in two parts. The first part, sort of my experience in terms of our safe houses and other safe houses that I know that we have set up; and secondly sort of the bigger Edmonton picture in terms of how the Edmonton community has responded to this.

Well within the city of Edmonton anyways, there is I believe a bylaw which allows a classification of a house or a facility as a sort of social care facility which has less than six beds, less than six persons living in there. It doesn't allow . . . or rather a facility such as this it's up to the city or the body which governs the social care facilities regulations to approve it. And it actually doesn't have to go to a community consultation. And so, for example, so I think we either have the fortunate or the misfortune of this, I think, regulation and these bylaws are on our side.

So as a result we met with very little resistance. I think the people on the same block as our safe house is aware that this is, you know, a safe house. But as far as the greater community as a whole, you know, it's just like any other private residence in which somebody, you know, lives in and there really isn't a legal requirement for us to do that. As well, I mean, if the entire neighbourhood knows the exact location of this place, it wouldn't very much be a safe house.

Now with our second location, it's actually . . . it's on church property and, as a result, I don't know if that helps or doesn't help, but I think the church is fully aware of what is happening. And in fact, they gave us use of their old rector's residence to use as a housing facility. So again, we didn't run into many problems.

Now I know Catholic Social Services, who also runs a few safe houses in the city, has recently moved their location. Again, it was a situation where they moved to a house, an old, old house which, I forgot which order of nuns actually occupied it, but it was a house that belonged to an order of sisters. Again, they vacated it. In fact, the sisters still live next door so oftentimes I think to have . . . (inaudible) . . . community buy in — oh you know, it's next to a church, you know, or it's next to a place where someone is keeping an eye and will be, I think, providing, I think, some community contact — I think that really helps.

We also, in conjunction with a few other agencies have an inner city youth housing project which comprises of five houses. And they're spread throughout the inner city. Again, you know, they're really small housing models. There's no more than four persons per facility. And, I think, maybe one of the ways we've really been able to avoid a lot of community outcry is because, you know, we've been able to keep things small, and it's really a home-based type of model instead of a big shelter model. So that's my personal experience.

Now, the second part of the question is having to deal with how the Edmonton community has responded to this in the first place. Again you know, going back 10 years or more, Edmonton within its . . . it's the core communities that are affected by prostitution, I think, really had a grassroots response. I think a lot of the people who live in the community have said, look, you know prostitution is not a victimless crime. We are the victims as members of the community. And with, I think, disposed needles, disposed condoms, there are health risks. All of the johns that are cruising are safety risks for, you know, those of us who live and conduct our business in the neighbourhood and for the children that are walking to school. So there is really sort of a community grassroots type of organization.

I think they changed names. I mean I think at one point they were the Action Group on Prostitution; and then it changed into the, I think, what is it, Communities for Control of Prostitution. And now there's a wider group now that sort of changed membership. It involves the neighbourhood patrols, the community leagues, and that's sort of a coalition that I don't even know what the name is right now for this group.

But throughout all of this, I think, there was a formation of another society or another non-profit group called the Prostitution Action and Awareness Foundation of Edmonton, and this is really sort of an umbrella organization that really focuses on public education and advocates for policy changes, and it's really a conglomeration of concerned individuals.

And because bodies like this exist, I think community services, you know, like us or the police or, you know, the protection of children involved in prostitution collaborators like the childrens' services authority, you know, the addiction of drugs and alcohol treatment, a commission — all of those other players have been able to sit with a representative of this group to sort of to collaborate and iron out the issues, and we end up

supporting each other.

And I think one of the really important things that we have, I think, established in this city is that we've reached a common stance that the women that are prostituting should not be, I think, the sole focus. In fact in many cases these women, young women, or women who used to prostitute as children, are really ultimately the victims here.

And we've reached a common stance that we need to, you know, focus in terms of legal enforcement, in terms of community response, activities that are focused on the johns and the pimps, you know, and the drug houses which you know in many cases serve as sort of the pimp for a lot of these women that are addicted and have to go back onto the streets to feed their addiction. So that's sort of the Edmonton perspective.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you.

Mr. Harper: — Yes, Ron Harper, MLA, Regina Northeast. I also want to thank you very much for your presentation. I have just three quick questions. How many children would you say under the age of 16 are involved in the sex trade business in Edmonton today or any given day in the last year?

Mr. Chan: — Well that's a good question. We've just recently evaluated our one-year sort of anniversary for the Act, and within this region I think there was over 130 children identified to be involved or at risk of prostitution in this city. I think province wide, I don't know what that number is. I can't really say. Maybe . . . I know that you're talking to Heather Forsyth later; she may have some numbers for you.

Out of those 130, I can estimate probably that maybe half of them are under the age of 16 because, you know, usually . . . I think that we have a few, very few 12- and 13-year-olds. But then the bulk of it is then 14, 15, 16, 17.

And those actually, from 14 to 17, that group seems to statistically pretty much be equal. You know, you can kind of slice it down the middle, and you can say 50 per cent of it is roughly 16, 17, and 50 per cent of it is roughly 15, 14. So maybe half of those, 50-some odd. Would you agree? Yes.

Mr. Harper: — Through your endeavours, how many children have you and your organization been able to assist in exiting the profession before they reach the age of 16 or 18? How many have you been able to assist exiting it while they're still children?

Mr. Chan: — Right. Well we have worked with, like I said, over 3,000 people in our existence. I would probably say that, you know, safely that about, you know, 15 to 20 per cent of those we know as children. So probably then we're looking at 400, 500 — let's say 500 of those children, 500 of those people were children when we first started working with them.

And from there, you know . . . It's a typical question you're asking me because, you know, as I'm thinking over the years I can only sort of generalize. I would say that maybe about 50 per cent of those solidly I think exit before, you know, they turn 18. So that would make it maybe about 250 over the course of 10 years, or 25 a year. That sounds about right.

You have to realize too a lot of people say, well what is your success rate? You know, do you have the child . . . Does the child exit, you know? How many months does it take? I think those questions need to be asked with a point of caution because, first of all, I mean the process of change is cyclical, and especially with trauma and abuse issues.

This is no different than if a woman that has been constantly battered by her husband decides to leave that relationship for good. I mean all the research demonstrates that, you know, it takes multiple attempts to leave before she is successful. And then after she's left, she's still got to put her life back together. In the case of child abuse, I think it's exactly the same except you know, there are more problematic issues because we're dealing with developmental issues as well for these children.

And so it's not a simple . . . it's not as simple to say well okay, well the only indicator of success is that if they cease prostitution. I think there are many indicators of success, some of which are: you know, if they are uniting, I think, with their family; if they are able to, I think, consistently attend treatment; if they are able to access resources when they need to versus not. I think those are all different indicators of success.

And I think the process of exiting is, you know, in my experience, is it's a cyclical process and it's gradual. It's one thing at a time and oftentimes like any type of addiction, drug addiction or alcohol addiction or whatever addiction, the process is that you have to relapse in order to learn and gain the tools for you to continue to reach the point where you are going to be able to terminate, you know, your addiction. So I just want to put that in.

Mr. Harper: — In your experience have you been able to identify any common cause that would cause individuals to enter into the prostitution trade at such a tender young age?

Mr. Chan: — Yes, well I think . . . I think it has to do with a couple of, a couple of situations which just happen to be concurrent. And one is the instability or some sort of instability at home. And I mean not everybody that becomes involved or are involved in situations of abuse . . . but often, and very often I think, that there is some abuse and neglect daily. What that child needs for healthy development is not happening within the home.

And in a lot of instances they're already out of home, they're placed in some kind of short-term placement or . . . (inaudible) . . . placement, and I mean those environments cannot fulfill their needs. And because of this I think often these children have low self-esteem. You know, they don't have a good sense of self, they don't have a good sense of what is right and what is wrong. And they don't have a sense of, you know, that they are capable or they're good at doing something or what I think normal children have that is appropriate to their age.

And thirdly it's a need situation. If this child is, you know, kicked out of home or has ran away from home and pretty soon, especially if they leave a . . . they're in a community that's outside of Edmonton, even just on the fringes — you know, it

doesn't have to be a rural community that's an hour out; it could be a satellite community that's half an hour away — once they left their home community and they're in the city, I think they have some basic needs in terms of a place to live, food to eat, and that sort of stuff.

And I think oftentimes if they meet somebody, a recruiter, who may introduce them to the idea, hey, you know, this is a good way for you to get some money, or a pimp who will seduce a child to say hey, you know, come with me, I'll give you a place to live and, you know, I'll provide for . . . I love you, you're the best thing that's happened to me and all that other kind of seduction stuff that a pimp does, then I think that's how a child gets . . . I think these are pretty common scenes for children that become procured or recruited into prostitution.

Mr. Yates: — Good morning. I'm Kevin Yates, the MLA for Regina Dewdney. I just have a couple of quick questions here. In your opinion, are there any shortfalls or improvements that could be made with the current legislative base in Alberta to improve the situation, to make it easier or to help and assist you in getting children off the street?

Mr. Chan: — I think there are . . . we have a working committee which looks at I think emerging issues. But I mean, I think I've talked enough. I think Diana is the one here that runs into I think the day-to-day difficulties and maybe she can talk about some of them.

Ms. Wark: — I think in general the Bill works very well. It's helping to identify, it's helping getting these kids off the street before they get involved. And I think that's a key, because it's very easy to get involved and it's very hard to get out.

I think one of the problems that we're running into as community follow-up workers is just trying to get services. That's the biggest gap, that's the biggest loophole — is a place for these kids to go and get positive treatment, treatment for addictions, and that includes the addiction to the street. And I think that part has been ignored unfortunately. But we are trying to work on that.

And I think collectively there's been some miscommunications. But I think we're trying to work on that as well to provide the easiest path for these children to exit, to become healthy children, and to move away from the street and to gain some positive tools so that, you know, once they do turn 18 and the government or the child welfare says we can't further support you, hopefully, Crossroads can continue providing services once those kids move out of child welfare to help them remain out of prostitution.

It's pretty hard for me to say that at 18 any of my follow-up kids . . . I'm cutting the strings and, see you later. They know that I will continue to provide support to them after they turn 18.

So again, you know, it's where does the child stop and the adult start? At 18 legally, but mentally, emotionally, where are those kids? Yes, they might be 18 in years but a lot of them might still be 13, 14, 15 in here. So it's how do we further help these kids so that they don't return after they turn 18? That's the biggest gap right now.

Mr. Yates: — And my second . . .

Mr. Chan: — The addictions . . . Oh, sorry. I just want to say, you know, really addictions treatment, as Diana has identified, it's really core. If you're looking at setting up something similar in Saskatchewan, I mean that's a lesson you learn from: have those pieces in place, as well as, boy, these kids are going to turn 18, what are you going to do with them. I mean, again, have that piece in place. Sorry.

Mr. Yates: — My second question has to do with the voluntary aspect of treatment. And you've stated that, you know, any meaningful change is voluntary. But I guess I'm tying in with the fact that you have a three-day, up to three-day intervention, and these children would be highly influenced by those factors on the street, their pimps, and those other socio-economic factors.

Do you think that that period of time is sufficient to — keeping in mind that there'll be multiple interactions, I'm sure, over a period of time — but is it sufficient to create an environment where somebody feels safe to look at changing their lifestyle? And that's what we're asking . . . would be looking at these children to do. Or would a longer period of time be more beneficial?

Mr. Chan: — Well I think the three-day, the 72-hour facility has never been intended to, I think, promote change in somebody. It's really the extreme, the most extreme end of intervention where we know this kid is going to be, I think, in a dangerous situation because if she goes back out, engages in prostitution, you know, every time she engages in prostitution with somebody, you know there's a threat on her life.

So it really serves to remove and provide immediate safety to the child. And then, within the 72 hours, hopefully there's an opportunity to assess, you know, physically, health-wise where this child is: addiction, if she has any addiction issues; and if she's at risk of harming herself; and those types of really general, immediate safety-oriented assessments.

I don't think the 72 hours really has been intended to be a process to promote change. I think within that time there is an opportunity to, I think, illustrate to the child what type of services are available, and very often the child is offered a community follow-up worker as a service if they want. And oftentimes even if they don't want, you know, I think the community service worker or community . . . (inaudible) . . . worker nevertheless meets this child and hopefully I think later on, if she does come back on the street at least, you know, that there are more people now that's aware of her and can identify her and possibly engage her or apprehend her again. Unfortunately, that's the case when you're dealing with some of the kids that are already very seriously entrenched.

And yes, three days is definitely not enough period of time to promote positive change, but that's not the intent of the protective safe house.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Kevin, I'm given to give June

and Don a chance to ask a couple of questions too, if that's okay. We're kind of beginning . . . We're at the verge of running out of time but I wanted to make sure that every committee member got some chance to ask questions. So I'm going to go June Draude and then to Don Toth.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you. Diana, I just have a short question. When you're driving around in the van, I'm just wondering, in an evening, how many people you would deal with and, you know, what their age would be; and if you've had any chance to have somebody else come with you, if that has an effect on the number of young people that would stop and use the van's facilities?

Ms. Wark: — Absolutely. On any given night we'll run into anywhere between 20 and 30 women in an evening that could run approximately between 9 p.m. and 2, 3 in the morning.

We haven't been seeing the same number of children that we were seeing of course before Bill 1. Occasionally we do see them. We are obligated to report them. They know that. We still try and engage them on the street, we still try and make contact, offer condoms, offer a bad date sheet, but we do report to vice or to the cart team or to crisis.

We do take volunteers in the van. The volunteers have to be able to provide a service to our clients. We have a public health nurse, student legal services, somebody from the sexual assault centre, people that work in our safe houses. So we definitely want to have somebody in our co-pilot seat who can provide a service to our clients and, if that means that somebody feels more comfortable coming approaching the van, asking some questions, getting in, engaging in some conversation, getting to know these women, we certainly want to try and foster that as much as we possibly can.

Certainly seeing the children on the street is the most difficult part of the job but it's also the most satisfying in the sense that now I know that when these kids do get apprehended, they're going to go somewhere safe; and hopefully I will see them within the next 72 hours and they will see me as a support, you know, if they do end up back on the street.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you. I just have a short follow-up. You said you don't see as many children now. Does that mean that probably they're driven underground or do you feel you've dealt with them? And secondly, what about the ages of the people that you do see in the van?

Ms. Wark: — Okay. Sorry. The ages — we're seeing roughly anywhere between 18, of course, and 55. Really, there's no age limit and . . .

Ms. Draude: — Are the young people not there because they're scared to because of the new legislation?

Ms. Wark: — Right. No, I think we've identified a lot of them. I think we've prevented, done a lot of prevention in terms of keeping the children off of the street. I think there are a few young girls who are very entrenched who know the ropes. They know to use cell phones and pagers. They have regulars that they work out of hotels. I don't think that's a large number. And I think that those children have been identified. We know who they are. And again it's a matter of breaking that cycle of abuse and addiction that will foster change for them.

Mr. Toth: — Yes. Don Toth, the MLA from Moosomin. Just one quick question. In the years you've been . . . had your program up and running, have you actually had people come to you asking for your help in getting off the streets? Have they come to you and just offered and asked for your help rather than being referred to your services?

Ms. Wark: — Well we certainly had women approach us on the street. They come up to the van and say I need to get off the street right now, I can't be here any more — I'm going to die. And then that's it. We get them off the street right now and some of them never return. And that's the turning point for them.

We certainly get phone calls, any time day or night, and we will try and assist everyone as best we can. So we certainly have been approached, you know, and worked at the drop of a hat to help these women exit. So absolutely.

Mr. Chan: — Yes. There is no, there is no requirement I think to access our services other than the fact that you want to. You don't need to have a social worker refer you or the police refer you. In fact I mean, the services are there and anybody can call and say I need help. And we've helped the people that have called. We've helped their parents who called. You know, we've helped, you know, I know I have a friend who's involved, what can I do to support them?

So it's really pretty much up to them to call us. And, yes, I mean we strive to be immediate and accessible.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Diana, if I could just ask you one question — we're going to wrap it up pretty quickly here — I'm really quite interested in getting some of your views again on addictive treatment for abuse victims.

We were talking a little bit about sort of a carry-on treatment for all victims that have addictions and so on, but obviously there's a component of treatment or some sort of treatment that would probably better serve women or young girls who have been through sexual abuse, whether it be on the streets or whatever. And we're referring to the streets here so we'll leave it at that. But there would be a certain specific sort of treatment or understanding of how this impacts the human psyche and so on as compared to, as compared to, for instance, a workaholic's addiction or an alcoholic's addiction.

So I've heard this before. And I know in Ontario they do have sort of a . . . part of the treatment is a ranch setting and so on, and it's very successful. And it's specifically directed towards girls or young women that have had a lot of sexual abuse in their life.

So can you give me your views; if we were going to set something in Saskatchewan, as Mr. Chan indicated, we want to learn from what you think needs to be added to what Alberta already has. And in the area of addictions, could you just expound a little bit on some advice you might give us there.

Ms. Wark: — Sure. We know that a lot of young women that are exiting from prostitution suffer from traumatic stress disorders which I think is a huge red flag that we're missing. I think the street is an addiction, the drugs obviously, sexual addiction, the abuse that they suffer. I think we need to look at a holistic treatment program that looks at all of those factors.

I know that drug treatment just specifically wants to deal with drug treatment but it doesn't necessarily help in dealing with the addictions to the street. And it doesn't help with the relationship problems that these young women experience. They have trouble identifying abuse. They don't recognize abuse — they don't recognize verbal abuse; they don't recognize physical, emotional, sexual abuse.

And I think that that's where the biggest gap is, is dealing holistically with a young woman about her sexuality, about her self-esteem, about her outlook on life, about relationships, about what the street gave her that she needs to try and fulfill that in a healthy way.

So yes, I really see treatment as a big problem and a wall, but I think that there are avenues that we need to explore certainly. This addiction to the street I think is the most ignored part of the addiction process. And I think that's where we need to focus.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, I thank you so much. Before we wrap up too, I've had a request to ask you, Diana, if you could please repeat your name and spell it out for our *Hansard* staff here. And then I'll have . . .

Ms. Wark: — Sure.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — As soon as you do that, I'm going to ask you one more question. So if you could just spell your name, please.

Ms. Wark: — Sure. It's Diana, D-i-a-n-a; and the last name is Wark — W-a-r-k.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Could we get you also, Diana, to repeat your full title and the organizations that you represent.

Ms. Wark: — I'm a follow-up . . . or a community follow-up worker; and I'm also a street outreach worker with the Crossroads Outreach program.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, thank you ever so much. So we are going to have to wrap up and we thank you ever so much, both of you, for coming. You've been extremely helpful and don't be surprised if we're in touch with you from time to time in the future. Thank you ever so much.

Ms. Wark: — We're 24 hours.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, great. Thank you.

Mr. Chan: — Okay, thank you.

The committee recessed for a period of time.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — . . . Heather and we're really happy to have you on teleconference but we really regret that we can't see you televised. I've been looking forward to kind of looking at your face after all the conversations I've had with you.

Ms. Forsyth: — Well, it's probably just as well this week after all the long hours we've been putting in.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, I know. I know it's really busy, but I'm going to just introduce to you or have just the members of the committee here introduce themselves to you and we'll do that very quickly before we hear from you. So I am Co-Chair of this committee, Heather, as you may know by now, and Co-Chair Peter Prebble.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Hi Heather.

Ms. Forsyth: — Hi Peter.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I'm one of the members of the legislature from Saskatoon.

Ms. Forsyth: — Oh good — my hometown!

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Oh, terrific. Anyway it's really nice to have you with us this morning. I'll pass you on to some of our other colleagues. Carolyn, why don't you go next?

Ms. Jones: — Good morning, Heather, I'm Carolyn Jones. I'm the MLA for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Ms. Forsyth: — Oh hi Carolyn.

Mr. Harper: — Good morning, Ron Harper, MLA Regina Northeast.

Ms. Forsyth: — Hi Ron.

Mr. Yates: — Good morning, Heather, I'm Kevin Yates, the MLA for Regina Dewdney.

Ms. Forsyth: — Hi Kevin.

Ms. Draude: — Hi, this is June Draude, I'm the MLA for Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Toth: — And Don Toth, the MLA for Moosomin.

Ms. Forsyth: — Well hello everybody.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We also have with us some staff members that I'm going to ask to introduce themselves. Maybe we'll just go over it.

Mr. Williams: — I'm Brian Williams and I'm with Saskatchewan Social Services.

Ms. Forsyth: — Hi Brian.

Mr. Pritchard: — And I'm Randy Pritchard, I'm the technical adviser to the committee.

Ms. Forsyth: — Hi Randy.

Mr. Pritchard: — Hi Heather.

Ms. Woods: — I'm Margaret Woods, I'm the Clerk to the committee.

Ms. Forsyth: — Hi Margaret.

Ms. Young: — And I'm Deb Young and I'm from House Business and Exec Council.

Ms. Forsyth: — Okay. Hi Deb.

Mr. Mustatia: — And I'm Stan Mustatia and work with the Minister of Social Services.

Ms. Forsyth: — I missed that name.

Mr. Mustatia: — Stan Mustatia.

Ms. Forsyth: — Oh hi Stan.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Just to remind each of the committee members that Heather Forsyth is the woman who has for years now pressed for changes, and one of those changes were legislation that would not only help assist children off the streets but that would put measures in for police to be empowered a little bit more in helping children off the streets. And as well, the legislation that has put a heavier penalty in for anyone that would be engaged in continued exploitation of children.

And so Heather has certainly been a great assistance to me in helping me to understand some of the avenues that Alberta has taken to help children off the streets and has also informed me what different levels of government as well as social agencies and community agencies have been doing in this regard.

So Heather we've asked you to do a bit of a presentation, and I think with no further ado we will ask you to go ahead with that.

Ms. Forsyth: — Okay. Well thanks, Arlene. This started for me in 1990 before I was a member of the legislature. I was involved in crisis counselling and had one of the moms come to me to explain that her child was on the street. And I said, "Doing what?" And she said she was prostituting. And I was somewhat taken back by that and went with her in the car and drove downtown, and sure as heck there she was standing on the street corner. At that time Susie was 14 and it took me aback. And through the crisis counselling from that period there were several people — moms, dads — that came to me in a similar situation.

I decided to run in 1993 to bring this to the forefront of the legislature and started with a motion actually asking the government to be aware of child prostitution and establish a task force. And it passed in the House unanimously and from there the Premier established and appointed me Chair of the task force. That task force process that you're in right now — I'm losing my voice, sorry — brought forward, myself as Chair and then I brought together groups of people that I knew, knew what was going on in the street, that being vice-squad officers, agencies, a mom that had a daughter involved in prostitution. We brought kids in that were involved in prostitution.

From there we made several recommendations, one of them firstly was a recommendation and change to our Child Welfare Act, which was four words, "including prostitution-related activities." So it tightened up our Child Welfare Act. We also said that we believe children who are involved in prostitution under the age of 18 are being sexually abused which was key to the legislation.

Secondly, we brought forward another piece of legislation which is The Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act, which clearly spells out what can and what cannot be done. It is also a protective piece of legislation and not criminal, because we didn't want to get involved with the federal government because of the fact that the prostitution is federal legislation.

And I mirrored it around what can and cannot be done under The Child Welfare Act and The Mental Health Act, which gives us the ability to apprehend children similar to what happens when the child is being sexually abused at home — we have the authority to go into the home, apprehend the child for 72 hours. This piece of legislation is first in the world.

It's being watched all over the world, and I've had calls from England, Sarajevo, Bosnia. In fact I'm a keynote speaker in . . . there is a — what's the word I'm thinking of? — a seminar coming to Alberta in May from people all over the world about this particular piece of legislation and other children's issues.

As you know, as of today we've currently apprehended 272 children off the street. That was effective January 31 and went from February 1 of last year. Five of those children are 12; ten are 13; forty are 14; seventy-three are 15; and the balance is between 16 and 17. Those figures also indicate that the children have been apprehended more than once — approximately 55 of them — and we will continue to apprehend them. Those 55 children indicate to us that there are hard-core children that are deeply, deeply involved with pimps, travel the country . . . huge drug and alcohol problems. So the 72 hours gives them some time to come off their drugs, give us some time.

Some of those children that have been apprehended more than once — out of those figures — are now off the street. Our success rate has been very, very good. As of today, 13 charges have been laid both under section 9 and the Criminal Code. We've had several convictions; and we have more court cases, in fact our police are in court right now on one of our charges.

So that's pretty well it in a nutshell. You know we're facing a court challenge April 7 and 8. Don't know how that will come about, but there are several things that the lawyers are going after: one, being under the Charter of Rights; two, in regards to the apprehension of the way the police are doing because on an emergency apprehension, they have the ability to apprehend without going to a Justice of the Peace.

The support in Alberta on this piece of legislation has been unbelievable. The court challenge . . . My phones still are

ringing in regards to the court challenge in support of what Alberta is doing. And very . . . I think I've had one call supporting what the lawyers are doing. So we're eagerly waiting to find out what happens with that. That's it really very briefly.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Heather, you mention that there were 272 children within this last year since the legislation came in, that were, was it identified or taken off the streets?

Ms. Forsyth: — Both.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Is that in Alberta or is that in Calgary?

Ms. Forsyth: — That is in Alberta — 272 children have been apprehended off the streets.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. So because you are specifically involved right at this time with the legislation and that's been your work over the last couple of years is to — well I guess your work has been certainly more expansive than that, Heather — but the legislation has been what I've certainly been talking to you about a lot.

And I'm interested in the court challenge because . . . The court challenge, could you tell us a little bit more specifically what the lawyer that's doing this court challenge is challenging in effect?

Ms. Forsyth: — Yes, I can. I'm just going to pull it actually. Sorry.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — That's okay.

Ms. Forsyth: — I'm trying to find all the papers that I have. Okay. Of course, do I find it right away? No.

There's several things they're challenging. First of all the age of the children were 17 years old. And they believe that at 17 they can make up their own minds, so that is under the Charter, section 15 in regards to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms — in particular discrimination based on age.

They also . . . under the apprehension, there are two ways the police can do it. First of all by calling a justice of the peace; secondly, if they believe it is an emergency apprehension, they have the ability to apprehend the child and then identify the apprehension when they appear before the justice to reason why they apprehended the child. So that's another reason that they're contesting the apprehension.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay.

Ms. Forsyth: — So those are probably the two main things that are being challenged.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I just find it kind of interesting that one of the challenges — and I guess we'll have to wait for the outcome of the court challenge — but I find it interesting that one of the challenges is that a girl is 17 years old so she should be able to make up her own mind. When I think it's clear to most people that when you're under a great amount of duress, bodily duress and mental duress, because of drugs and alcohol and so on, that you aren't really able to make a good judgment for yourself at that time.

So I just kind of . . . you know, obviously if people are in a position or young women are in a position where they were making good decisions, they wouldn't be in the area that they're in, wherever that may be, you know, dealing with sexual exploitation and drugs and so on. So it seems to me that it's almost — and I know this is judgmental — but it's almost a foregone conclusion that they aren't able to make good decisions because if they were, they wouldn't be in the situation they were in.

Ms. Forsyth: — Well, being involved with this for over 10 years now, in my mind — and I mean literally I have talked to hundreds of children on the streets — none of them want to be in the situation that they're in. They're under coercion and intimidation by a pimp. They're also involved in drug and alcohol addiction, which is very difficult to get out. You also have to put your mind . . . think like a child. And to them they see no way out. They clearly see no way out of a situation.

The kids that I have talked to like what we're doing. Literally some of them are flagging down the vice squad so that they get the 72 hours.

But as I mentioned to you, Arlene, about a year ago I was threatened by pimps, ended up with police protection, and it scared the bejesus out of me. So you can imagine the coercion, intimidation that pimps are using with these children. They're master manipulators. The children are frightened. They are told how to dress, how to eat, when to brush their teeth, when not to brush their teeth, so it's very difficult for them to even make decisions.

We feel that our legislation, again, is protective legislation, not criminal. All of our workers in the safe houses are trained to deal with children like this. We don't use any sort of intimidation with them. We just say this is a safe place for them to be. Our staff also indicate that women who enter shelters will enter the shelter more than once — many times before they're ready to make the break.

In Calgary, we've apprehended — and these figures have probably changed — approximately 75 children. Fifty-seven of them are off the street and with their parent, in PCHIP community resources, in child welfare, or in other voluntary programs and have to this date stayed off the street.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you, Heather. I'm going to just offer your knowledge to the rest of the committee members right now and I'm sure they have questions they would like to present to you. Don Toth, I'll turn it over to you.

Mr. Toth: — Yes, Heather. I have a couple of questions here. Number one, in regards to your legislation regarding apprehension, what guidelines have you in place that would indeed see to it that an apprehension order or a movement by police to apprehend is indeed based upon . . . I don't know, do

they go by information or people they see on the streets when they apprehend, or it is just on hearsay evidence that someone might phone in?

Ms. Forsyth: — Ninety-nine per cent of the apprehensions have been done by vice squad. So these vice squad officers know the streets, know the children, and know who is involved with prostitution. So it's not like you have a 15-year-old standing on the street and they apprehend them. The vice squad in both of the major cities and some of the smaller cities are well aware of who is on the street and what they are doing.

So none of the cases other than this particular one has been challenged. The court case that we're talking about was a drug bust. And when the police busted the house on drugs they realized immediately that it was also a trick pad and called in vice at that particular time, because of all of the paraphernalia and the children involved.

So they knew right away it was not only a drug pad, that it was also a trick pad and there was minors involved. So even though the drug officers made the bust, they immediately called in vice squad to make sure that they weren't apprehending children that were in there. Also the girls that they apprehended were already known for prostituting on the streets. The police have to have reasonable and probable grounds for their apprehension.

Mr. Toth: — I guess that's . . . that was the concern I would have in the fact that it was being used for what its intended purpose rather than sometimes . . . we can make laws and they tend to be a little more aggressive or can be abused. So that was a concern I had.

Ms. Forsyth: — We haven't had that, Don, to be honest with you. The police are 150 per cent behind this legislation. They know that fine line that you're talking about. So obviously they're not going to apprehend if they're not sure if the child is involved in the trade.

Mr. Toth: — Well I appreciate that and I think just from listening to JoAnn McCartney, I believe, it seemed to be a sense of really having worked the streets, she had a good understanding and knew exactly what they were doing. And your legislation just gave them a little bit more of that authority to try and deal with the situations they were facing, so that sounded excellent.

But another question I have, Heather, is we hear a fair bit and you made a comment about the threats that you had by the pimps. What do we do or is there anything being done to really come down hard on the pimps. I think a lot of times we're talking about trying to help children, but somebody is obviously putting them on the streets and abusing them.

And how in the world do we start to deal with that side of the coin? I think that's probably the area that we really need to address in the long run . . . is getting some of these people out of the way. And it just appalls me that there are individuals out there who would abuse children and put them — or women — and put them on the streets and they seem to be getting on with their . . . or just continuing their activities while we're trying to help people get off the streets.

Ms. Forsyth: — Well . . . and you're correct and the police in Alberta have been very instrumental in focusing on pimps and sex trade offenders, johns, if you want to call them that. I'm trying to use the correct political language. So there has been more charges also involved with the pimps and with the johns, so they're also working on that end.

We've always let the kids know that it's not criminal, we're protecting them; and we've also focused on the pimps and the johns. So that is also being done, but that's under criminal legislation.

In our legislation, we have the ability for a restraining order if the pimp happens to find out where the safe house is; so that we can have a restraining order and we also have heavy fines under this Act. So they've also increased the charges towards the pimps and the johns.

Mr. Toth: — One further question, Heather, before I allow other members for any involvement. In your involvement would you say that there's a fair bit of the prostitution that is maybe gang related?

Ms. Forsyth: — Oh, we have that also. I mean we have a gang problem in this province and we know that whether it's the Vietnamese gang, a Lebanese gang, or a white gang, they have girls involved in prostitution; and we have also beefed that up in regards to gang-related activities. And in fact, more money is going into dealing with gangs. This is not a one-issue problem.

You know you spoke, Don, about the pimps, the johns, the gangs — they're all related. But they also know that Alberta is very serious about protecting our children and have the tools now to deal with that. You have to realize that when we take the kids off the street, we're taking the dollars away from the pimps and the gangs. So they're feeling the heat.

I could take you out on the streets a year ago and they'd be busy; and now they're relatively quiet. And we were concerned that some of this would be driven underground but the police are on top of this and also know where the trick pads are. It's important to get other provinces onside because they'll move the kids. And we're well aware of that. So BC (British Columbia) has had an increase, but surprisingly enough in talking to some of the police there, they're not Alberta kids.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Heather. I'm just wondering if you can tell me if you know a percentage of the children who've gone into the safe houses are male?

Ms. Forsyth: — Very few males, June, very few.

You have to understand first of all with males, a lot of them don't get into the trade till they're over 18. Most males do not have pimps. They do their tricks in, like, gay places, etc. We have a gay stroll in Edmonton and Calgary, but they tend to hide deeper into the bushes and they are over the age of 18. We've apprehended, I believe, two or three boys under the age of 18; a lot of them don't get in till they're older and then they don't have a pimp, they do it individually. But we're focusing on them also.

Ms. Draude: — I'm wondering if the children that you have apprehended, if when checking about what commonalities amongst them, is FAS or FAE (fetal alcohol effects) one of the ones that you see is a common factor?

Ms. Forsyth: — It's a difficult question to answer. Trying to give a percentage of children that were on the child welfare roll, whether they're socio-economic background, etc., it's very difficult.

For example, Edmonton has a higher Aboriginal population than Calgary because they're drawing from the North where a lot more of the reserves are. That's one thing we've noticed is . . . It would be sort of Saskatoon-Regina kind of thing. So we have a higher Aboriginal population up in Edmonton than we do in Calgary. But a lot of them come in with drugs and alcohol. Some new to the game, some into the game, very old.

Ms. Draude: — But do you have any idea of the numbers that are involved in the child sex trade in Alberta?

Ms. Forsyth: — Well all I can tell you right now is as of February 1 last year, '99, to January 31, 2000, we have apprehended 272. It's difficult to count how many are involved. Whether it's one or whether it's 300, we have always said it doesn't matter, we don't want our children on the streets.

You have to understand, when you talk to the older kids that are over the age of 18, I would say a very, very high percentage of them started when they were young, approximately 14 or 15. So the older girls felt that, if this law was in place when they were on the streets, they wouldn't be where they are now. Because it would have been nipped. It's like everything — early intervention is a key.

Ms. Draude: — I just have one other question. Are you working on any educational information to present to schools right now because of your Bill? And if you are, are you working with any of the young people who have left the trade to give their personal information when you talk to schools or to young people?

Ms. Forsyth: — Both of those answers are yes.

In our education we have a brochure for the educators, and it's more of a brochure that deals with teachers, administrators in the school, and also to parents. We thought that was key. That they could pick up whether there was a change in the child's academic, change in clothing, beepers, that sort of thing. So that they're aware and how to deal with it and who they can call if they need to deal with a situation. So yes. And we also have kids that are using sort of the peer pressure.

The original task force recognized that there is issues that we have to deal with in justice, i.e., training the police. Calgary has come out with a wonderful training video for their police officers that has increased amongst all of the police, not only vice, about the problems on the street and the kids that are involved.

Education. We've done brochures. Social Services obviously knows that we have to go further than the 72 hours, and that's what we're working on right now as far as a recovery house.

Health. The kids have a lot of health needs but they can't go into the normal clinics. So now we're looking at sort of travelling HIV tests with the promise of confidentiality to the children.

And so we're working with all of the people involved with this. It's just not social service problem or a justice problem. We have to deal with it — educational, health, etc.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you. Heather, keeping in mind you've only had this legislation in place for a short period of time, knowing what you know and the experiences you've had with it, are there any changes or improvements or any redesign that you would put in place today if you were starting from square one? Or any recommendations you can make to us in regards to where there may be some issues that you'd see that could be changed?

Ms. Forsyth: — On the legislation now, we feel the legislation is good legislation, and we've done all we can under our provincial jurisdiction.

The one thing that we know clearly, the kids have said to us, 72 hours isn't long enough. So that's something we have to look at. We know clearly that we have to have some sort of a recovery centre after, whether instead of having a seven-bed safe house, five of those beds are used for apprehension, two are for longer term.

When the kids come off the street, their days are mixed up; their nights are mixed up. It's as simple as telling them that breakfast consists of a well-nourished breakfast and not McDonald's hamburgers and french fries. So we know we have to go to the next step for a percentage of kids that have been entrenched in the streets for a long time.

Mr. Yates: — Just one quick other question. Heather, what type of success are you having dealing with children involved in prostitution where they're being pimped by their parents or encouraged by their parents? And what type of advice would you give us in that area?

Ms. Forsyth: — Well, we have the ability under our Act to go to the courts for a 30-day secure treatment if we believe . . . and thank God I haven't run across, I think once. Where a child had been turned out by the parent, we have the ability to take that child out of the home and will do that if mom or dad are pimping the child.

We think it's important that if the child is in a situation like that, that they be taken out of the home and go into, say for example, Eleanor's House that we have in Calgary, which can provide them a safe environment and a secure environment.

Mr. Yates: — What do you do beyond the 30 days then with that?

Ms. Forsyth: — We can go back for another 30 days if need be. Or else we can put them in — discharge them from the protective safe house or the 30-day secure — a parent or a

guardian, on their own if we think they'll be able to do something on their own — say, they're 17 or 18 — into other PCHIP community resources, whether it be Eleanor's House or match them up in some sort of a voluntary program into child welfare where we can put them into a foster parent that is used to dealing with high needs children.

And other things, if necessary. For example, into an drug and alcohol AARC, which is our Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre which deals with children that are heavily involved in drugs and alcohol.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Heather.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you. Heather, in all you experience in dealing with this issue, have you been able to identify any one single element that would cause people to get involved in the sex trade.

Ms. Forsyth: — Probably the enticement of the street, first of all. Kids normally don't like rules — on the street there's no rules. They tend to think that people on the streets are their bestest ever friends. Drugs and alcohol play a huge role in the staying on the streets.

Pimps are very good at getting kids on the drink or on drugs very early and providing them free drugs for some time and then, all of a sudden, saying they're in a financial situation and it's just that one trick.

Children are very funny how they can turn their brain off when they are performing tricks. It's not like they're there but they are there, but they're not really there. It's sort of like when you're talking to your child and you're giving them heck for some reason or another and you know the fog-over in the eyes that they're there but they're not listening.

Mr. Harper: — Would you say that it is the substance abuse would be the main factor or would there be factors deeper than that?

Ms. Forsyth: — Well I think substance abuse is key. Secondly, the friendships that they get on the streets, too, and the coercion and intimidation and the love factor that they have for their pimp. I mean these pimps come on very, you know, very . . . I can't even describe it. They just have a way. I mean they're the scum of the earth. They know when you're dealing with a child of 14 and they see this pimp all laid out in gold and he's buying them the designer jeans that they want and then it's the drugs.

So it's a factor of many things. So getting them away from the pimp, getting them off the drugs and alcohol, providing them a safe home, getting them straight. These kids, believe it or not, Kevin, don't want to be there. They may say they want to be there, but I have sat many nights with these kids at a pizza place or a coffee place and have had them cry on my shoulder. They just don't know how to get out of a situation.

One of my kids told me, she thought she was in hell and didn't know how to get out of it, didn't know how to get back to earth.

Mr. Harper: — So would you say this — probably the attraction of the street life would be an element of security because these children have come out of perhaps an abusive childhood and have basically low self-esteem or looking for some element of security and they find that with their pimp on the street?

Ms. Forsyth: — Absolutely. Some of these kids that are on the street, it is better than being at home. They need to understand that we're offering them a better place. Many, many, many of the children have thanked me and said they didn't have anywhere to go prior to the 72 hours and the safe houses, our safe houses.

Ninety per cent of the kids when they enter the safe house strip their street clothes off, have a shower, put their pyjamas on, and grab the teddy bear we provide. Some of the kids . . . Some of the workers, for example, the next day they'll be baking cookies. Some of these children have never, ever, ever baked cookies. We provide them with a TV, some games, etc., and sort of a normal home atmosphere.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you.

Ms. Forsyth: — You're welcome.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you. And Heather, Peter Prebble, one of the Co-Chairs . . . or the Co-Chair along with me is going to be asking questions now.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Heather, I've admired the work that you've been doing over the last few years and I've followed it quite closely and I want to ask you some questions that are related to this whole issue of a voluntary safe house versus the three-day apprehension process. I take it what you've got in Alberta right now is some voluntary safe houses and then a facility that's geared for children who've been picked up off the street under the new legislation. Can you just clarify the distinction between the facilities just for starters?

Ms. Forsyth: — Well our safe houses are secure. In other words, the door is locked, in and out. So you can't pull the door open and you can't pull it closed. In other words, it's a secure treatment centre.

The voluntary safe houses can be provided by the agencies where they can voluntarily decide to go in.

But when they're apprehended, our 72 hours is secured treatment. Understanding that some of these children, many of these children, in other words, need the time to get off their drug and alcohol, need to know that there's a safe place for them — so that means that no one can get in to get at them because they're deathly afraid of that. So our safe houses are secure, the 72 hours.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Do children go on to one of the voluntary safe houses afterwards? I mean there'll be all kinds of different directions that they go on. Some of them will go back out on the street at first. Some of them I presume will go to family members; some of them will have placements by Social Services in Alberta. Do some of them go into voluntary safe houses?

Ms. Forsyth: — We have currently 63 children that are in a voluntary safe house. In other words, it's not a locked facility. Of those 272, 63 are in some sort of voluntary placements, 111 of them are within the child welfare system, 47 are in a different situation — they could be in a drug or alcohol counselling, etc. — 46 are back with their parent or guardian, and 8 are on their own right now.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And what's your experience in the significance of moving? I've been involved in setting up a voluntary safe house in Saskatoon.

Ms. Forsyth: — Right.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And the primary focus is on children under 16 years of age. And I know that one of the things . . . I mean we are . . . one of the things I'm struggling with right now is the importance, you know, of whether you want to go the apprehension route. And I'm obviously in the process of thinking that through. That's one of the very significant things that you've done. And I think it's a really important model for us to be looking at.

I just want to ask you some questions that I guess probe at whether there's any disadvantages of going the apprehension route. And one of them is: I'm wondering whether in some cases the relationship that outreach workers and the police and Social Services might have with children, in your experience, is damaged by apprehension.

Ms. Forsyth: — No, it's not.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Your experience is that that's not a problem?

Ms. Forsyth: — Absolutely not. In fact you would talk . . . you could probably talk to Crossroads. No, it hasn't been a problem.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I sensed that when I was . . . we were talking to the Crossroads workers just actually before we had the opportunity to join you, and they were quite positive about the experience.

Ms. Forsyth: — These children do not want to be on the street. Apprehending them, Peter, is a way for them to get off the street without really saying that they want to, even though they do want to. And again that goes back to the coercion and the intimidation of the pimp so that they can say to the pimp, "Well they apprehended me; I didn't have a choice."

So both have been very, very successful. Voluntarily, if a child chooses, we have the resources for them to come off the street. They have, you know, the work that they've been doing with Crossroads and Street Teams etc., so then they can go that voluntary route.

The apprehension is for the kids that are on the street currently turning tricks and the police know that they're turning tricks, and they're apprehended off of the streets. They — and I hate repeating myself over and over.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — No, that's fine. Go right ahead.

Ms. Forsyth: — These children do not want to be on the street. They don't want to be there. And I've been to graduations of these children and they don't want to be there. Even if they tell you they want to be there, they don't. It's just children saying, well, I want to be here. But they don't want to be there.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes I know, that's been my experience for the most part too, Heather, is that kids don't want to be there. So you know I really appreciate the comments that you've made in this regard. I've got some other questions but I want to make sure that Arlene has a chance to ask other questions that she has so we can maybe do a second round if there's time. I particularly wanted to get in that question though and I wanted to . . . I'll pass it back to Arlene for a moment.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Heather, I just have a question in regards to the kind of funding that the provincial government has designated for the legislation to be effective and within the last year?

Ms. Forsyth: — Over a three period we've designated $5.2 million . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Over a three-year period?

Ms. Forsyth: — That's correct.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay.

Ms. Forsyth: — Now a huge amount of money was used in the first year obviously, for the fact that we had to establish the safe houses which was important. And of course usually in funding anything, most of the amount goes in the first year because we have the safe houses to establish. You have to furnish those safe houses, etc. We are watching our funding very closely because like anything it can be swallowed up and you don't know where it is.

The fortunate thing about this is I have someone who is working with me on a day-to-day basis so that we know where every dollar is being spent and we haven't handed over to our children authorities yet and will not for the next year — the first year of apprehension — because we've apprehended . . . We've had a lot of apprehensions in the first year.

We know that we will probably have to get some more money because of the huge cost at the beginning, but feel that it will funnel out over in the long run because of a decreasing numbers in children who are involved has decreased off the streets. And we feel that $5.2 million has been well spent because we've had costs in training, we've had costs in meetings, etc., so we can get the agencies and the police on side, etc. But to us it's been well spent.

Short-term costs gain long-term goals because these children have criminal records and costs, whether we have them in the young offenders' centre or they graduate up into more crime with charges from the Criminal Code.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And Heather, just one more

question if I could. And I'm not too sure that this, you know, that you'll have these stats with you, but in regards to drug and alcohol rehab for youth under 18 in Alberta, do you have any idea of the number of spaces Alberta provides for that?

Ms. Forsyth: — No, I can't. But I can tell you we have two recourses we can go with drug and alcohol. We have AADAC (Alberta Alcohol & Drug Abuse Commission) which is our sort of Alberta alcohol and drug centre. We also have AARC which is the Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre.

If a child is at stage 1 or 2 drug and alcohol addiction, we could put them into AADAC. If they're at 3 or 4, which is a higher drug and alcohol addiction, 4 being the highest, then they will go into AARC which will then be covered by the government and long-term.

That again depends on how long the child is involved on the street. Those repeats that I've told you — 55 — I've got kids that are shooting cocaine into their feet, they're so drug and alcohol addicted. So obviously they would have to go into AARC which deals with a higher level of addiction. Some of them are just starting to experiment with drugs and alcohol so we can get them the training and the help through AADAC.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, okay. I know that it's fairly expensive to go through AARC, some of them being there up to a year.

Ms. Forsyth: — That's correct.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — You know, that kind of expense is really quite, quite high. But I know, too, in Alberta that there isn't a lot of volunteer organizations, NGOs (non-governmental organization) that contribute on a regular basis to all kinds of treatment centres and treatment for youth that are addicted or street prostitution or whatever.

Ms. Forsyth: — It's important to understand that early intervention is key. And also, even though you've got high costs at the beginning, there are long-term savings because if we don't nip these children early, there are huge costs to government in a long term because they get more entrenched and more entrenched and more entrenched, more charges, more charges.

You have to understand that people involved in prostitution, whether they're children or an adult, have a seven-year lifespan. In seven years, they'll be dead either from drug or alcohol, murdered by a john, murdered by their pimp, suicide, etc. So they have a seven-year lifespan.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I'm going to pass you over to Carolyn Jones, Heather, who's got a question.

Ms. Jones: — Hi, Heather. First of all, out of the 5.2 million, could you give us just a brief kind of budgetary rundown of things that you needed to make expenditures on to implement your new legislation? And could you also give us an idea if other areas of the provincial budget had to be "plumped up", if you will, in order to facilitate, you know, integration of services? I'm interested on whether or not you had to increase, you know, health or social services or anything to kind of implement your legislation.

Ms. Forsyth: — No. The 5.2 million was allocated to children involved in prostitution. The majority of the expense, Carolyn, came in the establishment of the safe houses and of furnishing them — we've got a seven-bed safe house in Edmonton and a seven-bed safe house in Calgary and then to furnish those — and the staff, obviously, expense of the safe house because it's manned 24 hours a day because the kids don't necessarily come in from 9 to 5. And we had to have counsellors in the safe houses available for this particular addiction of prostitution, so we wanted to make sure that we had key staff so that they knew what they were dealing with. So the majority of that expense has been involved in the regards to the establishment of the safe house.

No other department, i.e., Health, Education . . . Education brought forward their own budget of, I believe, about $300,000 to put forward their brochures and the training of the administrators and teachers within the education system. But the majority of the expenses came from Social Services, and we really haven't gone to other departments at this point in time asking them to ante up.

Ms. Jones: — Okay. Just a supplementary question.

Ms. Forsyth: — Sounds like we're in the legislature.

Ms. Jones: — No kidding. We're learning quickly; I'm a new MLA. Looking back on it now, do you think that . . . Would you have spent any of the money differently knowing what you know now?

Ms. Forsyth: — No.

Ms. Jones: — No?

Ms. Forsyth: — I think, I guess, there's a couple things that I could see some of the funding go to.

I think it's very important that we establish a tracking system to keep track of these children better if we can. Considering we've only had a year's implementation in regards, our tracking system has been very, very good. But I would like to see maybe a stronger tracking system to say, well, this is where we are at six months for this particular child — this is where we are at a year.

Some of the kids I can track myself because I've kept in touch with them, and I know exactly where they are and what they're doing, but I'd like to see a stronger tracking system. I'd also like to see a stronger tracking system if some of my kids are moving from province to province so that say they land up in Saskatchewan and are apprehended, Saskatchewan can say, look, we've got Suzy Q here.

So that is some of the things. We've established a phase 2 working group and we bring together Social Service, Justice, Health, Education, and the commissioner from children, and we've got AADAC people on there. And we're looking at what

we can do better, what we're doing right, what we're doing wrong.

We also will, this spring, bring together all of the stakeholders again after a year to talk to them and see what we think we should be doing differently. We did that last summer, and the only criticism we got was in regards to the 72 hours and the kids couldn't smoke in their safe house. So they wanted smoking in the safe house. But that was very, very little criticism about how this legislation has run and how it's working.

Ms. Jones: — That's excellent. And I'm glad to see that you're going to do it again and see what else can be done. Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Heather, I just wanted to ask you a couple of other questions. Maybe I'll put them all together if you can just take a note and then — because I notice we're running out of time here — and we can also communicate by phone.

Ms. Forsyth: — Absolutely.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — But it would be nice to get them on the record. My questions relate to — with respect to the safe house — what are you doing around parental notification which we've found to be, you know, a delicate issue? So I'd be interested in your comments on that.

I'd be very interested in your comments on where you'd recommend that we look at going and where you're thinking about going in terms of, you know, the recovery process beyond the safe house and a kind of a comprehensive program that would address a variety of needs that kids in this situation will obviously have.

And my third question relates to the monetary needs of the children themselves and how you're addressing that in Alberta. I know one of the things we've struggled with in Saskatoon is how to address those monetary needs in a positive way so that kids have ways of receiving money, earning money that are not related to being involved on the street.

So I just wondered if you had any thoughts on those three, or advice on those three questions?

Ms. Forsyth: — Okay. In regards to the safe house and the parental notification, most of the parents that are involved who have children involved in prostitution have identified that they have a child that is, if I can say, missing and they're not sure where they are. So most of the time if you have to use parental notification, the parents are already looking for their children.

So they're relieved somewhat, shocked obviously, that . . . Glad to know the child is safe and are wanting to do what is best for the child in helping them through the process. I was with the child that we rescued in Vancouver. The father knew what she was doing, but broke down sobbing and crying when he saw his child come off the plane and handed from one police officer to another, full well knowing that she was in her prostitution gear, but got past that because the child was just as embarrassed as he was obviously because it was daddy's little girl.

The recovery process. We know that after the 72 hours moving into a recovery process is key. It's as simple as most of these children don't fit into a normal school setting. We had a child . . . a teacher say to a child, well, you're nothing but a prostitute anyhow. So we know that there has to be education on both sides, and the child needs to go into an education system that fits their needs and we have high schools that do that . . . you know where they learn at their own speeds; as simple as straightening their day and night. So that's a lot of things in the recovery process that they have to learn.

In regards to the monetary needs of the children, trying to teach them that earning good money over bad money and trying to train them for job training, etc., is important because the average BJ (blow job) for a child on the streets here is a hundred bucks. So that is a quick, quick, quick turn for them.

So we know that we have to work with them in regards to finances, and if it means putting them into child welfare resources and providing them with education and that sort of thing, needs to be done. You just can't move them out of the 72 hours and then if there's no parent or guardian, that financial needs must be met whether it's clothing, food, shelter. A lot of these kids are hooking just for the basics. So they have to be provided that.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you, Heather. I'm going to stop because of time considerations but I really appreciate your advice.

Ms. Forsyth: — Well I think it's important what you're doing, and I must compliment you on what you're doing and wish you well and offer any assistance I can. I mean I have got four binders full of information that we have gathered. So by all means if you have questions, send them down. I'll send you information I have. I'll do anything I can to help you through the process. One thing that is key is to get the Aboriginal people involved because there are a lot of Aboriginal children that are involved. And it's key to have the elders involved.

And the police are key. Your police are key. Once they've bought into it, you'll be amazed how quickly and successful it is. I've spent many, many hours with the police and they're behind this. The agencies . . . this legislation is so successful because it was bottom-up instead of top-down, and everybody bought into the process.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes, and I know, Heather, that there's also a number of agencies and organizations in Calgary and in Edmonton that can be of help to children that are in recovery. And a number of those agencies are, I guess, developed according to the different needs that different children have. And so I'm just referring to Mr. Prebble's comment about recovery and the need for money and so on.

And I know — I can't remember the names right now — but when I was in Calgary, I visited some of the places that were set up for self-help basically, where there's wealth generation within their organization, and the youth start taking part in skill development as well as learning economic reliance on themselves and so on. And so they set up sort of work projects and it's all part of the whole recovery. So there's a great deal

going on in Alberta that is quite admirable.

Ms. Forsyth: — The whole province of Alberta has bought into this, absolutely bought into it. Believe it or not, even the media have bought into this and have been very successful in this legislation. And it's being watched right across Canada. I think we were moving a lot faster at one point when the premiers all came out unanimously supporting this.

But I think what's happened, is it's a sit back and wait to see what happens with the court case and what Alberta's next move is. I can tell you that Alberta is going to take this to the map. We believe our children need to be safe; they need to be protected. We believe this is an important piece of legislation and we will fight this till the end because these are our children.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Hear, hear. Thank you very much, Heather, and Godspeed and hope you have a great day.

Ms. Forsyth: — Thanks, everybody.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Bye, Heather, thanks.

The committee recessed for a period of time.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We thank you for being with our committee today and we are going to do some individual introductions, Doris Mae. The committee members will introduce themselves. But first of all, I'm Arlene Julé. On this committee we have two Co-Chairs: so I'm one of the Co-Chairs; and Peter Prebble, sitting next to me, is the other Co-Chair.

So it's a legislative committee and we're very happy that you could be here with us to offer your information and support and a rundown of the services that are provided and how they affect the enhancement of the lives of youth in Manitoba. So I'm just going to take you over here to my right and I'll let the members introduce themselves.

Ms. Jones: — Hello. I'm Carolyn Jones from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Harper: — Ron Harper, MLA, Regina Northeast.

Mr. Yates: — Kevin Yates, MLA, Regina Dewdney.

Ms. Draude: — June Draude, MLA, Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Toth: — And Don Toth, the MLA from Moosomin.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I wonder if the officials would like to introduce themselves.

Mr. Mustatia: — Hi, Doris. Stan Mustatia. I work for the Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Pritchard: — Hi, Doris. It's Randy Pritchard calling . . . or calling; I'm here.

Ms. Oulton: — We've talked so often, Randy.

Mr. Pritchard: — Yes, I've talked to you about 10 times last week. I'm the technical adviser to the committee.

Ms. Woods: — Hello, Doris. My name is Margaret Woods. I'm Clerk to the committee.

Ms. Young: — And I'm Deb Young, and I'm from House business in Executive Council.

Mr. Williams: — Hi, Doris. I'm Brian Williams from Social Services.

Ms. Oulton: — Hi, Brian. Now how do you want to proceed with this?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Doris, we wanted you to present to us, if possible, just through . . . Let's see. We have from 1:15 to 2:15 in total. So we have one hour here.

And, you know, we'll hopefully be able to have your presentation for the first half hour, something like that. But we're flexible, you know. We want to make sure that you have the opportunity to say everything that needs to be said. And for the last half hour then, the committee members will maybe ask you some questions if you feel that you could answer them.

I just wanted to commend Manitoba on their Child and Youth Secretariat. I did visit Manitoba about two years ago — and there was a different person in your place — but it was very informative and I think it's going to be of great value for the committee members here to hear from you, especially with the common interest here in helping children that are being exploited on the streets of Saskatchewan, sexual abuse of children through the child prostitution trade. So, if you would just like to go ahead and give us what you have ready to say about the secretariat.

Ms. Oulton: — Excellent, I'll do that. And first of all, I want to tell you how excited we are to be part of this. We had Minister Van Mulligen came to visit us a very short period of time ago and asked us some very perceptive questions and we were delighted to be able to share our information.

And we also are part of the prairie, now Prairie Northern Partnership around FAS. So we actually had three people from Saskatchewan in for meetings on Thursday and Friday. And we really think that those kinds of partnerships are the way to go, that we really need to be learning from one another. And the area of children and youth is under such very dynamic times right now and certainly is a challenge for all of us.

What I will do is I'll present the kind of framework for the Children and Youth Secretariat and why we've chosen the initiatives that we have, and then I'll be delighted to answer any questions that you have. So we'll just go ahead then now with that.

Okay, you now have, I hope, something on your screen?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We have something, although it's not centred very well.

Ms. Oulton: — Okay. We'll just get our technical person here to come back and make it centred better. I'm not exactly sure how that happens but I can't do that.

Let me just get you a little of the background while we're getting that person to come in. The Children and Youth Secretariat was set up to be a coordinating structure that brought in seven, then eight . . . it started off with four government departments, then went to seven, and then eight, who really had something to do with children and youth.

Now the something to do was in various stages, and some . . . One of our partners — for example, Culture, Heritage, and tourism and they have the recreational aspects. Family Services — one would assumed would have been one of the more important partners because they end up having to do a lot with the . . . how's that? Is that better?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes.

Ms. Oulton: — They have to do with the programming when children are at risk. But it started off really with four key program deliverers: one was Education; one was Justice; one was Family Services; and one was Education.

What we said to start it off was that we think there are a number of children who are falling between the cracks — and you talked about children on the streets and those are certainly some of the children who end up falling between the cracks — that we really needed an overall strategy, a strategy that said we don't think that if you put a band-aid here that you'll fix the system. What we need to do is restructure the system so it becomes more child-centred and it becomes much more responsive to the needs of children and their families.

So we developed a kind of baseline vision, and our vision really said what we ascribe — as does Saskatchewan — to the UN (United Nations) Declaration on the Rights of Children and youth. And that says that we believe that they have the first call on resources.

We also had said — but we often don't act as though we actually believe it — that children are the most important social investment that we can make. And we've got a lot of stats later that really, for us, put together that business case for children.

We also were very careful of the next part of that vision statement, and that's that what we do has to be family centred. One of the things that we know even about children who are abused in their homes, who run away from their homes, who, we would all say, were neglected in their homes were that even when you take them out of that home, even when the circumstance that you're putting them into is "clearly better" for them, they want to go back to their families. So it's really important that whatever we do it takes into account needing to build on that family and that family's capacity.

We also said that there were some things that we as a secretariat wanted to embody, and so we chose this little circle diagram. It actually was drawn . . . Dr. Frasier Mustard came at the beginning of our secretariat and did a community-based workshop. And one of the children at the workshop, a 10-year-old boy from South Indian Lake — one of our more remote communities — drew this and we thought that this for us was the perfect symbol of what we wanted to do.

You'll note that it has a circle which is really important to the Aboriginal culture. In our province as in yours, the majority of children who are at risk in any category are Aboriginal. So we felt that we really had to be very cognizant of that so we liked the circle. We liked the path and the fact that it says, okay, you're trying to go forward, that it's going forward — we liked that motion part of it. And it's a nuclear family.

Now if we were designing a "politically correct family," we would have never have been able to put this up because there are all sorts of other dynamics that we would have had to consider. But that's how children see families, and we thought that that meant that that was really being very sensitive to how children see families.

And we put . . . we love the sun at the back because we hope that what we're all working for is really that sunny future for children. This is a bit of our structure, and I expect that this may be one of . . . that you want to do some follow-up questions, but I'll just deal with it sort of superficially now.

I report directly to ministers. I don't report through deputy ministers. In many cases, what ministers were feeling was that they needed a really very responsive mechanism that — in the jargon terms — was outside the box. So we tried to set up the Children and Youth Secretariat in a very entrepreneurial mode. And that's why I'm called the chief executive officer. It was kind of trying to get it out of the bureaucratic thinking.

We have a committee of deputies, and we have a committee of ADMs (assistant deputy minister). And a committee of deputies meets on a by-issue basis. So, for example, when we were negotiating the national child benefit, that committee of deputies met on how we actually would assign the investments from national children's benefit.

We have an ongoing assistant deputy ministers working group. And not to denigrate deputy ministers, but at the ADM level, it's very much more where the work gets done. People will put time and resources into wrestling with a particular issue, and then we'll try and figure out how we resolve it.

All of what we've tried to do is not to do a program but to do a systemic change. And that's been a really important but very difficult approach.

We work on a secondment basis, so we have seconded staff from Education, from Health, from Justice, from Aboriginal, from Culture, and from Family Services, and Housing. Now it depends of the size of the department. So Health, for example, has seconded three people to us — Aboriginal and Northern Affairs one. So it's very dependent on the size of the department.

The resourcing is the same, so that the large departments put into our base budget 250,000 each; the small, smaller departments put into our budget 50.

We then came up with programming that was over and above that funding mechanism. So, for example, from the national child benefit, we put some of our money into that — the long-term strategic development. And we also have gone through each year with what's called in our system a new initiative. And those initiatives were all cross-sectoral initiatives. So that's a bit of how our funding happens.

We also use funds from other people's budgets. So, for example, when we were doing the fetal alcohol syndrome initiative, we were very interested in the diagnostic part of that. So we had a tele-diagnostic project that is funded from both the Department of Health, who do the primary funding of it, but also resource a staff person from Family Services. So that would have been over and above our budget.

So our mandate is to put in the ChildrenFirst policy . . . is to work strengthening families and communities. We have concentrated on the early years. That's not to say we exclusively deal with the early years, but we believe if we're going to do some preventive work that's where it has to start.

As I said before, in all of our areas our Aboriginal populations are overrepresented. So we talk about having to work and recognize and respect the Aboriginal culture.

And we try to work across barriers, and this has been a huge challenge for us. Federal/provincial barriers are extremely difficult. Orders of government are extremely difficult. But we have, and continue to do that, so again in a much more entrepreneurial way than is "normal" within government.

We've said that we are based on a population health approach, in a global environmental sense; that our foundation is that if you have healthy children and healthy communities, that you have a healthy population. We work very much on inter-sectoral partnerships. We concentrate on the family and the family as part of the community and we use outcomes and best practices a great deal.

We believe that one of the things that is not understood about best practices or, as one of your people said on Friday, promising practices, is that they have to be able to be replicated in whatever environment that they are in; that in and of themselves, they are not a best practice. They are only a best practice if it can be replicated in your environment and your environment understands how it's going to work.

For example, although the French model — while in France it's very appealing to us as it talks about a benefit for children — that's only going to be useful if that benefit is, as it is in France, hooked in to a health care system, into a crèche system, so it has to be that whole continuum of services; that best practices can't be withdrawn from the system that supports them. And that's certainly one of the things that we've learned very painfully.

When we started in Manitoba, we took those four key departments and we had them identify for us in each department, 50 children who were the most at-risk children in their department. And then we did almost a forensic type of audit. We went in case by case in each of the files and said, how much is that going to cost? How much does that family cost, how much are we expending?

And we discovered that in that very, very small group of children, we in fact were spending $1.4 million a day on high-risk kids. And that if we looked at the ultimate failure of our system, we would probably — most of us would agree that it's when a child ends up in a correctional facility and it costs us about $46,000 a year per child in a correctional facility — we could put that same child through university, wholly subsidized, and it would cost us less.

We know that we're not, within the systems that we've got going now, we're not actually improving outcomes for children; that most of the incarcerated adults, 75 to 80 per cent of them in fact, were persistent offenders in youth. So whatever we're doing in our correctional facilities to try and correct those children certainly ain't working folks because they are coming out the end as . . . (inaudible) . . . are offenders as adults.

We know that about 71 per cent of the children who enter grade 1 with severe behavioural problems, again end up being anti-social adults at the end of that.

We know that a very, very important stat for us all to look at — and we've all been very involved in the whole question about poverty and child poverty — is the connection between child poverty and adolescent pregnancy. We know that there are about four babies born to adolescent mothers every day in Manitoba. There are about seven pregnancies every day. We believe that our stats are very, very close to yours. In fact I think that we've been kind of trying for which stats are the most prohibitive in Canada.

We know that Aboriginal children have a death rate of four times the average in Manitoba.

We know that about 50 to 75 per cent of the adolescent mothers that we have, had a history of being sexually abused.

We know that there is an 80 per cent correlation between adolescent pregnancy and poverty; that if a mother becomes a head of a household while she is an adolescent, she's going to be poor all of her life, her child is going to be poor all of her life, and if her child is a female child she is most likely to have a child as an adolescent. And that simply means that we are really condemning children to a lifetime of poverty.

One of our really important foundations and I'm sure you're all aware of this one so I won't spend a lot of time on it, are the effects of child neglect. Now I want to make this very clear, that what we are talking about here is not abuse. This is not a child who has been hit, struck; this is a child who has not been cuddled, has not been talked to, has not had stimulation when they were born.

And we know that what happens in those circled lobes, are what happens during the development . . . after the developmental period. You can see that there is no activity in those lobes. That when you're born you have about 64,000 — if any of you are physicians please close your ears because this is such a simplistic explanation that I get really worried when I do it but — we've got about . . . an infant has about 74,000 synapses that

they are born with and the pathing that happens in the next three years is extremely important.

And if in fact you don't have that kind of stimulation, you don't have neural activity in those circled brain on the right-hand side of your screen. And that means that those children are simply less able to deal with stress, to deal with change, to deal with confrontation in their environment, they don't have the neural synapses to make those proper responses. And they're the kids who end up in our classrooms that they're just rotten little kids. It's really a difficult kind of thing and they're not things that we can go back and fix. We can teach behaviour modification but it's so much less-effective than having a really good start.

One of the things that we know is secure attachment is really important and that if you have birth complications when a child is born, that there's a very high possibility of an early maternal rejection of that child. And you probably have got a child who ends up in violent criminal activity by the time they're 18. So this is not just a pie in the sky kind of thing, this is a direct correlation. You want to prevent gangs; well you have to work at birth to do that.

We know that secure attachment is a really important protective factor. Very scary stats around infant homicide, a leading cause of infant death. A second or later child is born to an adolescent mom . . . is 10 times as likely to be killed. And if the child is born to someone who is under 15 years of age, again high risk; less than 12 years, high risk; didn't have prenatal care, high risk.

One of the things that we also have learned is from NLSCY (National Longitudinal Study on Children and Youth) — and NLSCY, I'm sure you are looking at it, but it's been a huge source of information for us — that the greatest predictor of success for a child is the status of the father. And the second greatest predictor of success for a child is the education level of the mother. So making sure that our girls are sticking in school, are really aware that there are other choices for them than becoming pregnant as adolescents is extremely important.

Fifty-two per cent of the pregnancies in Manitoba to adolescent girls are Aboriginal, but we believe that that's rather skewed because we believe anecdotally that . . . that Aboriginal girls are less likely to abort than others.

We also know that there's a huge, huge connection between maternal depression and depressed newborns and behavioural problems. About 45 per cent of the single parents who are on social assistance, and, if you think of your social assistance rolls you'll know that that's a great number of them, end up with children who have developmental delays or behavioural problems, that it doubles the chances of having problems with your children in the ages of 2 to 11.

You've probably all seen the slide that Frasier Mustard uses about the mismatch between opportunity and investment. We've done it another way here. If we actually looked at the time when you could improve long-term outcomes for folks, you'd start when the brain is most malleable because that's what determines long-term health outcomes. And of course that's in your prenatal and preschool years. But if you look at where we expend our dollars, in fact it's not in those years. It's very much towards the end of a person's life when we can't change health outcomes.

So we said, we do know how, if you really wanted to change outcomes for children, how you can do it. You would make sure that you were doing the most that you could in those zero to three age.

This is an American study — some of you will be familiar with the Parry preschool program — but for every dollar that we spend in intervention programs, we think in the end it saves us about seven.

Now we had been quite worried that that was a very American study. And so we're quite interested in the recent British study that in fact says that for every pound that you invest in children, you save eight pounds in the end. So we think that that's probably a pretty useful stat.

We also know that it's incredibly important to have a secure attachment to a single adult in a child's early years. And that means that much of what we're doing in foster care is really counterproductive. That you have to have a child infant having a consistent single adult in their life.

We know that if you really were serious about preventing crime, that what you'd be doing is teaching kids to read. And if you were really serious about teaching kids to read, what you'd be doing is making sure that by the time they started school they were ready to learn. Because if they started school ready to learn, they would be much more likely to actually graduate from high school. And we know that girls who believe they've got a bright future don't get pregnant.

So some of the things that we've taken and tried to mould from those very bold ideas is we try to do some systemic initiatives that promote the protective factors that we talked about and that reduced the risk factors. All the risk factors being child abuse, school difficulties, FAS, adolescent pregnancy, and poverty. We think that that's the way you've got to do it. And unless you're doing that kind of global programming, that you'll miss some of it.

Our BabyFirst program screens all children who are born in Manitoba at the time of birth. And if in fact their families are seen to be at risk families — that is to say they are at risk of abusing or neglecting their children — we hook them into a system that's based out of the public health system that has public health nurses doing a screening, inviting them to become part of our project. If they are part of our project, they have a home care visitor who goes out and works with them for the first two, two and a half years of their lives.

One of the things that we . . . We had a number of children who had died of shaken baby syndrome. And one of the recommendations was in fact that you would do parenting classes in the hospital before children were sent home. We know that simply doesn't work; that the children were shaken by people, caretakers, who were in the home who were not present at birth — in fact, male caregivers. And we believe that at least two or three were probably male caregivers who had

FAS/FAE. Now that means that you have to be in the home, you have to be working with that family so that you're actually talking about how you can change behaviour.

We think that if you . . . We have research sites in Winnipeg . . . two in Winnipeg and one in Altona but all of the regional health authorities in Manitoba are delivering it. We've got — oh, I just lost it — I think, 25 public health nurses who are either full or part time and 65 home visitors who are delivering this program.

We'd say that, in very bold terms, that if you can simply — simply being such an ironic word in this case — if you can reduce neglect and abuse for a child you save our system about $7,300 a year.

Our next program is taking the child from that zero to two, two and a half and getting them into a structured program that will help them interact with other children. And will help maintain that support for their family so their families get connected into a system. And the families get imbued with the notion that they can have an affect on their kids.

So we work with them through home visitors, primarily although not exclusively in the day care, early childhood settings. In the North where there are not early childhood settings, we work with the school system through a program that's called PEER, Parent Early Education Resource centres.

And again, we think that if you can . . . We have 55 sites across Manitoba and have got some very good early baseline data. And we think that if you can make sure a child doesn't end up in secured custody, that you save us about forty-five, six a year.

One of our huge issues in Manitoba is fetal alcohol and I am still . . . although we have it up there, I question the first line in that and that's to say FAS is 100 per cent preventable. If it is, how do we prevent it?

We have about 240 children who are born every year in Manitoba who have FAS. We believe it costs about $1.5 million for every one of those children and that there are about three times as many who are born with FAE. And we know that it costs us about forty-eight, five a year for the children.

When we were dealing with Frontier School Division, which is our northern school division, they in fact said that it cost them about $300,000 for every FAS child that they had in their system.

We also have really talked about the importance of getting communities linked through their schools. So we have a number of programs that try and do that. We know that if what you are really interested in keeping kids in school, that a dropout costs you about 19,000 a year.

We also have a number of initiatives that try to look at preventing adolescent pregnancy. Again we believe that there are huge, huge costs of adolescent pregnancy. Not the least is the correction system. We have not replicated this study in Manitoba but an American study that we think is probably real relevant for us is that 9 out of 10 men who are incarcerated were in fact born to adolescent moms.

So what we've said is that we have to both build resilience in children and to make sure that they're learning how to overcome neglect and abuse.

That's the end of the presentation. I'm not sure how we get this off the screen but . . . There, it's gone. I'll be very pleased to answer any questions that you have.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you very much, Doris, for that presentation. As I was looking at some of those statistics and listening to you, it was certainly occurring to me that as we are looking in Saskatchewan right now through this committee at the exploitation of children on the street is that, as many other presenters besides yourself have said to us, it's a bigger picture that we have to look at here. Certainly it's a more complex situation that we're dealing with.

And so I think what you've presented, for me anyways, it seems to spell out to me the necessity of healthy children from the time of birth and even before birth onward that will certainly stop the stem of children ending up on the streets. And so it's a holistic sort of approach for children and youth.

Ms. Oulton: — You know, it is. And one of the things that was really shocking to me is, when we first started to try and look at adolescent pregnancy, one of the things that people said to us was that you have to also include the young boys in this kind of equation. So we did a number of focus groups, and the focus groups were about 12 each. And they had . . . We did them for young girls up to the age of 12, and then from 12 to 15. We did it for young boys in the same catchment ages.

And it was shocking to me, but 7 out of the 12 girls in those focus groups declared that they had been sexually abused, and many of those children were ending up on the streets. So it's just so holistic that you have to look at the big picture.

One of the things that was poignant for the boys — and most of them came from single-parent families — the boys said, you, government, should legislate that men have to spend time with their children. It was just a very, a very sad commentary on where we've gotten to with young children in the inner city.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — What I mentioned this for in the first place was one of our committee members had been asking some of the other presenters that we had this morning if they could sort of point out any cause or single cause or the, I guess, most pronounced cause of girls ending up on the streets or young people ending up on the streets and being exploited and where that all arises from — like, what's the factor? And, you know, you've added another dimension here. Certainly that gives us a broader view of just what is necessary when a child is born, if they're going to end up in a healthy lifestyle.

But I'm going to turn over some of the questioning, Doris, to the other committee members right now. And Mr. Prebble, being Co-Chair, I think will . . . Why don't you go ahead first this time, Peter?

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Doris, I have a number of questions, but I'm going to leave them until other committee members have had a chance to ask. So I'm going to invite other

committee members first to come in here. Maybe starting . . . Don, do you have questions? June, do you have any questions that you wanted to ask?

Ms. Draude: — Just one. I'm just wondering, Doris, I mean, I was just wondering if you have any studies to determine if there's any kind of link between fetal alcohol syndrome/fetal alcohol effect, and the children that are on the street? Is there any standard to prove that there is any kind of . . .

Ms. Oulton: — We certainly have a lot on FAS/FAE, but one of the difficulties in linking it is that most of our diagnosis has been fairly recent. And so we . . . What we have now is we've got a situation where most of the children who are on the street have not been diagnosed. What we've actually decided that it would be useful to do is to do some things in our correctional institutions because we think that might give us some more than just anecdotal stuff.

I can send your committee what we've got. So we've got bits of it, but we don't have a whole study of it. One of the things that our remand centre has told us, for example, is that they think about 70 per cent of the children who are in the remand centre are probably FAS/FAE. So it's a huge link. And again part of it is that we don't simply know what the incidence is. We've got some, and I'll send you what we've got.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you.

Mr. Yates: — Good afternoon, Doris.

Ms. Oulton: — Hi.

Mr. Yates: — Do you have any specific programs that deal with children involved with — on the street — with sexual exploitation or prostitution within your framework?

Ms. Oulton: — We actually have had a committee working on this for some time and what we've tried to do is to link it again to an overall strategy. The overall strategy is called the youth emergency crisis stabilization system because that's the, if you like, the interface with the children who are on the street and being sexually exploited. So what we've said is that we need a link so those children who are coming into the system, end up with a way that they can be . . . consistently have an alternative. The next presenter has just arrived and I think he's going to talk more about the specific programs.

Ours has been to try and build that connection with that group and bring that group together so that we're all working consistently with a coordinated systems approach. But I think that Wayne will probably talk a little bit more about that later. So that children and youth has not had specifically anything to do with a separate program for that, only the linking one.

Mr. Harper: — Yes, thank you, and good afternoon. I'm just overwhelmed at your presentation because I think it's — for me, at least — it's gone a long way in opening the issue even broader, because I have personally believed for a long time that the issue of the children on the streets is only the tip of the iceberg; that the much bigger part of it is unforeseen and I think you've demonstrated that. And I guess it's the old additive of an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure has certainly been proven here.

Have you developed any strategies as to a mechanism of being able to reach out to those families to prevent the situations as you've outlined of actually happening in the future?

Ms. Oulton: — Absolutely. We've done that specifically with the families of children who are recently born, and we have a very aggressive program. In fact, every child who is born at risk in Manitoba we think that they're now getting an outreach to their parents.

But we also have been working with the group that has . . . I don't know if any of you watched the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) last night called *Letters from a Street Child*. Did you watch that at all? If you haven't, I would absolutely recommend . . . I will have my communication person send you the contact for how to get that. You must look at this tape. This tape talks about children who are living on the street and their exploitation.

We actually have been working with the group that's been putting that together and forming the foundation for that because it talks about a very different kind of group of parents; that you have the parents who are . . . of children who are sexually abused while they are young, but you also have another group of children who very much we have not dealt with who end up on the street regardless of what their parents have done, and we tended not to deal with that group.

So we've also had a lot to do with that particular production. You should have a look at it. It's a very stirring tape. We'll make sure that you get the connection for getting that.

But we worked with a group of parents that were doing that, and whenever you brought that group of parents together to talk about what was their frustration at being able to reach their children who are on the street. That's another very interesting dynamic of this problem, and it too is heart wrenching. So yes we've dealt with it both from the preventive and from the families who've got street kids.

Mr. Harper: — Right. Thank you.

Ms. Jones: — Doris, I'm wondering about . . . what you described to us was very interconnected with departments. I'm wondering if there's interconnection between federal and provincial government here and also and any sort of advice or connections that you've made with First Nations and Aboriginal people in terms of their self-governance and how that's all working for you.

Ms. Oulton: — A very profound question. I co-chaired the joint management committee for CAPC which is — I'm sure you know — the Community Action Plan for Children which is funded by Health Canada, and we strategically did a number of initiatives together. They are funding some of our BabyFirst; they are funding some of our Early Start to try and make sure that we were not doing piecemeal programs because that doesn't do any of us any good. We're all sitting with federally . . . with the programs that were federally funded and then the

funding drops off and what do we do with it. So making sure that right from the beginning we were going to tap into that was really important. So that's one of the ways we've connected.

I also sit on the joint management committee for the National Crime Prevention Councils programs in Manitoba as well. So what we're trying to do is to build not replicate — do co-operative joint functions. And if there's anything there I would recommend if you are looking at this kind of interaction within Saskatchewan is you've got to start building that.

I have been at any number of meetings where people have been shopping for programs; they've gone to 10 different places. I can see very clearly (a) that there is a replication, a duplication of something that's already happening in the community that's not got sustained funding; or (b) that they are at the end of it serving the same populations. So that kind of connection is absolutely vital.

We have had our biggest challenge not working with the federal government but getting the federal government to work with itself. I hope there are no feds around the table but the funding . . . For example, you talked about First Nations. The funding difference between Health Canada and the CAPC programs and the medical services branch is really astounding. I mean they are operating in the same building but they don't talk to one another. They fund differently and they don't treat children the same.

So that's been again one of our really great challenges is to make sure that children are seen as children. They're not seen as on-reserve children or off-reserve children or First Nations, but they're seen as children. And that we try to build that kind of accessing of resources so that we got that seamless ability to respond to children. That's for all of us one of the biggest challenges.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Doris, I understand you've got to catch a plane shortly, so we want to be cognizant of that.

But I want to ask you first, in terms of . . . I want to discuss cost of some of these initiatives which I think we in Saskatchewan need to look at in more detail. The basic message being if we're looking at trying to keep kids off the street, one of the things we should be looking at is an investment in the early years to keep the next generation off the street.

I've got some familiarity with the Hawaii program; I'm not familiar with what you've launched in Manitoba. Is your BabyFirst program now province-wide and what's the cost of getting it off the ground? I'm thinking we've got fairly similar populations so I think these cost figures will be of interest to us here in Saskatchewan.

Ms. Oulton: — Very similar. And one of the things that I would urge, if you're going to do this in Saskatchewan, let's build the resources collectively.

Because you know one of the things that we've got is North Battleford has what we call the BabyFirst project in North Battleford. And they've come to us, they've done the training with us, they've got our manuals, they've got our evaluation. And a lot of the stuff that we've done, we've learned . . . For example, our FAS stuff, it had to be more culturally appropriate, so we've developed those tools and would be delighted to share whatever.

It's about $1.7 millions a year to run the BabyFirst program, and I will send you complete costings of each of the programs so that you can look at that. The biggest challenge for the costing is determining for your population what you think the number of at-risk families are.

We made a grave error when we started. We used the Hawaii Healthy Start model and they predicted . . . theirs was based on believing that about 20 per cent of their children who were born were at risk children.

In fact, what we found in Manitoba — and again you've pointed out I think our populations are pretty similar — in fact we have about 26 per cent of our children who are at risk. And that's a huge costing difference. The baby . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes.

Ms. Oulton: — Sorry.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — No, no. Please go ahead, Doris.

Ms. Oulton: — The Early Start program, which is the next level and it's based on a Parry preschool, is less universal — it's only in 55 sites — and it costs us about $33,000 per site. And that's primarily for a home care visitor. We don't actually have to pay for any of the on-cost sites for offices or equipment or anything like that. That's borne by our host and it's been a very good program for them and for us. So that's about what it costs.

Each of those sites can deal with about 15 families who are at risk depending on the age range of the child and depending on the geographic dispersal. Because, of course, in the North where you've got not a concentrated population, it's much more expensive to run than in the South where you have concentrated populations.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thanks, Doris. We're going to wrap up fairly shortly here, but I just wanted to mention that most of what you've been discussing, and we've been discussing with you, is the preventative measures for at-risk children. And we all recognize that's really valuable.

If I could just sort of take us to the situation on the streets in Winnipeg or whatever, it may be for adolescent youth that are engaged and being exploited through the prostitution activity, what kind of, what would you say . . . I guess, I'm just wondering if there's any sort of comprehensive program in place that has been outlined by the government that's in place in Manitoba to deal with this situation at hand?

Do you feel that you have, for instance, enough drug and alcohol rehab spaces? Do you feel that you have, you know, an ongoing sort of healing environment as young people end up regaining some skills and moving into a self-reliant life?

Ms. Oulton: — One of the things that's absolutely key to what we've been doing is the gang prevention stuff because one of the things that we know that has increased street life for children is the exploitation of those children by gangs as a source of income for them.

So the fact that we've had a gang coalition — and we worked with the gang coalition as well — and that that's been taken as seriously by all orders of government in Manitoba, including First Nations has been really, really an important part of dealing with the street exploitation of children. And in fact, the gang activity has gone down and we hope that means that the exploitation of children has gone down. We think that that's a really important thing.

We think that making sure that you're working with the abuse, the drug and alcohol abuse programs are really important. As well, we're not convinced particularly in the northern remote areas that we've got the most effective drug and alcohol abuse programs for teenagers. In fact, we would question that we do, that what we've got is primarily drug and alcohol abuse programs that work in the school, and most of our children who are at risk by that age are not in the schools.

So we think it's the wrong focus for them, for the delivery of the programs, that it misses a lot of our children.

And we also think that we are not even touching the iceberg when it comes to other abuses like solvent sniffers. I mean those are really big problems for us and the places where they've worked, where we've worked at a solution have been where there's been a community solution.

For example Shamattawa has been a really big challenge for us in Manitoba, and when the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) became involved and said that they were going to look at this as well, that's when we started to have some movement in the community of Shamattawa. So that kind of partnership with law enforcement agencies, whatever stripe they are, is critical.

And I have had some very interesting experiences dealing with police in Winnipeg as well as the RCMP. The RCMP have actually come to us and asked us to be partners and to help them write their business plan. So we thought that that was a huge breakthrough because they were seeing the importance of building in this kind of issue as well.

But the Winnipeg police have also . . . they've all seen this program. And I don't know about how it is in Saskatchewan, but beat cops tend to be — excuse me here for a minute — a pretty cynical bunch. They really truly have seen it all. And the big thing that they said to me when I'd made this presentation was how many of these home visitors can I have access to, how many of these can I make referrals to? Can I make referrals?

So it was very much them seeing that they needed to have a partner in this and that they were more than willing to be the partner. So I was really pleased with that. So that's the important partnership I think we all have to build in when we look at the sexually exploited issue for children on the streets.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Well thank you very much, Doris. And it's just been wonderfully advantageous to us to have you present as you have. And we thank you so much and all the very best with your work in the days ahead. Thank you.

Ms. Oulton: — Thank you very much.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Doris, I want to thank you too, and I look forward . . . we look forward to getting that cost information. That'll be very helpful. And also the other things that you've indicated you would send us; we really appreciate it. And I know you've got to slip away, so thank you.

Ms. Oulton: — Okay, thank you.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Good afternoon. I'm just checking out your name here. It's Wayne Harrison.

Mr. Harrison: — Okay, you're welcome. Just excuse me for one second. They left the door open and I don't want anybody walking by here, so I'm just going to be one second to close the door. Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you very much, Wayne. Thanks for joining us, and we're going to have an introduction and each committee member will introduce themselves to you. And we're very pleased, by the way, that you could take the time to join us. You can be sure that, because you are sort of in the action and have seen a great deal and have worked out a great deal as far as the exploitation of children on the streets, that we'll most likely have a lot of questions for you at the end of your presentation, Wayne.

But first of all, my name is Arlene Julé and I'm one of the Co-Chairs of the committee in Saskatchewan to deal with the exploitation of children on the streets, so Arlene Julé and . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — My name is Peter Prebble, Wayne, and I'm also one of the Co-Chairs, and I represent one of the Saskatoon ridings.

Ms. Jones: — And my name is Carolyn Jones. I'm the MLA from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Harper: — Ron Harper, MLA, Regina Northeast.

Mr. Yates: — Kevin Yates, MLA, Regina Dewdney.

Ms. Draude: — June Draude, I'm the MLA from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Toth: — And Don Toth, the MLA from Moosomin.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We'll introduce our staff as well, Wayne. Stan, why don't you start?

Mr. Mustatia: — Stan Mustatia, I work for the Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Pritchard: — Hi, Wayne. I'm Randy Pritchard, technical adviser to the committee.

Ms. Woods: — Hello, Wayne. It's Margaret Woods. I'm the committee Clerk.

Ms. Young: — Deb Young, and I'm from House business, Executive Council.

Mr. Williams: — Hi, Wayne. I'm Brian Williams and I'm with Saskatchewan Social Services.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, thank you. I think we have everybody introduced. Wayne, maybe you could just give us a little bit of background, first of all, in your work and what it is exactly that you do. And then possibly we'll go into a presentation that you have hopefully prepared in as far as the role of the police in this whole picture and what you have found valuable and effective and helpful as far as moving children into safety and into a wholesome lifestyle.

So we are hoping to hear of the very great things you've done and also the difficulties you've encountered. So we'll let you go ahead.

Mr. Harrison: — Okay. First of all I've been with the Winnipeg Police Service now for 21 years and I've done a variety of different divisions: homicide, major crimes, robberies, squad, and everything. I split, came into the vice division four years ago and like everybody else who had been out in the street for a number of years and worked in these districts, you always come in contact with a periphery of prostitution — whether it's through drugs, through break-ins to people's houses for money to supply drugs. Prostitution and drugs always seem to go hand in hand.

And I thought after 17 years that I knew quite a bit about prostitution, but until you actually get involved in working with the issues and that, you really don't have a very good idea as to what the true issues are of prostitution. And that's why I appreciate the opportunity as a detective sergeant in the vice division to come and speak to people that actually can make the decisions and maybe have some input into how these, how these various legislations or various thoughts and programs are developed. Because I think we do have a different perspective on things, and a lot of the time we see what works and what doesn't work on a day-to-day basis. And some of the frustrations we feel that lead to the cynicism that Doris talked about — it's very real; we do come into quite a bit of frustration in dealing with it.

I got a little bit of a different tone on what I was presenting on today when I was speaking with some of the people in Manitoba here. They told me that you were interested primarily in the towing of vehicles legislation, and how that's affected, and what use it's had in terms of the youth. I've prepared a presentation of about 15 minutes on that, but I'm certainly free to cover any other areas that you feel need to be covered. I've been involved on other committees, etc., within the province but the focus of this brief presentation has been the towing of the vehicles. So if it meets with your committee's approval, we can just carry on from there.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes. Certainly, Wayne, go ahead. There is that, but I know very well that as a police sergeant, you would have so much more information too, and we need to somehow hear from that. If we don't hear from you regarding that today, possibly we can be in touch again.

But, of course, you have your presentation ready, so I think it's most appropriate that you go at it that way.

Mr. Harrison: — Okay. First of all, I'd like to thank the province of Saskatchewan for showing interest in our dealings and ways we've dealt with street prostitution primarily, and the sexual exploitation of young children through street prostitution.

I'll briefly cover the intent of the legislation, the towing of vehicles legislation, the legislation itself, and the alternative measures program known as johns schools to which the legislation is built around, some of the statistics we've had in the year that it's been operating, and the impact this legislation has had — not only from a police perspective — but also from the prostitutes and the communities themselves that are affected by street prostitution. Again, throughout, I'll ask and invite questions from the group.

In Winnipeg there are four different strolls that are located primarily in the core area of Winnipeg. Only one of these strolls could be in what's considered a business area. The others are in residential areas with businesses on the main thoroughfares.

The homosexual tract is a little bit different because it's located in a densely populated area downtown that's comprised of numerous high-rise apartment buildings.

All of the strolls — with the exception of the homosexual tract — are in areas that can be categorized as communities where people with lower incomes live.

Previous police enforcement showed that the majority of persons using the services of street prostitutes in these areas travelled to these areas from various parts of Winnipeg. The primary method of travelling to these areas was using their own personal vehicles. The citizens in the community complained that although only a handful of people that lived on those streets owned vehicles, there were between one and two hundred vehicles a night driving down their street. They were extremely frustrated with the problems in the area.

The seizing of the johns' vehicles was viewed as a way to add serious consequences for those who exploit young persons, by seizing their vehicles and having them forfeited to the Crown upon conviction for the offence. It also further deters street prostitution in general and reduces traffic in the effected areas, thereby making the community safer.

This legislation was crafted using the john school as a successful alternative of measures. And this allows the johns to retrieve their vehicle if they are arrested for a communicating offence and decide to enrol in a john school.

The legislation itself is an amendment under the provincial Highway Traffic Act. It's formally titled seizure of vehicles in prostitution-related offences. It came into effect on March 1 of 1999, and it covers three sections of the Criminal Code: section

211, which covers the transporting of persons to or from a common bawdy house; section 212, which is a procuring section; and section 213 of the code which is a communicating section which is one that's commonly used by police during street sweeps.

For every arrest made under these sections, where a vehicle is used, the police now seize the vehicle. The vehicle then can be released if the government — or the magistrate in this case — is satisfied that: (1) the vehicle was a stolen vehicle; (2) the occupants of the vehicle are eligible for and consent to be dealt with by way of alternative measures, which is the john school.

If the registered owner is not the person that's arrested for the communicate offence, the registered owner may make an application before a magistrate, pay a hundred dollars, and have a hearing. If they satisfy the magistrate the driver was in possession without their knowledge or they satisfy the magistrate they could not have reasonably known the driver was going to use it for the offence, they have their vehicle returned to them. If they are successful in their argument, they also have their hundred dollar fee returned to them as well.

The registered owner can also retrieve the vehicle by depositing a sum of money or a security deposit equal to the value of the vehicle.

When the police seize the vehicle, they serve a vehicle seizure form on the driver. The vehicle is impounded by the towing company under contract to the city of Winnipeg. The accused is processed in a normal manner and, if eligible, has seven days to register for the johns school diversion program.

There is no eligibility for johns school for any people involved with children, any of these offences involving children. In other words, it's only for the adults that have the opportunity to be diverted to a johns school. If you are the owner of a vehicle driving that vehicle, communicate with a person under the age of 18 or somebody you believe to be under the age of 18, your vehicle is impounded until your court case is resolved.

Under this legislation also, a copy of this vehicle seizure form is required to be sent via registered mail to the registered owner to notify them. If the person is not eligible for the johns school or elects to proceed to trial, there are two possible dispositions for the vehicle.

If there's no finding of guilt, the vehicle is released if it has not been released prior to court by one of the other means. If there is a finding of guilt, the vehicle is forfeited to the government to be sold. If the vehicle's value has decreased while awaiting the disposition, there is a provision to recover the difference between the seized value of the vehicle and the vehicle's current value.

Any monies — and this is written right into the legislation — that any monies generated from this legislation will be given to assist any groups or organizations that, in the government's opinion, support or deliver programs to reduce the occurrence of the offences related to prostitution.

That's an overview of the legislation itself. If there are any questions specific to the legislation.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Well we'll just go around the table here. Is there anyone that would like to present any questions in regard to . . . Okay, Carolyn.

Ms. Jones: — Just one quick question about johns school. If they're eligible for that diversion, do they pay a fee, a registration fee to go to johns school, or is their vehicle their registration fee, kind of . . .

Mr. Harrison: — No. Actually I'll cover the johns school in detail a little bit later because I think it's a very important component. And I'm not aware . . . I believe they operate one in Prince Albert but I'm not sure if Regina or Saskatoon operate a johns school at this time.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — No, Saskatoon doesn't have a johns school, Wayne.

Mr. Harrison: — They don't have one in Saskatoon?

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — They don't.

Mr. Harrison: — I'll cover the johns school in detail. But the long and short — yes, they pay a $400 fee to attend this class.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Wayne, I've got some questions about the legislation.

Mr. Harrison: — Sure.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — My first question is with respect to . . . I'm obviously interested in the whole element of reducing prostitution-related activity and the activity of johns. Just to focus in on johns who are seeking sex with children under the age of 18 for a minute — how many vehicles have been seized, with vehicles being owned or driven by . . . vehicles being driven by johns who were seeking sex with children?

Mr. Harrison: — We have made two arrests in the past year specifically for that offence. And it gets into a difficult area from policing. The federal government has recently changed the laws for the procuring section in that the person doesn't necessarily have to be under the age of 18, they just have to believe them to be under the age of 18.

That assists the police greatly in terms of making arrests for the new procuring section, but it is a very difficult enforcement because we have to have the age of the undercover. We have to be able to convey in a course of a normal curbside conversation that I'm only a 15-year-old girl without it coming across as being an overt suggestion to try and entrap a person, if you will.

So it's a difficult type of area to run an enforcement program on. We haven't dedicated the time that I would like to see dedicated to it, and that's because our unit itself is a seven-person unit that also covers a variety of other aspects including Internet pornography, gaming issues, liquor issues, as well as prostitution. So it's very difficult to devote the necessary time and resources to it.

One of those vehicles is still being held. It's been held since last October awaiting a court date for a communicate with a person believed to be under the age of 18. That vehicle probably has a value of about $8,000 and this will be our first challenge through the courts to see what the disposition will be.

Our understanding is that . . . We've spoken to the Crown attorneys and we've asked, and they've been told as well, to take a hard line on this. And because this is going to be our test case through the courts, we're not prepared to entertain any lesser pleas. We want to see what the court's disposition is going to be and in turn what the public reaction and perceptions are going to be, by putting this case through.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — With respect to the enforcement of the impounding of the vehicles, is it your impression that . . . Well, let me just back up for a minute. Just to clarify your four strolls — are you finding that in effect the child sex trade is operating on all of these strolls and is it integrated in with the adult sex trade or do you have a separate kiddie stroll in . . .

Mr. Harrison: — Yes. Well the homosexual track primarily is young people and I think that that's . . . You know, without making too many broad generalizations, there was a time 20 years ago when I could stand out in that corner and I would have vehicles stopping for me. If I went out there now at my age and my size, the vehicles drive by me. So you learn a lesson very quickly that the youth is a prize commodity in that track. And we do have to use younger people in that area.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Wayne, what are the other . . .

Mr. Harrison: — The other . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Oh, sorry, go ahead, Wayne.

Mr. Harrison: — The other stroll with adults or . . . There is a kiddie area however it's not as established as if you go, you know, past this certain corner you're going to be into the kids' area. They do intermingle with the adult prostitutes that are working but primarily they're in the . . . in one of two strolls. But there isn't a situation where if you cross an imaginary boundary you're into the kiddy stroll; we don't have that in Winnipeg.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Right. The final question I want to ask related to this is — and it'll be clear why I asked the other one just now — are you finding that your efforts at seizing vehicles and tackling the overall prostitution issue along the four strolls is reducing the activity of children on the strolls and johns seeking sex with children on the strolls? In other words, by tackling the overall issue of johns seeking sex along the strolls through impounding vehicles, are you impacting on reducing the involvement of johns in the child sex trade beyond the two arrests that you've just made?

Mr. Harrison: — I think we prefer to look at the legislation, as the legislation was designed to add an additional serious consequence for anybody who's arrested for soliciting children for sexual purposes. That was the intent of the legislation. The added bonus that we see is it's a great deterrent for the . . . for the rest of the street prostitution trade.

So the primary focus of the legislation was let's make this something that's going to add a serious consequence for anybody who is strolling . . . or cruising areas looking particularly for children, and as an added bonus we've got all the rest of the general deterrent to the street prostitution problems we encounter.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thanks, Wayne, I know you've got more to present. Are there any other committee members who have questions specifically?

Mr. Yates: — Okay, Wayne, what would happen with a vehicle that was say a rental car that somebody used to pick up an underage minor involved in the sex trade? You said if they own it there's no opportunity to get the vehicle back, but if it was a rental car what is . . . or is there some alternate punishment for the individual who'd use that car — like a fine equal to the vehicle's value or something, or . . .

Mr. Harrison: — Okay, yes I see where you are going with that. First of all built into the provisions, the registered owner — if they're not involved and had no reason to believe that their vehicle would be used for this offence — can apply to get the vehicle back. And that's what happens in the situations when we do have rental cars.

Are there provisions under the statute specifically to see greater penalties if we . . . if they were driving a $20,000 vehicle that they rented? No there's nothing specific in there, but I'm sure once our first standard is . . . or once our first decision is given that supports the legislation, that it will certainly be a mitigating factor that — especially if we could prove the intent of the person to avoid having a vehicle seized by going out and renting a vehicle for that night — I'm certain that that would be raised as a mitigating factor. And it's something we're aware of that we would certainly research. If it's a Winnipeg guy who goes out and rents a vehicle on a 24-hour basis, I think we could attempt to prove a reasonable inference that he did that for the sole purpose of avoiding this type of legislation. We're hoping that that would be a mitigating factor.

Mr. Yates: — Wayne, just one more quick question. As you know, the court system and all the police time, prosecution time, and the cost to put somebody through court for an offence like this, taking their vehicle — is it in fact cost-effective as a deterrent? Do you believe it's working?

Mr. Harrison: — Yes, I do. And I've got feedback. Basically it's from our observations and the observations of the guys that work the cruiser cars in those areas, that there isn't the volume of traffic that's out there. That's the first perception we got. It was the case when the legislation was enacted a year ago now, and it's still the case now, that the traffic in those areas is down.

We also get that from the community — that the traffic is down in their areas. We get that from the outreach workers as well. They've told us that — the outreach workers that go out and do harm reduction for the street prostitutes — they've told us that they've had complaints from the street prostitutes about the number of vehicles and the lack of customers in the area. So we

know that the legislation coupled with enforcement has had an impact.

But that does . . . it raises another concern from a policing perspective in that now the community is seeing what they believe to be more prostitutes out on the street for the simple matter that instead of having a customer once every 40 minutes on a busy night, they're now out there for a couple of hours; and the perception is that there's a lot more prostitutes out on the corners, when in fact that isn't the case.

We hope that that's an opportunity for the social agencies that deal with intervention programs to maybe see this as a time that these women are maybe willing — women and men — maybe willing to accept and become involved in some of the other programs that are available to them.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. I was just going to get you, if we could, Wayne, to expound a little bit, as I think this legislation had to come in under The Highway Traffic Act. Is that correct?

Mr. Harrison: — Yes, it did.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes. And you know that was the avenue you took in order, you know, to be able to put it through. Can you just explain that a little bit to the committee? About why you had to do it.

Mr. Harrison: — Well it was always believed . . . and in Manitoba they have . . . the philosophy is they've done it for impaired driving offences, etc. . . . that to increase the punishment, take away what's deemed to be a privilege as opposed to a right. They've attacked Manitoba drivers' licences and given more strength to suspending drivers' licences.

There's provisions in the john school that if they enroll in this alternative measure known as john school and fail to complete it, because they've got their vehicle back, there's provision to go in and suspend their driver's licence for a three-month period for a non-compliance with an alternative measures contract. So they've built that in so that a person can't register for johns school, get their vehicle back, then not go to johns school, and we have no avenue back.

So they've built it around The Highway Traffic Act because it's something that they believe will stand . . . withstand any constitutional challenge. It withstood a constitutional challenge very, very similar to this for the impaired driving where they sought to seize vehicles for a longer period of time in Manitoba. So I think that's where they felt that this was the strongest avenue to go and to get legislation that will withstand any legal challenges.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Just one more question. We were talking a little while ago with people from Alberta regarding their PCHIP legislation and the authority that that legislation gives, the extra dose of authority it gives to police officers to apprehend children that are in danger on the streets.

And we're wondering here — or at least I am — whether or not Manitoba has thought of . . . has looked at that legislation — and we have — and are you thinking about having similar legislation put in place in Alberta? Or do you think it would be advantageous? Or a deterrent? Or what do you think?

Mr. Harrison: — I personally, I'm a big supporter of the legislation in Alberta. I believe that any tools that we can have and put to our . . . put to good use in terms of: (1) removing the children from the immediate risk; and, (2) having an opportunity for them to get comfortable in a setting before they talk to us.

It's one of the more difficult interviews that I have to do is to try and get a young person who's been betrayed either truthfully or through their beliefs — they've been betrayed throughout a series of time by a system — and then go into a room and tell them place all our faith in you . . . or place all your faith in me in the next 15 minutes and we're going to, you know, do this. It's very difficult to get that support from them.

Whereas if you have a period of time — whether it's a three-day period — you can go in there on a couple or three occasions and show the willingness and explain in greater detail how you want this to happen. So I'm a great big supporter of this legislation.

We use the child welfare Act in Manitoba that says we can apprehend any child who's in need of protection. And that's one of the difficulties.

Another difficulty in enforcing is we'll see a child who's out in an area known for prostitution, who's standing on a corner. We have one of . . . or one of three options. We can arrest that child immediately, as a child in need of protection, and take them to a child welfare facility where they are essentially turned over to the province for immediate counselling. We can attempt to communicate with that person, thereby involving them in a criminal offence and rely on the courts to put the child into the proper programs. Or we allow . . . obviously allow that child to be picked up a couple of times and look for an enforcement angle from there. Obviously that's not a chance or a position we would ever take.

So we are in a position where do we use the courts to mandate them into a program or do we have to go out and use the child welfare Act and rely on child welfare agencies to put them into the program. That's our preferred route and nine times out of ten, we'll simply apprehend the child without attempting to make a communicate arrest.

That skewers our prostitution-related arrest, because on many nights we'll go out and pick up a child and simply detain them or take them as a child in need of protection with very little report documentation from our perspective. And hopefully, we rely on the child welfare agencies to do their work to put this child into . . . and reduce the risk for them. But it skewers our statistics because yes, that person was arrested in a prostitution area. We believe that arresting them isn't the answer, and relying on an appropriate intervention is the better alternative.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Right. You speak of the scenario being that you would go and arrest a child that's on the street, but of course there are the trick pads and so on and you know

perpetrators that would sort of almost lock children in an area, in an apartment, in whatever it may be. So under the legislation that you have in Manitoba, do you have the authority to enter into that sort of a scenario if it was at a trick pad and . . . to do emergency intervention like that and then to refer the child to the welfare agencies or do you have to get a warrant or whatever in order to do that, in order to go into the building?

Mr. Harrison: — Yes. We can use the . . . if we believe that there's an immediate risk to a child, we can enter any premise under our legislation — that's the current legislation that's in place under the child welfare Act — so, yes we could go in. We would have to have a fairly high standard to prove that there was some type of imminent danger to a child, and I can't think of an incident where we've used it in that situation, to be honest with you.

We do have a problem and I know Doris Mae Oulton spoke of it briefly with the gang intervention. We have gang problems in Winnipeg. We have gangs that run certain corners. We know that if there are not gang girls working on those corners — as they're called — they will work for the gang and pay the gang a certain amount of money per night to stand on that corner as a gang girl and with whatever protection that affords them on the street.

So we do have a serious problem with gangs. Our youth division did a major investigation last year — and the males are starting to wend their way through the courts — where it was crack . . . cocaine was exchanged for sexual favours with young children in Winnipeg. The majority of the children involved were 13, 14, 15-year-old females and I believe there's 14 to 18 males that are before the courts that were using . . . trading sex for sexual . . . or trading drugs for sexual favours. So that's wending its way through the courts.

The first one last week pled guilty and received a sentence of three years with no prior criminal record. That is the sentence that we were satisfied with. I think it's, considering the lack of criminal record of the person, you know, that is . . . that will send a message. And, if they're successful in the other 14 or 15 males that are left, I think that's going to send a very strong message.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, well thank you, Wayne. Is there anyone else on the committee who would like to ask a further question?

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Wayne, did you have another portion of your presentation? I sensed earlier on that you weren't . . . you asked us whether we wanted to ask questions about the, you know, about The Highway Traffic Act amendments. Do you have other elements of your strategy that you want to discuss with us?

Mr. Harrison: — Well there's a couple of other points. One, if the group is willing — I don't know what your awareness level is of john schools in Saskatoon and Regina and the province of Saskatchewan — if you like, I've got just three or four minutes prepared on john schools because I really believe that these are a tremendous alternative to a court process. And there's a couple of . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Sure. Why don't you present that, Wayne.

Mr. Harrison: — Okay. Because this legislation, the towing of vehicles legislation, is closely tied with the alternative measures program of the Criminal Code, I'll give you an overview of the john school.

The john school is a pre-charge alternative measures. In other words, the formal information charging the person with the offence is held pending the successful completion of a john school.

The john school itself consists of three parts. There is an initial interview which determines the john's eligibility. The interview and the record of the john are the determining factors for determining their acceptance. The john must admit their guilt and sign a contract stating they will complete the john school program. Upon acceptance, they are now entitled to retrieve their vehicle which had been towed. The legislation requires the registered owner to attend to retrieve the vehicle.

There's a further fee of $400 for each john that attends john school and there is no flexibility in the fee. We don't have a sliding scale. This money goes directly to fund a similar alternative measures program that's run for prostitutes who are arrested for a communicating offence. The prostitutes attend a three-day, camp-type situation at no cost with all the costs borne by the funds raised through the john school.

The john school itself is a one-day setting where johns are educated on the various aspects of prostitution. Presentations are made by a Crown attorney regarding the impact of a criminal record in the court process. A vice officer talks about the realities of prostitution and the dynamics of pimping. A nurse who treats street prostitutes speaks on the health risks associated with this dangerous lifestyle.

Members of the communities who are affected by prostitution speak on the problems that johns have created in their own communities.

A mother who had two teenage children exploited through prostitution speaks on the effect that this type of exploitation had on her family. This is a very, very dynamic, very emotional presentation made by a mother who has the courage to come and speak to this group of males.

Former prostitutes speak on the true nature of prostitution, why they were out there, how old they were when they started, and what the factors were that led to them becoming involved.

At the end of the day a psychologist specializing in sexually deviant behaviour explains the reasons that men use prostitutes, the long-term effect on the well being, and ways to modify their behaviour to prevent a reoccurrence. Upon conclusion, they have to . . . the johns themselves have to attend an exit interview which is done within a week of the johns school to assess the impact of the johns schools on their lifestyle choices.

I really am a big believer in the johns schools and the success of it. We've had judges attend and view it for a day. And as the

Crown attorney pointed out, that she had worked in child abuse and worked in various things, said she's never been to a day-long program where she had seen so much remorse and changes, or apparent changes, in thought processes occur, that occurred in this one day.

Part of the johns school program now, obviously I alluded to, was the monies that's generated goes to a prostitution-diversion program. There's also a pre-charge alternative that's run for street prostitutes that are arrested.

We do have youths who are probably of the age, depending on the maturity level, as young as 15 that can attend this diversion program. We don't have the numbers required to run one specifically for youths, but we do believe that it's a valuable enough tool and informational setting that we believe they should be required to attend.

This is run similar to the johns school. However, there is a lot more emphasis on cultural issues and it's more of an educational plus awareness program to let them know what is available to them in the community. We have legal presentations done for them regarding children and how they can be successful in applying to have their children if their children have been placed in care.

There's issues of police I go out and present, and it's a very interesting two hours to sit and speak with a group of 13, 14, 15 street prostitutes. You certainly learn a lot and you're certainly put on the spot very quickly by that group. They want to know and they want various answers on the law itself, so we do presentations on that. We cover domestic issues, healthy relationships. What is a healthy relationship? Goals. If you ask a 16-year-old what their goals are in this type of setting, it's amazing what their goals are. I mean they really are, you know, they're talented people.

They have a lot of positives in their life and all that is stressed throughout this, that this can be a positive, that their life doesn't have to take the avenue. The testimonials from former street workers who have been successful in leaving the street, probably the most powerful part of it and that's used very early in the session.

It's a three-day camp. It's away from Winnipeg. We take them out of town. I've been the driver of the bus that takes them out of Winnipeg for this three-day program. They're provided with healthy meals. It's a holistic . . . We have a camp nurse that's out there; there's daycare that's available. And we've had a lot of successes with this program.

People — and I guess success has got to be measured in various terms — but with us we've seen people that have enrolled in a program, that have gone to beyond . . . or adult upward-bound which is an adult education program. People that have gone to the first one are still in upgrading their education skills. Those type of successes are very important to us.

And probably the most gratifying part is when they've completed the three-day session, a lot of them don't want to go home. They don't want to go back to the . . . and put themselves back at risk to going out on the street. And that's where the second part of this is something that . . . I'm sitting on a couple of committees and we need safe houses. We need to build on a program with success like this. We get a three-day indoctrination for them, but we don't really have anywhere we can take them to and that's the next level that we need. And that's a shortcoming and that's a gap in our continuum that we have tried to address and we're working towards addressing.

One of the problems we do have in Manitoba is — I've sat at a table at a provincial committee on sexually exploited children — we do have the problem in that should we make this a locked facility or should we make it a volunteer-type of enrolment? It's a very difficult issue to address.

From our perspective and I'll speak on behalf of the police service, it's very difficult for me to comprehend apprehending a 14-year-old youth who's at risk, who's obviously involved in being exploited sexually through prostitution, to take them to a home and have them, the 14-year-old, make the option or decide whether that's what they want to do. And if they want to do . . . if they want to stay, they stay; if they don't want to stay, that they can leave again.

I find that very difficult to accept and from a police perspective we always push — give us a period of containment where we can go in, intervene, perhaps with not just two policemen going into a room and speaking to a person, but a policeman and somebody that we built a rapport with from the street who is successful in leaving the streets, to go in and more or less vouch for our credibility. Establish that credibility and in turn begin to successfully and dramatically increase the numbers of people that we prosecute for pimping of young children.

And I think that that's . . . the problem we have of course is not everybody at the table is in agreement that it should be a locked facility. And we've studied, I believe it's Halifax has got a program that's up and running that is not a locked facility. Obviously we're looking to Alberta for their statistics and the successes that they've had.

Both areas have had successes and what we keep . . . what I keep saying, is let's put a proposal forward with both parts of it and let's let the legislators decide what they want to do, and how they want to craft the legislation. But either way you're going to have successes.

Let's just get moving on it and let's get the successes rolling, regardless of our personal beliefs at the table. If there's something we can do, let's get the procedure going.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Right.

Mr. Harrison: — Safe houses are a big concern in Manitoba; we don't have them.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes, well we certainly need more here too, Wayne. Wayne, I've just . . . this is a little bit sort of removed from the discussion we've just had right now, but I'm just wondering if you, for the committee members' benefit, can give them sort of a profile of a pimp.

Mr. Harrison: — Well, typically I would say 80 per cent are

going to be male. We do have a lot of females that will pimp. It's amazing that a girl, a young girl or a young boy can be turned out which is a street term for making them working them work the street. We've had them in as little as 3 hours they can be successful in turning them out, and then it goes that sometimes they'll work months on grooming a person.

Drugs can be part of the grooming process where they're given drugs for a period of time and then they're told that: (a) they either owe for the drugs they were given, or (b) they're not getting any more drugs from them until they go out and work the street. They are very manipulative; they are very, very cunning people.

They look to separate the group of . . . the person from their support networks. If they can get a young person away from any support network that's available to them, isolate them, and become in effect their support network, that's when they're successful in recruiting the girls or boys. That's what they look for.

And in essence what I see the legislation in Alberta is doing is using some of the techniques that the pimps use, and I know that might not be a correct way of wording it, but in essence we become their support network. We become their only outside contact. We're the ones bringing them the Burger King hamburgers and their cigarettes and everything else. We're the ones who are coming to them and offering them the supports that they are not getting or that they've been isolated from.

It's a trick that the pimps have used to turn these women out and I don't see why we couldn't use them in a much, much more controlled and much better setting to use it to our advantage to show these women and these girls that there is support.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes. I would imagine that Crossroads in Edmonton is doing that and I know that Street Teams in Calgary is doing that very thing — just as you've described it.

They are there for support for the girls. They build a friend relationship with these people that are on the street — Street Teams will do this — and they also, you know, any time you want to talk, I'm here for you. It is the Burger King; it is that sort of a setting for talking. And that gradually builds a trust relationship where, where the girls have . . . know they have a choice, and a safe choice or a detrimental, painful choice with their pimps.

But when I was talking to you about the pimps or asking about them, what I was hoping that you might be able to help us with or to realize is the background sort of life of a pimp. Like, where do they come from? Why do they end up to be pimps? What kind of psychology goes on here with people that end up being part of this chain of exploitation and these people that are called pimps?

Mr. Harrison: — Well, typically, I think you see a lot of similarities in terms of their upbringings, the involvement that they've had with police agencies, their involvement and their role models that they've followed throughout their life. A lot of them have the same or similar backgrounds from those that end up working the street, and they use that or exploit that for their purposes.

A lot of them will come from abusive backgrounds. A lot of them come from situations where they have observed abuse within their home. A lot of the pimps themselves may have been, may have been sexually exploited. A lot of the pimps themselves are drug traffickers, and they use these street prostitutes as a way of supplementing their income.

Once they have them hooked on drugs, these . . . the monies that are required for them to, for them to live that lifestyle are exorbitant and they can't make it any other way, and they will put them out on the street. And not only will they give them a little bit of drug to keep them working, but they will use it for that purpose.

So there's a real mix. The gang culture thrives because of the acceptance factor. These children want to belong. And I use it when I speak with parents about some of the risks. I tell them that how often do you tell your child, your 14-year-old or your 15-year-old that you love them. A pimp will tell them that in the first night — if that's what it takes — and they will say it with all the meaning and sincerity that they can muster in order to get a child to work.

It's very, very easy, and every child wants to be accepted and wants to feel that love and that need and wants to make that connection. And the pimps in large, they're very, very skilled manipulators.

You mentioned Street Teams. I don't know if your group has seen the film that they've done out called *The Butterfly Collectors*.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I've seen it, yes.

Mr. Harrison: — Yes. I think that that's probably one of the most . . . We use it as part of our johns school as well. It's one of the most dynamic presentations that, that shows . . . that demonstrates how easy it is for a pimp to manipulate a situation to get somebody to work for them.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes. There are some very good videos that are wonderful helps along the way.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Is there anybody else that has a question? Wayne, we want to thank you very much for taking time with us this afternoon, for all your advice, for an excellent presentation, and for responding to all our questions.

And we're looking forward to examining what you've done in Manitoba even more closely. But this gives us an excellent overview and a really good start in terms of thinking about what we might do here.

Mr. Harrison: — Okay. I'd like to thank you for allowing me to come out and present. As I say it's not very often that . . . And I think you'll find within your own Saskatoon Police Service and the Regina Police Service — I know some of the guys there — there's a lot of grassroots opinion.

And don't exclude the police, if I can make our own plug here. Because I'll tell you, we can tell you very quickly what'll work in legislation and what may appear to be nothing but smoke and mirrors. We know what it takes to get some of the jobs done. And in this piece of legislation we worked closely with the government on. We're working on a couple of other safer communities legislations.

Include the grassroots people. Because, I'll tell you, it will come to benefit and there's a lot of very skilled people in both of the major cities' police services that I've dealt with.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Absolutely. Well thank you for that. We've certainly been I guess informed to make sure that that does happen, by other people. And so we're going to make sure that we do have the police forces involved.

There's a wealth of knowledge there and understanding of the situation. And also a wealth of caring. I know that 99.9 per cent of police officers out there care about the children and about justice and law and order and so naturally we are going to draw on that — that caring and that knowledge.

And we thank you so much, Wayne, for being part of our preparation for what we are going to be doing in Saskatchewan to hopefully work towards the end of the exploitation of children on our streets. So thank you very much, Wayne.

Mr. Harrison: — You're welcome. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 3:20 p.m.