



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

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

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Humboldt

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Saskatoon Meewasin

Don Toth
Moosomin

Kevin Yates
Regina Dewdney

The committee met at 7 p.m.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Well, committee members are all sitting here ready to rock and so we're . . . we just want to welcome both of you here tonight and thank you very much for coming to present your perspective of things, and also to . . . we want you to know it's an education for us always. And we're going to listen so that we can hear what you have to say and to be able to, hopefully, come up with some recommendations as far as legislators, and what could be done within the province to assist in stopping the sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

And for the committee member's sake, and I think that some of you have met our presenters already, but we have Ron Savidan with us. He's a staff sergeant of the La Ronge RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) detachment, and we have Brenda Clark with us also — Cst. Brenda Clark joining us too. So we welcome you.

I'm going to ask the committee members, on your behalf, to mention their names, so that you kind of know who you're talking to.

Mr. Toth: — Don Toth, MLA Moosomin.

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

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I'm Arlene Julé and I'm the MLA for Humboldt.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I'm Peter Prebble, and I'm a member of the legislature for Saskatoon Greystone and the other Co-Chair of the committee.

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

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

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

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Though we have received from you, Sgt. Savidan, the document, a very to-the-point document in summary of what you see and some recommendations and we thank you for that. It was very clear and concise.

However, we'd like you to expound a little bit and if you could go forward with your presentation we'd appreciate it.

Mr. Savidan: — Yes, I will. I brought with me Cst. Brenda Clark. She's one of my better investigators, and she's also tasked with investigating child abuse cases and, in particular, child sexual cases. So she's done quite a few of them in our district and she's specially trained in that area; and the police have these investigators throughout our detachment system.

Now, I don't know if you want me to read this or not, but the . . . in 1994 we started collecting information extensively on this . . . on sexual abuse of people. It started with Bernardo and Homolka in Ontario, and that's when we started — in 1994 — to extensively study and gather and analyze our sexual offences

investigations.

And that's why I used those statistics because I gleaned that from these reports and they're very, very accurate.

Of the 240 cases that we had here in La Ronge since 1994, 194 of them were confirmed sexual assault cases. And of that, over half — 60 per cent — of them involved children under 14.

It looks like when you look at the statistics from 1994 that the pendulum swung where it's . . . it hit a high in 1994; we had 15 victims of crime under 14 to '97 where we had 26. And it seems to be going down, however, I have to caution you that not all the time are we . . . are sexual abuse cases reported to the police. And I don't always believe these statistics.

It's going on all around us and we see evidence of it in the homes as we're investigating other offences. We see some children living in dangerous conditions, exposed to becoming victims. And these children are living in homes that drug and alcohol abuse is prevalent. It's used and abused daily and weekly. And these children are exposed to predators, if I could use that word, who just are looking for self-gratification and they do so with drugs, alcohol, and sex.

Ninety per cent of these children that were sexually abused knew the person that abused them. And over 50 per cent of them, it was a relative or a parent who abused them sexually — over half. The idea of a stranger walking into a community and sexually assaulting children happens, but only in 10 per cent of the cases.

I gave a typical example of what my officers face in our community and our district where a child is sexually assaulted and it comes from a home where they regularly abuse alcohol. And these children are living in this home and the people are drinking and partying and the neighbours come over and the relatives come over and these children are running around, playing.

My officers have seen this over and over and over and over again. And during the course of the party or afterwards, after they've indulged in drugs and liquor, inevitably they'll think about sex. And if a child is available, they will use that child. Not in every case but in most of . . . that's a typical case, if you want to use that term.

And my recommendations are quite clear. I don't know if I will ever see any of these recommendations. But education is extremely important and it should form a part of our curriculum in the schools, especially in the grade schools.

And we have to start talking and calling a spade a spade and saying that there are sexual predators out there. We can't hide it; we've got to talk about it. And it should be talked regularly to our children in kindergarten. And I don't mean little stories that point to that. Just tell it like it is. And that can easily be done. Bring it out in the open. It has to be transparent.

And our children in our communities have no safe location to run to or hide to. There's no escape route available to them if

they're exposed to people who are drinking in their home. They can't run to the neighbours and expect to be taken in for this evening, because it will happen two and three times a week. But to run one of these safe houses or escape homes is quite expensive, you know. It is. But how much money are we going to spend in our community to save one child. Are you going to put a dollar value on it?

So there has to be a location in the community or in the neighbourhood where a child can run to or go to, to escape the drunkenness and drug abuse that is occurring in that home. And these parties aren't . . . they happen unplanned, so this escape route has to be available 24 hours a day.

And stronger consequences . . . like my officers go to a home and they'll be called to a drunken fight in a home and there's children there and there's drug and alcohol abuse in the home and they see children there, so they take the children out. And sometimes they ask for Social Services to help them but by the next day the children are back in the home.

And Social Services have to have firmer apprehension rules we feel, and firmer conditions that have to be met by the parent to allow these children back in the home. And I haven't heard of any firm, cut and dried, black and white rules. It's all very subjective and it's up to the person that is working for Social Services who makes a judgment call. That's just my opinion though.

And secondly it's the convicted sex offenders. I personally feel that sex offenders cannot be cured; they have to be controlled. I think that more of them should be treated and charged as dangerous criminals. And they should be taken to task on that course immediately after being identified as a sexual offender. And they have to be controlled for the rest of their lives — some of them, the majority of them. We can't keep them in jail but we certainly can keep them under direct supervision.

And I as a policeman would give a person a break, but the second time he does it I think he'd be a confirmed and identified sexual offender whether the victim was a child or an adult person. Would you like to add anything, Brenda?

Ms. Clark: — No.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you very much for giving us that presentation. We have a number of committee members I'm sure who would like to ask you some questions and also we ask you to, as we're asking you questions, to certainly give us your views on what you think the gaps in the system are right now. You've mentioned some of them but possibly some strategies to filling them, and also feel free to ask us questions.

We're on a learning curve here, many of us, and so we appreciate your knowledge and recognize that working out there that you have first-hand knowledge of the situation. You're closer to it than we are so . . . But we're going to ask committee members if they would like to just give some indication if they have questions, and start with Ron Harper at the end.

Mr. Harper: — Well thank you, folks, very much for coming in this evening. Staff Sgt., you indicated that the statistics that

you have here are those from the reported cases but you believe that there may be a great deal more cases out there than get reported. An educated guess, a ballpark figure of how many instances you think of child abuse, as you've indicated here, happen in your community within a year's spanned?

Mr. Savidan: — Oh I think that we only . . . of the 200, I think you can double those statistics easily, safely. It could even be . . . The statistics we gather, in my estimation, are more like a third but you could easily double it — double all those offenders and offences and victims too. And multiple victims also — like brother, sister, sisters, you know, in the family.

And like I was mentioning before the incident started, before this . . . my evidence started, these people who become victims also have been known to become abusers themselves too. So it's kind of a wheel; or there's nothing to stop the cycle it seems, you know, because not enough people seem to care. They seem to avoid the subject, you know.

Mr. Harper: — One of your recommendations is the establishment of a safe house. Would one safe house in your community be adequate enough or would there, in your opinion, need to be more than one safe house?

Mr. Savidan: — I think there would have to be one in each neighbourhood, not a . . . you know, even a voluntary person that would act as having a home or a safe home. Brenda?

Ms. Clark: — I would agree. Also you have to take into consideration that we're kind of mixed with town and the reserve. And the reserve have their own; it's called ICFS, Indian Child Family Services. And so, like, if we're on the reserve, we call ICFS to apprehend the children. If we're in town, we call Social Services.

So there would have to be . . . I don't know if the reserve would have their own and the town would have their own. It's kind of a unique community that we have here.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you very much. From your presentation I would take it that most of the problems that you are dealing with are dealing really within the home environment rather than on the streets. Would I be correct in assuming that?

Mr. Savidan: — It does happen that we have sexual offences outside the home in the wooded paths between neighbourhoods after the bar closes. No, it's not always in the home but — the actual attack or the act — but it's always . . . usually the person, the victim knows the perpetrator, you know. I gave you a typical example, but that's not, you know.

Mr. Toth: — Well what I'm saying is it's not necessarily prostitution visible on the streets as much as we'd see it say — the problem — Regina, P.A. (Prince Albert), Saskatoon, specifically.

Mr. Savidan: — No, I wouldn't say that. I've been suspicious of 12- and 13- and 14-year-old girls in Robertson's store with American money, exchanging it for Canadian money. I don't

know where they got it but, you know, you can assume where they got it, you know. And that, I have witnessed that with young girls with American money in their pockets exchanging it for Canadian money this summer.

Mr. Toth: — You also mentioned about stricter guidelines for Social Services, and I'm not sure, I think you indicated Brenda's done a fair bit of investigation in this area. It's the question, first of all, I would have from a number of presentations we've had and especially in P.A. yesterday, the comments about extended family, seeking their help and support versus just taking children out of the home. And the reason that was brought forward is because of . . . especially for the Aboriginal community that have grown up through the school system and everything associated with that. The younger people that we're talking with is basically they just see that we're just pulling them out of their environment.

I'm wondering, is there . . . when it comes to dealing with some of these issues up in this area, do you have access to or have you looked into the possibility of seeking the assistance of extended family where children could be placed, would be in a fairly safe and comfortable environment for that period of time versus — as they indicated and Ron had talked about — a safe house, trying to afford or finance a safe house?

Mr. Savidan: — Using the extended family, we do have a problem with that. I agree with it. However, if we have a victim who lives in Stanley Mission and is moved to La Ronge, it's kind of like going out of the frying pan into the fire where they're exposed to more peers and more of the abuse in and around the neighbourhood, you know. These children just don't stay in and are exposed to that extended family member's home. They go to school.

And sometimes some of those children have to leave the district, you know. And it's not always a good idea, you know. Sometimes these children have to move from Stanley Mission and they might have to go to Pinehouse or Pelican Narrows or Prince Albert. They have to move a little bit further away and the extended families don't always extend that far, you know. It is a problem.

Mr. Toth: — Yes, I can appreciate that because I think you're dealing with something that's totally unique to probably the rest of the province when it comes to dealing with this type of issue and especially within families.

But I personally am not exactly sure just giving more power to Social Services . . . When I run into social workers who are basically saying they even have more power than the police, I think we need to be careful.

We had two officers today in P.A. mention of the scrutiny that they go through to make sure that they aren't falsely sending, like, a dear John letter so that they aren't probably laying blame because they don't know if they really . . . or they don't . . . They want to make sure that if they're sending something like that out, that they're really sending it to someone who deserves it. And when you're dealing with some of these circumstances, I think sometimes it's very difficult. But in other cases, it's very open.

So to me it just seems we're . . . a difficult situation. And I don't really envy the job and the position you have in trying to deal with that, and the frustration of young children who really don't know where to turn and that probably their whole lives are being disrupted.

So what you're saying is, in the situation you have up here, if we had the funding to finance and could provide some care, a safe house, you would see as a better way of actually providing some security and protection for children versus the family environment.

Mr. Savidan: — Yes, in getting away from the drug and alcohol abuse or an escape route for that. I see that a problem in our district. Wouldn't you, Brenda?

Ms. Clark: — Yes. And also, I think extended family. I don't think, for some children, they might not be safe there because the suspect or the perpetrator may have just as much easy access because the family might feel pressure. He might want to come over or she might want to come over and visit and whatnot.

Mr. Savidan: — Because a lot of the times the perpetrator is related to that extended family where the child is living and was sent. You know it's quite a confusing situation.

Ms. Clark: — I know I've had that situation myself. One of my files, and the girl is in Social Services' care but she comes up to visit the family, and I often get calls that, you know, the father is at the house even though she's to have no contact. But the mother and the father are still together. She just wants to come up and visit the mother.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I have an adjunct to that question and I'll take other members, but just prior to sitting down to this committee meeting I was talking with you about whether there is an expressed willingness or desire on the part of kokums to possibly, the grandmothers to . . . and the women of the community to take back their children from this and to protect them, to provide some sort of cultural healing, to re-establish, to re-ignite those values and so on that will help younger people to move on with a more productive and wholesome life? And whether in fact you see that protection by the women or the grandmothers of their children in the homes where they're being abused?

Mr. Savidan: — Yes you do see it, and it's there. However the grandmothers and the aunts have . . . they can't do it all. And I feel that they're outnumbered, I really do. They don't seem to get the support from the rest of the family. And these older people are good and wise but they can't be awake and they're not as young and energetic as they used to be. But they're a very good influence on the children and very good at protecting the children but they can't do it just by themselves, you know; they need support from the community.

And that's where I see . . . I feel quite frustrated in that the community doesn't rise up and do something about the abuse of children. I really do, and I don't see that enough. I don't see it enough.

I have to . . . my time is almost up but you mentioned . . . We had quite a frustrating situation about a year — and I have to mention it to you — about a year and a half ago an individual became drunk, went to another house, and sexually assaulted a young child on the couch. He just happened to have been in that house before. The child was sleeping on the couch and he sexually assaulted her.

With remands and his jail sentence, he was out of the community for about a year and a half. He came back, and after a few months he broke into another home, and the woman that was sleeping in the bed woke up when he was standing at the foot of her bed. The perpetrator was scared away.

Here we have a known sex offender who broke into a house and was standing at the foot of a bed with a woman in it, and when we went to court our prosecutor argued that this should be treated as more than just a break and enter. It should be treated as a sex offender looking for a victim. The judge said that under the evidence and the way the law was written, there was nothing he could do about it. And he treated it just like a regular house break-in where the person was looking for a VCR (video cassette recorder) and a microwave to steal. That is wrong.

I mean anybody with common sense knows what that individual was doing at the foot of that woman's bed. He was looking for another victim.

There has to be something to block these people. That's what we find frustrating on our end. Once a known sexual offender is identified and is released and continues to prey and looking for victims, shouldn't our judges maybe look past the black and white law and take some idea that this fellow was looking for more than just being unlawfully in a dwelling house? And he got nothing for a sentence. So what kind of a message is that?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I regret that you have to leave. Are you saying that you have to . . .

Mr. Savidan: — No, I don't have to go. I just didn't want to overstay my half hour here.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Oh no. We'll be happy to keep you.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We have a little more flexibility. One of our witnesses has had to cancel out so please don't feel that there's a huge rush.

Mr. Savidan: — No, we can stay as long as the radio doesn't call us.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I have a couple of other questions, but I'm going to turn it over to some of the other members of the committee. Carolyn, you had a question.

Ms. Jones: — I have a couple of questions. Some have been partially covered.

I'm wondering in these home situations where they're being abused by a father or relative, uncle; our committee is designed quite a bit to deal with the sex trade, so people selling sexual

services as opposed to family abuse, although we've recognized quite clearly that often victims of exploitation begin as victims of family abuse. And so we know that that's an interconnected thing.

But I'm wondering in the situations that you deal with is this a simple — I mean there is no such thing as simple abuse — but a simple case of abuse or is there exploitation or pimping involved in these home situations? I mean are fathers selling their daughters or sons to other men in the home situation? I mean do you think it goes that far or is it — and I hate to use the word simple again — but is it simply a gratification of the moment thing? Or do you think that it's more organized and insidious than that?

Mr. Savidan: — It can be in some families. My experience in 31 years in the mounted police, I've run across situations like that where there's land traded, favours given for that. Brenda, have you run across any situations like that in La Ronge?

Ms. Clark: — Not in La Ronge, no.

Ms. Jones: — No, okay. So that wouldn't be the kind of widespread abuse that you're seeing all the time? That might happen, but it's not so much a for sale situation or a for favour situation?

Mr. Savidan: — No. We do have a lot of tourists that come in here in the summertime and there is some exchange of money I'm sure for sex over many ages of people. I know that happens.

Ms. Jones: — When you were talking about the spaces — this was somewhat covered by Ron — in a safe house. You're familiar with the block parent program?

Mr. Savidan: — Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jones: — And you have that here, like . . . But that's more of a daytime program, obviously. But do you think anything like that would work if it were encouraged, that you could have like a block parent except it would be a . . . somewhere where children would be safe to go at any time of the day or night?

Mr. Savidan: — Our community is made up of about 6,000 people in the town of La Ronge, Air Ronge, the reserve district. We have communities within this community, like areas, neighbourhoods. And the neighbourhoods where we do have neighbourhood watch, the drug and alcohol abuse isn't as high as another neighbourhood where it is, and in that neighbourhood we do not have any crime watch or neighbourhood watch or block parent because the people that live in that little neighbourhood don't want to be involved with that. They don't have that community spirit.

So though we have it in the community, we don't have it in the neighbourhood that it's required in — in the group of homes where there's a lot of drug and alcohol abuse.

Ms. Jones: — I'm just wondering if you'd see any value in . . . I mean if one safe house, you know, funded and staffed 24 hours a day isn't going to work because the children don't . . . little children certainly don't have a way to get to that, to run

away in the middle of the night when a drinking party is going on.

So I was just trying to explore a different option to see if there was, you know, any merit in pursuing that type of idea where you could perhaps set up neighbourhood safe houses that were, you know, more like a volunteer block parent program.

Mr. Savidan: — Well if you compare or try and look at mixing the safe house with the grandmother thoughts where each parent . . . or each child knew that the grandparent would always be there and could go there, and if that grandparent was helped and told about the danger, I think you could make each grandparent's home a safe home, and help and train her. Like Social Services could do that.

So you could mix and match and you could have surrogate grandmothers, or surrogate kokums. Yes, it could work, where you could work with both ideas.

Ms. Jones: — And just one more quick one, if I can, Arlene. We heard very clearly, and this was covered a lot by Mr. Toth, but we heard very, very clearly in Prince Albert yesterday and a bit this morning that particularly the Aboriginal community are extremely against Social Services or police or anybody removing children from their homes. That they believe that it's criminal to take them out of their home and put them into, say, a foster home program, and talked about extended families and such.

In your . . . I mean . . . And your brief, to me, seems to say the opposite. It seems to say that we need to be more proactive in taking children out of dangerous situations. So do you think that's . . . is your attitude, perhaps because you're in a more isolated community than the urban Aboriginal families? I mean is there a difference? Why do I hear this from you and that from them?

Mr. Savidan: — I see it in . . . Like most of my service has been in smaller communities in Alberta, the Yukon, NWT (Northwest Territories), and Saskatchewan. I've served in the South also. It's just the way I view things.

And I'm not saying take the children away forever. I think that the parents have to learn to change their lifestyle. That was the point that I was trying to make there — firmer rules to get your children back. And I'm not saying keep them away. What I'm saying is, is get the parents, give them a reality check that you can't live this way. You know, we'll give you your children back but you have to do something about your drug and alcohol abuse, you have to do something about the condition of your home — just do it and you'll get your children back. Just firmer rules. I'm not saying take the children away.

Ms. Jones: — Okay. All right, thank you very much.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you. I have a couple of questions that are more just sort of stats and information. And I know that sounds kind of cold-hearted when we're dealing with an aspect of children being abused, when you're talking about facts, but I think you need facts to base some of your decisions on.

So when you talked about children. a lot of your victims coming from homes where there was drug and alcohol abuse, is that like 90 per cent of them? Or what percentage of the children that are abused do come . . .

Mr. Savidan: — Almost all of them.

Ms. Draude: — So it'd be fair to say over 90 per cent?

Mr. Savidan: — Yes.

Ms. Draude: — Are a lot of these victims repeat victims?

Mr. Savidan: — Repeat victims?

Ms. Draude: — Like do you get a call from the same family or of the same victim again?

Mr. Savidan: — The victims have been repeatedly sexually assaulted, like . . .

Ms. Clark: — In some cases.

Mr. Savidan: — Yes. Like, you know, it could be two people that have sexually assaulted this person over a course of a number of years, you know. And then when we finally hear about it, you know, the damage has been done.

Ms. Draude: — Would it help, in your estimation, if their names were publicized?

Mr. Savidan: — Well once the person . . . once the charges are laid, in our community, everybody knows usually.

Ms. Draude: — Does that help then?

Mr. Savidan: — I don't know.

Ms. Clark: — I personally don't think it would. Like there's more to the issue; like that person has a problem. I don't think it really would.

Ms. Draude: — And you talked about education. And I really agree with you that education for everyone is going to be very important. And you talk about coming into the school. Who do you think should be talking to the children in the school?

Mr. Savidan: — The person they trust the best — their teacher.

Ms. Draude: — The teacher?

Mr. Savidan: — In the younger grades. It should be part of the curriculum.

Like the kindergarten teacher develops a really close relationship with her class. She really does. And that woman can make those kids do just about anything. And they believe her as much as they would believe — or him — as they would their father or mother. Their teacher is very influential to the younger grades and all the way up to grade 6. That's my opinion. I wouldn't bring in an outsider.

Ms. Draude: — Okay, thank you.

Mr. Yates: — Just a couple of questions around, I guess, tools of enforcement. Are there things that we could look at changing within our provincial jurisdictional authority that would help make your job easier? It's a question we've asked all the various police agencies that have come forward. Most of them have centred more on the actual sexual trade on the street. But are there things that you could think of that would make your job easier?

Mr. Savidan: — Well that story that I told you about the judge and the break-in — that's a true story; it just happened. I mean isn't there anything that the government can do to educate our judges, you know? Do they need more education? Do they need more knowledge about what a problem it is, you know? Certainly the judge could have made a better decision, I think.

I think there's a lot of talk in court about how we want to protect this person who has broken the law and we forget about the victims. We do. We do forget about the victims. And I think that should be emphasized to our judges and Crown prosecutors, to our Legal Aid, and to the private lawyers in the community.

And I think that when we're trying to stop crime . . . They say there are too many Aboriginal people in jail. Well for every Aboriginal person in jail, there's an Aboriginal victim out here and nobody talks about that. Like why? Why are these bullies being allowed to get out of jail earlier than they should? Why does it look like we're being soft on them? And nobody thinks of the victims at all; I really don't think they do.

That's my opinion and that really frustrates the heck out of us, you know, is the victims. That's all.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you. I just wanted to talk with you a little bit — both of you — about the correlation between the sexual abuse of children in the areas outside of the major cities and the street trade, and children in the street trade, in the cities. Do you believe there's a correlation and can you sort of tell us why or why not that you believe that?

Mr. Savidan: — A relationship between the . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes. For instance, is there any reason that we should be here in La Ronge being concerned about this, what you're talking about, when in fact our mandate is the sex trade that's happening in the streets? I mean that was the mandate initially. So is there a correlation that you can see or do you believe that those two things are separated completely?

Mr. Savidan: — No, they're not separated. The women that . . . or the girls, and to some degree the males, that are sexually abused in their home in our community here will eventually escape this community and they will go to the city. And from there they're . . . Because of the way they grew up they have very little education, very few talents to make a living. They just wanted to get away from La Ronge or wherever they are.

And all they know is what happened to them in the past and

how they should live, and they always gravitate to that type of lifestyle in the city and they sell their bodies because they do not have any . . . sex doesn't mean anything to them. It's just a way of getting what they want. You know, if you want . . . Billy's nice to me, all I got to do is have sex with him. And they learn that and they take it to the larger cities and . . .

If you talk to all the prostitutes, young and old, in the city, you will find that all of them were abused at home at one time or another. They were. It just doesn't add up that a child graduates from high school and then says, I think I'll go to Edmonton and become a prostitute. It just doesn't happen, you know.

But when a child wants to leave a community where they're very, very unhappy, they take a geographical cure, and they'll leave that community and they'll go to Prince Albert, Regina, or Saskatoon. And they'll say everything will be better because I'll be away from that bad place. And they end up hanging around the same people, the type of people that they hung around back home — the drugs, the alcohol. And then they get into the sex trade because what else can they do? They need money to eat. They have to live some place, you know. It's kind of sad.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — When you say . . . and I hear you say that sex doesn't mean anything to them. I mean they have been sexually abused for so long that it sounds as though there's a desensitizing to your feelings. You don't feel anything any more and don't have an understanding of sex being a wholesome, sort of spiritual good thing. And that spells out a dehumanizing situation to me.

I'm wondering if you feel the same way and if you think that you might be able to, either of you — maybe you, Brenda, can tell us what you see as a result of that for society. You know, what does that mean for all of us in society that we have people that have been dehumanized like that and desensitized as to . . . and become cold and hardened? What do you see?

Ms. Clark: — Well lots of violence. I think from just lots — and not maybe even sexual abuse, but physical abuse — just lots of young offenders I find here in La Ronge, they're becoming more and more violent. And they like don't have a conscience. And hurting someone, they really don't care. I don't know. It's affecting all of us. I mean . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And I have one more question and then I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Prebble. I guess it's a question but it's also an observation that I've had that you have made, Sgt. Savidan, and it's about the judicial system. I'm a little opinionated in this but I feel that, you know, you made the mention.

Do the judges need more education or what? What is going on here? You know, why do we see a system in place that allows judges to have a penalty that they can put on a perpetrator, on someone who has violated someone else, and they don't do it? There's just hardly any kind of penalty that meets this kind of horrible crime as far as I'm concerned.

I can't understand it. I can assume a lot. I have assumed that there's protectionism but it's not the children that are being

protected. I've assumed a lot of things but that's, I guess, not important right now.

What is important is, do you really believe the judges need more education on this, or what is the reason that they're not throwing the book at these people?

Mr. Savidan: — The best judges I ever saw is back in the old days when we used to have trials in front of justices of the peace for minor offences in communities. These people were untrained, but they were leaders in their community. And a justice of the peace would say, well you know, Joe, I've known you all your life and you're always speeding and this and that and the other thing, and he'd find him guilty and he'd . . . There doesn't seem to be that in our courts at all. Like there's no community knowledge, there's no community problems; they just look at the charges in front of them and the evidence. The letter of the law but not really the spirit. Does that make sense to you?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — It's hard to believe. I find that hard to believe.

Mr. Savidan: — That's just my opinion.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — No, I don't disbelieve you. I find it hard to believe that the letter of the law is all that one would look at when the implications to society are so damaging.

Mr. Savidan: — But maybe I'm just cynical, and that's the way I view things now, you know. I wish there was a better system. It's a good system, but I really wish that there was, maybe, firmer sentencing rules. A sexual offender . . . there is no common sense for anything, you know. There isn't.

Like I can sexually assault or I can beat up somebody and I may get a conditional sentence, and on the other hand I could get 18 months in jail depending on who the judge is. And why the difference in the sentencing? Is it how you . . . like there should be more continuity in that.

And that's why I suggested that the continuity in sex offenders is that they be treated like dangerous criminals. There has to be some continuity in sentencing. Like if you sexually assault somebody, you're going to go to jail for two years. That's it, period — plus this, you know.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, and just one last question and I don't quite know how to frame this question. But, Cst. Clark, I just wonder if you could walk us through, give us a picture of how you come upon a situation where a child has been sexually abused.

Could you just give us a scenario so that we . . . it can help us to understand how things are at and therefore lead us to . . . you know, you'd be assisting us in the long run to think about programming and so on that might be needed, that would provide services that might be needed. So how in the first place are you notified that there is trouble on the home front?

Ms. Clark: — Most often through ICFS, Indian Child and Family Services, on the reserve or through Social Services.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Who calls you?

Ms. Clark: — The social worker or someone from ICFS.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay.

Ms. Clark: — And then they get a hold of us and we start the investigation. The odd time a mother or a family member will call suspecting that this child has been sexually abused.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So have you received calls also of . . . calls to a home where the abuse is taking place at the time, right at the immediate time? Has anyone . . .

Ms. Clark: — Usually not, usually it's happened earlier on in the day or what not, and the child, you know, comes home and says so-and-so touched me, something like that.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay.

Ms. Clark: — Usually it's not right instant, right away we get the complaint and we head over there. It's a matter of days.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, have you . . . can you describe to us the repercussions that you've seen in children's lives due to this, within you know say a three-, four-, five-year period of time? If you have monitored any children to any extent.

Ms. Clark: — It's hard for me to say. I haven't monitored them like after the incident has happened. Unfortunately.

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

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you. Actually most of my questions have been answered and I want to thank you for what has been a very important presentation I think. This is one of the first presentations that we've heard that deals with sexual abuse primarily off the street.

You know, we've been holding public hearings in Saskatoon and Regina and Prince Albert and we've gathered a lot of very useful evidence on what's happening on the street, basically an exchange of sex for money between primarily male adults and children, many of whom are as young as nine or ten. But this is one of the . . . this is probably the most important presentation we've had so far about sexual abuse outside of that exchange that I've just described.

Because of the mandate of our committee, I do want to just make sure that we're very clear about what you're saying with respect to the limited degree to which the sex trade itself is operating in the La Ronge area.

What I'm understanding but I'm just saying this for clarification, is that none of these cases that you've documented here involved what one would consider a relationship between a predator and a child on the street. But you indicated both with respect to a reference to tourists who may be looking for sex and also the reference to some of the 12- and 14-year-olds that you were describing in Robertson's store who had American money that you suspect that this has been occurring. Is that an

... Have I understood that accurately?

Mr. Savidan: — Yes. But you know what? I haven't been able to obtain enough evidence in that. I've seen it on several occasions. Where did these kids get the money, these \$50 American bills in brand new, crisp, right out of the ATM (automated teller machine)?

And we do have a lot of Americans coming up here and they stay in the hotels or along La Ronge Avenue and the kids are there all summer, you know, up and down the street. So I have to assume — and I'm assuming a lot — but I'll keep chipping away at it.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I think that's something, you know, that's very important for us to be aware of, so I appreciate you sharing it.

Is there any evidence of men from this part of the province ending up as johns looking for sex in some of the other urban centres? In other words, do you know of people who have been convicted or who are suspected of having become predators in Prince Albert or Saskatoon or Regina and who travel from La Ronge on a regular basis to do that?

We've heard some evidence of people coming in from other parts of rural Saskatchewan into the cities looking for sexual activity with children. I'm just wondering if you've had any evidence of that in the La Ronge area.

Mr. Savidan: — It could go on. We're not always advised of it at this detachment. Like if somebody from our area goes and does something in another area, we may or may not ... they may move and we may or may not hear about it. It happens on occasion, but we don't ... I can't tell you how many times. It's not that often though. But that occurs.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Okay. I wanted to ask two other questions. One is with respect to abuse in foster homes. We heard some evidence over the last day and a half in Prince Albert, some complaints about abuse occurring in the foster home system. Have any of these incidents involved foster home abuse that you've recorded here over the last six years?

Mr. Savidan: — Not to my knowledge.

Ms. Clark: — Actually, I'm just familiar with one case I got, where a girl was adopted into a family and I think it was another foster brother — suspect in that.

Mr. Savidan: — Right.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — So with that one exception, no other cases.

And the final question I have relates to the drop in the numbers in 1999 and 2000. Given what you're describing in the community, is there a reason to think that there has been a real drop in sexual abuse or is it just a matter of cases not being reported, or what do you think explains this?

It could be a very encouraging drop in the numbers but I just

want to ... I sense from what you were saying that while the statistic is down you're worried that in fact the problem isn't actually declining. So I don't want to put words in your mouth though, I just wanted to ask you about it again to clarify what you think is behind this drop in the numbers.

Mr. Savidan: — In 1999, the whole of that year, if you remember, Brenda, we put or the judge, judges in this area, put a lot of bad guys in jail, okay. And it was noticeable, the drop in crime. That's one little reason. There isn't one big reason. But we put a lot of bad guys in jail.

And the statistics for 2000 are going to equal or maybe be around that 10 figure, you know, by the time the year's over and our investigations are complete. We've still got some on the go, but it will be five to ten for this year. So it will stay the same as last year.

Those are two reasons that I can think about. That 2000 one reported to date, that's not accurate. So you can actually scratch out that 2000, okay.

But I remember last year we were commenting that we did well, or the judges did well by putting all ... we put a lot of people in jail last year, serving time 18 months to two years. We got them out of here.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Right. I want to thank you very much for responding to my questions. I know that my colleague, Mr. Harper, has another question, and I know that Arlene has another question. And then I think probably we should try to bring it to a close and hear from our other presenters. Thank you.

Mr. Harper: — I thank you. Getting back to the children that you suspect could be selling themselves to American tourists, as you've seen them handling American dollars, do you believe that if they're selling themselves to tourists that they'll also be selling themselves to locals?

Mr. Savidan: — No, I don't think the locals would pay for it.

Mr. Harper: — Oh, stands to reason. They just take it.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We've been asking for some assistance from police agencies and so on with your suggestions on how legislation may be changed or what avenues we might be able to take as far as legislative changes or amendments or whatever may be to deal with the johns, being able to assist the police more on the streets of the cities and so on as far as being able to arrest the johns if they have a reasonable cause to believe that they are going to endanger a child or violate a child. And there has been some suggestion that there could be some use of notwithstanding clauses.

I wonder if you know a little bit about that, if you thought about that at all, and if you might be able to brief the committee and give us somewhat of an idea of what you think might be done.

Mr. Savidan: — Well I think that I, as an enforcement officer, and Brenda also, she knows that there's a sexual offender in our community. We know that the constitution gives that person the

right of unreasonable detention and unreasonable search. We can't do those two things. But we would like to go visit them and talk to them and see what they're doing and what's going on in their homes. And if we were to do that right now, we would probably . . . there would be a complaint against us and on the Public Complaints Commission that we're harassing this person.

And all we want to do is . . . we know that . . . we feel, the police feel, that these people cannot be cured. Okay? But they have to be controlled. If there was a notwithstanding clause, I would put it on all sex offenders that we can talk to them — not detain them, put them in jail but we can interview them to find out how they're living and what they're doing on a regular basis.

And how we do that . . . For instance, we have a bootlegging problem. It's a provincial offence. The judge makes his place a public place and the police can walk in there at any time of the day or night and look for liquor. Okay, that's how we battle bootleggers.

Well that same tool can be used against people who prey against young children in using sex, that we should be allowed to go knock on his door some Saturday night to find out if he's having a party and who's in there. Like we should be able to do that. Just check up on him. And the community wants us to. However, we are a little bit held back with our constitution — unreasonable detention, unreasonable search and seizure. It's very difficult.

I liked it much better when we were ruled by the British North America Act and we dealt with common law and case law. The constitution is very difficult to work with and I saw nothing wrong with the old system where illegal evidence was still evidence.

Illegal evidence now is not evidence and we're finding that a lot of these people are . . . Because we didn't read our warning right or we did some minor little thing, when we were under the British North America Act, we could still bring that person to court and he could still be convicted. But now we make a little fault, or our policeman's a little junior and didn't have the experience, makes an innocent mistake, and we've lost the whole charge.

I think more emphasis should be put back on case law and common law. That's just my opinion.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Do you believe that the offence is treated seriously enough as far as being, I guess, rated? I understand it's a summary offence a lot of times, you know, sexual abuse. There's sometimes not even fingerprinting done and that kind of thing. So I'm just wondering if you believe that . . . Are we treating this offence as the crime that it is?

Mr. Savidan: — Yes, we are but what happens in, and it's the old plea bargaining thing, is we've got a serious sexual offence that's indictable and we've got a weak case on our witnesses and so there's a tendency of the Crown to say, well we want to convict so we'll lower it to a lesser offence and you plead guilty. That happens a lot.

And it's the nature of the beast. We have to sometimes make a deal with the devil in order that we can clear something up, you know, and get this person punished.

That's a hard one; that's a real hard one. And our courts are so overloaded, as they are in La Ronge. I mean come to court on Monday and see what it's like. And on Thursday when we have trials it can be just a fiasco in there. And there's a lot of plea bargaining going on, a lot of plea bargaining to clear the plate, so to speak.

But then La Ronge was here with only one judge for a very long time and he was overloaded, so there shouldn't be. We've got poor facilities here for our court system. We have . . . it makes the witnesses uncomfortable when we can't even secure the prisoners in our court house. The province should build us a better court house, more court houses. We've got one down there. We need two where the prisoners and the witnesses and the victims don't always mix together. You know, it's just a big, big problem that we could probably be a little bit more professional on.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, thank you. Carolyn has one more question I guess.

Ms. Jones: — In terms of the . . . you were asked if you know whether or not you have johns who travel from your community to other urban centres to acquire sex. And it's come to my attention that it might be a good idea to have a database file shared by provincial and like by a city and federal police such as yourself to somehow keep track of pedophiles or johns as they move. You know, if one is spotted in Prince Albert and the license plate is run and it's from La Ronge, then you know that that person has been down in Prince Albert and you can do the same in terms of tracking. What would you think of some sort of a computer-based system to keep a tracking so that communities are aware of who is moving in and out of their streets?

Mr. Savidan: — It would be valuable information to us and to our investigators at La Ronge to know if there are people in our jurisdiction that are regularly travelling to Prince Albert and hiring prostitutes. But you're right, we don't have that database right now.

Ms. Jones: — Is there a possibility . . . I mean I don't have a grand grasp on the relationship between the RCMP and the municipal police forces in the various areas. Is there something that you can think of that could make that happen? Are there co-operative avenues that you could develop to ensure that that happens?

Mr. Savidan: — It boils down to money. I don't think P.A. is going to be inputting all this information from their computer system into a provincial computer system or the RCMP system because of money, you know. The province would have to do it or pay for it.

Ms. Jones: — Then you think it could be . . . technically it's achievable?

Mr. Savidan: — Oh, yes.

Ms. Jones: — And it would be a valuable tool?

Mr. Savidan: — Most definitely. The tracking and movement of criminals and perpetrators and parasites is very, very important. And it is if you're looking for people that make a living by fraud or break-in as it is the sex trade. And the more we can keep track of their movements the more we'll be able to predict what they're going to do and be ready to stop, prevent something like that from happening. It's very good preventive police work, you know, if we could do it. But it costs money and I don't know if there's that much money to be spent any more. We're taxed to the limit now, you know. But before . . .

Ms. Jones: — Well, I think that's part of it. I mean, money has to be targeted to the most useful means that we can so we're exploring ideas and, you know, and if there are additional funds or funds to spent, then I think it is the goal of this committee and those stakeholders to try to sort out where those funds are best spent.

So you know, that's kind of why you're asked the question because everybody knows there are limited funds and there are . . . you know, nobody has unlimited funds. But in trying to address any problem, I think you want to invest the best way possible, the biggest bang for your buck if you like.

Mr. Savidan: — Has the committee contacted our Regina headquarters and accessed their data bank of all this . . . of all our sexual investigations?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I'm sorry, I didn't hear you.

Mr. Savidan: — Well, you know we do keep all that . . . it's called ViCLAS (Violent Crime Linkage Analysis). You know, I told you about the Homolka and the Bernardo investigations. All the police forces in Canada complete ViCLAS booklets on each and every sexual investigation and all this information is put in a data bank all across Canada. But Regina has all that information available to them. And if you contacted our headquarters and talked to a Sgt. Henry Derkach, who's in charge of that section, he can give you access to all this gathered information all across the province from RCMP and city police force detachments.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So it's there, but you haven't got a mechanism for ongoing sharing of perpetrators and, you know, or tracking them and so on from city to city?

Mr. Savidan: — Well, we use it as an investigation only and that's why it's there. If we're looking for a person that came in our community and committed some sexual assaults, we would put his MO (modus operandi) into this bank. But it also . . . This information gives you a history, a sexual history of all the communities in the province, you know.

You see, there's lots of information there and it would be to your advantage, the committee's advantage, to contact Henry Derkach in Regina, or the officer in charge of that section and see if that information could help the committee.

There's a vast amount of information there, and I'm thinking of the sexual history in all the communities, you know. You know

what I mean? Like I just gave you our sexual history. Well, it's available for every community in the province.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — That is an extremely useful suggestion. And it's one that we haven't pursued and we will pursue now. I thank you very much for it.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We would like to thank you both for coming and all the very best in your work. You're doing a tremendous work and I guess, you know, if there's ever any hope that cycles can be broken, we cling to that and we hope for your sake, and for the sake of all the people that that will come to be. And that we can . . .

Mr. Savidan: — Well we, the police, hope that you are successful as a committee. We really do. Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you very much.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Just before we turn to our next presenter who's going to be Ron Ratte, I just want to point out to everyone here that the friendship centre has very generously made this room available to us free of charge, which is a very, very nice thing of them to do — a real sign of support for the work of this committee. And Liz Tait who is the administrative manager of the friendship centre is here tonight. And Liz, I wonder if you could convey our appreciation to your board and why don't we just express our appreciation to Liz now. Thank you, Liz, very much.

Applause

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We really, really appreciate your support.

Now would Ron come forward. Ron, are you able to present now?

Ron is the daycare program coordinator with the Lac La Ronge Band, and Ron, it's really nice to have you here. Just make yourself comfortable . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Randy is just saying that I said day care and I meant day program coordinator. Sorry, I'm sorry, Ron. The day program coordinator with the Lac La Ronge Band. Welcome and please . . . Were you here when committee members were being introduced?

Mr. Ratte: — I'm afraid not, no.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Okay. Well why don't we just go through a quick round of introductions, at least of the MLAs (Member of Legislative Assembly). Don, why don't we start with you.

Mr. Toth: — Don Toth, MLA Moosomin.

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

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Arlene Julé, MLA for Humboldt.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I'm Peter Prebble, the MLA for Saskatoon Greystone.

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

Ms. Jones: — And Carolyn Jones, the MLA for Saskatoon Meewasin. And missing in action is Ron Harper. He'll be back soon.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Anyway, Ron, we're really looking forward to your presentation. And why don't you say whatever you'd like to in terms of introducing yourself, and then just feel free to proceed.

Mr. Ratte: — Well I was sitting back there and I was just thinking well, I was very happy to take a life skills coach training that I have taken. And one of the things that we've done at that time was called receiving and giving feedback. And we had sort of a same structure in whatever it is that we had then. But it was helpful. But basically I was very happy that I had done that because I guess maybe it tends to . . . gives me that more confidence in having to sit here and hopefully share whatever it is that we and you can be . . . can work on or whatever.

So the La Ronge day program is to provide an appropriate structured day supervision program for youths as an alternate to custody; develop and make programs which provide youths with opportunities to improve their interpersonal and life skills, acquire employment training and education, and obtain further academic and vocational education which enable them to function more responsibly in the community.

Counselling and support services are also provided. Health and life skills instructions are also given. Leisure skills development, opportunities to perform community service, work, transportation and cultural programs are also been looked at.

When the youth is tried and had to follow certain conditions that are given to the courts and brought to my attention at the program that I'm running through Social Services and Lac La Ronge Indian Band — so the alternate to custody.

When a youth is tried and brought to my attention, then certain conditions are also given by the courts.

For example, community service work could be from 50-, 25-, 75-hour, 150-hour community service work. Not very often I have restitution for these youths that need to be paid because they're, first of all, they're too young to find employment. And I do have also the . . . And also they also have to be provided with various other programs like anger management and drug and alcohol assessments and so forth.

So it's something that I'd like and I'm hoping to structure more in this program as I go along. And I've only been in this program for six weeks . . . six months, I guess, sorry, six months.

And it opened my eyes a little bit to see how the young ones are . . . For example, I've got 22 where I'm working with right now, but five . . . maybe about nine are somewhat active with these conditions. And these other ones are on probation for a period, it could be about a year or so.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — That's very interesting. Can I just ask you a few questions, Ron? Is that all right? And I'm just wondering are there other committee members who have questions? Carolyn? Kevin? June? Don? Do you have any questions?

Are you done your presentation, Ron, or had you other things you wanted to say?

Mr. Ratte: — Well that's basically all I've had regarding the . . . my introduction with what I've done a little bit.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Right, yes. What are the ages of the youth that you're working with?

Mr. Ratte: — Between 12 and 18.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — 12 to 18.

Mr. Ratte: — Yes, right.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And is it your perception that in your community there is a problem with children who are not attending school, particularly children under 16? Are you finding that a lot of the youth that you're working with have not been in school? And are you finding that, you know, a significant . . . Is there a significant number of children in the community that aren't attending school on any kind of a regular basis and they're under 16 years of age which . . . kind of the legal school attendance age?

Mr. Ratte: — Well there's certainly a number of youths that are not attending school and . . . or have attended school but they were expelled for some reason or another.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Right.

Mr. Ratte: — And they in turn seek some attention elsewhere to try and satisfy whatever it is that they're given.

My program, the program that I'm running is . . . So far the 22 I have and these youth that are on probation — it's funny how things work — but they tend to come to me and say well, this year I'd like to start in such and such a school, can you help me with that? And I say well, okay, sure, I'll see what I can do.

So I search around from school to school and, you know, we don't have too many schools but we try . . . I try to squeeze whatever it is that . . . and a lot of them are on a waiting list, of course. And between time, I'm not too sure what a person can do. It's just a matter of waiting and try to make them, trying to actually, I guess, keep them busy the best way we can while they're out of school.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — . . . trouble getting them into a school?

Mr. Ratte: — Yes.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — That's a problem then.

Mr. Ratte: — A problem I think with La Ronge because of the

high rate. For example, before I came to this youth worker position, I've worked at the elementary as a guidance counsellor for about six years. I see a number of kids that even in elementary, that classroom is overpopulated.

One classroom, for example, would have probably about 29, 30, and they're just crowded into one classroom. And just imagine how it would be for the other alternate, I guess, high school, for example, would have a more . . . I'm pretty sure they have more of a problem with that also. I've checked into that and sure enough it was . . . they had to sort of . . . I don't know what they meant by prioritizing use and kids that would come to the program.

Schools now that I've gone to and visited, they have now alternative school programs I guess for specific behavioural problems with kids. So that's another thing that I've seen in the school system.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And just going back to the children not at school issue for a minute, is it your sense that there's just the odd child who's not in school, or do you think if you're looking at that under-16 population, there's quite a few?

Mr. Ratte: — I think there's quite a few out there that are not still going to school.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And would you hazard a guess about how many under 16?

Mr. Ratte: — Under 16? I cannot give you that.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I understand. But you think there's quite a few?

Mr. Ratte: — Quite a few, yes.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Are there any other questions before we . . . Arlene, did you have any questions? I've got one or two more but I don't want to be dominating here.

One other question I did want to ask you is with respect to the adequacy of drug and alcohol treatment programs in your community, and I don't know whether you're in a position to comment on that or not. Presumably some of the youth that you're working with have drug and alcohol problems. Are there resources available in the community to assist those young people?

Mr. Ratte: — There is certainly . . . I guess there's a lot of resources in regards to drug and alcohol. I've been working with youth that were given to me by the courts that need to follow up on the conditions, like for the assessments I was talking to you about. Lac La Ronge Indian Band does have qualified therapists and youth addiction workers and I've referred one of the youths to get whatever it is that they need in there, which is good.

Also La Ronge Health Centre, mental health centre, have quite a bit of addiction workers there that I refer matters to. There is a lot of . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — So youth do have pretty good access to services here.

Mr. Ratte: — Yes.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Well that's useful to know. Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I was just wondering whether or not . . . I didn't quite hear whether or not you have a sexual abuse therapist. Do you know of that service being provided?

Mr. Ratte: — That is a good question because I transport sex offenders to Prince Albert every week, Tuesday, every Tuesday.

We don't . . . I'm not too sure if we have qualified sexual therapists here, but I think that's what is needed in La Ronge is more programs regarding sex offenders. And, you know, it would eliminate a lot of travelling by me, I guess, and also it will help the community also to adjust to that and be more open to what it is that could be hindering the community.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So are you suggesting that there need to be more programs to educate people that are sexual offenders or . . .

Mr. Ratte: — Yes.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And also to assist people who have been abused.

Mr. Ratte: — Yes.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay.

Mr. Ratte: — Yes. I do believe that we need more programs in that regard.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay.

Mr. Ratte: — And also the topic had came up regards to an environment where . . . a youth environment, a youth care home should be also provided where I think it would be beneficial for youth that would need that certain structure in their lives, where they would go in a safe place and also have whatever treatment they would probably need in that facility. I think it would be very, very useful.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So are you suggesting having a centre where children would receive the same sort of nurturing that they should in a home that is functioning well, within the community of La Ronge?

Mr. Ratte: — Yes. I don't think we have . . . we do not have a youth facility for that specific reason.

I was just talking to a few colleagues of mine and that's one thing that we had talked about is hopefully if we had an environment where even stations in that environment would be placed where there is a drug and alcohol place, or sex offenders, where they can go for therapy and so forth, so they don't have to go far and trying to get something going for themselves and

so on. But that's something that hopefully . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Sort of a comprehensive treatment centre.

Mr. Ratte: — Yes.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Thank you very much.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you, Ron. We really appreciate you coming forward and sharing your experience and your thoughts and advice with us. Thank you very, very much.

We have one other scheduled presentation for this evening and that is a presentation by Dexter and Flora representing the Lac La Ronge Child and Family Services.

Welcome, Flora and Dexter. Just take your time and, you know, get comfortable and get some water and all those kind of things. I think you were here while the committee members were being introduced.

Mr. Kinequon: — Yes, I was.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Good. Well, welcome. Why don't you introduce yourselves formally and then we'll really look forward to hearing from you.

Mr. Kinequon: — Okay. I'm Dexter Kinequon. I'm the Director of Lac La Ronge Indian Child and Family Services.

Ms. Bell: — I'm Flora Bell, case management supervisor for the Lac La Ronge Indian Child and Family Services.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thanks for coming. Just proceed with your presentation in whatever way you'd like to.

Mr. Kinequon: — Okay. Just to provide an overview of our organization, La Ronge Indian Child and Family Services provides child and family services within the jurisdiction of Lac La Ronge Indian Band. We provide for approximately 4,700 band members who reside on Lac La Ronge Indian Band in the six communities of La Ronge Indian Band.

We deal with the child protection and family services. We also have a prevention services program and a residential services program which comprises assessment stabilization home and a therapeutic group home. We deal with our own foster care system and extended family resource system for children that are taken into care. Our legislative authority comes from the provincial Child and Family Services Act.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Did you have anything that you wanted to . . . Flora?

Ms. Bell: — I'm sorry. Betty Anne was supposed to be here but she's sick.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, my apologies for that.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Did you have any other comments you wanted to make before we . . . Okay, sounds

good. So just to clarify the resources that you've got available, you have an assessment stabilization home?

Mr. Kinequon: — Yes, we do.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And how many children will that . . .

Mr. Kinequon: — That's a six-bed.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Six beds?

Mr. Kinequon: — Yes, six bed spaces as well as the therapeutic group home.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And the therapeutic group home, And how many spaces does that have?

Mr. Kinequon: — Six.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Six. And then what other physical resources do you have?

Mr. Kinequon: — Well we have foster parents throughout all of our communities. Some of our foster parents are located in the South. We have several therapeutic foster homes. Some are located in Prince Albert, some are located in the North here.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So how . . . are you dealing with children then up to the age of 18 years old?

Mr. Kinequon: — Yes, we are.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And do you have any statistics that you might be able to give us as far as how many youth you might be providing the service — stabilizing service. You know, taking care of a situation where there might be . . . I presume this is to do with drug and alcohol treatment.

Mr. Kinequon: — No, no. Usually they're conduct disorder in terms of therapeutic group home. Yes, we access alcohol and drug services through other areas. We don't provide those types of services as of yet.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay.

Mr. Yates: — I just have a couple of questions I'd like to follow up on. Some of the presentations we've heard in the last couple of weeks, particularly in Prince Albert, about the need when dealing with children leaving a dysfunctional family needing to be taken out of a dysfunctional family that it was appropriate or very important to keep them within the extended family working within their own community. Are you finding that as an appropriate resource dealing with the types of problems that you're dealing with?

Mr. Kinequon: — Well I think each circumstance is unique. You have to look at all the considerations. Whenever possible we try and place with the extended family. Sometimes there are limitations to that in terms of a smaller community. Perhaps extended family don't want to become involved, so it's not always a possibility.

For this panel's purposes I think you know when we're dealing with sexual abuse, for instance, it's not necessarily always in the best interest of children to be placed with extended family. And part of the reason is because of issues involving influence. If there's an ongoing investigation, an extended family is a relative probably of the offender. So in those circumstances then, we have to also consider if there's a criminal investigation, you know, what is this child going to be told by the extended family during the placement.

So given that, you know, we consider each placement on a case-by-case basis.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And to what extent . . . Oh Don, please go ahead, Don.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you. Just a question I would have of the number of cases you deal with. Would a high percentage of those have to do with assault situations and sexual assault, those types of circumstances, or exactly what type of caseloads do you carry?

Mr. Dexter: — Well we service annually probably, you know, 3 to 400 children throughout the course of a year, and a high proportion of those would be involved in sexual abuse.

Mr. Toth: — And so what do you do when you've got a situation where someone complains of sexual abuse and you're called in to act. You have a six-bed facility. What else do you do to meet the need and provide some security I guess, if you will, for children that you're called in to maybe prevent, who are at risk from further abuse.

Mr. Dexter: — Okay. Well obviously the first thing is to determine the immediate safety of that child. Whereupon we would receive a call, you know, a child protection worker would attend. They would determine from an initial investigation if some sort of abuse had occurred up to the point where they feel that it's warranted to consult with RCMP.

At that point if the offender is still in the home, the children are usually removed, or child is usually removed. We consult with the RCMP, and if a criminal investigation is to take place, then it's turned over to the RCMP for follow-up. In the interim then we may end up placing that child in a foster home.

Mr. Toth: — In a typical situation, how long would it take to say initiate an investigation, complete the investigation, and then make a final decision whether or not there was a need to take further action or returning the child to the home.

I've asked that question on the basis of the extent of time it is where you've removed the child from a home and placed them in foster care or whatever, and sometimes as a result of congested court systems, things can take quite awhile.

And the complaints I get as a result of being the Social Services critic, complaints I hear from people is the fact they don't get a chance to see their children for extended periods of time and feel that that is disruptive to the family. Especially if the circumstance is where they feel that they've been falsely accused and they even go through the court system; and while

they're forced to go through it, it may at the end of the day vindicate them. But that could take a period of time. Yet in the meantime as a result of some of the guidelines and directions, you're almost forced to maintain that separation.

Mr. Dexter: — And of course, you know, in consultation with the RCMP they don't drop everything that they're doing and pick up this case. So a lot of times we have to, you know, follow whatever time frames that they're available to conduct the investigation.

Primarily what we would look at is, what is the non-offending parent's capacity to protect that child? A lot of times if it's a father or, you know, an uncle or somebody close to the home and are living in the home, then, you know, we would establish some procedure in which that person would not be allowed in that home.

That way the child could still continue to live at home but it would reduce the risk, the level of risk. Because that's really the determining factor. You know, whomever it is, grandma or auntie, you know, what is their capability of protecting the child? That will kind of, you know, like I said, determine where that child will go from that point and during the investigation and the interim.

Mr. Toth: — One final question. Of your years of experience, do you find children that you've actually taken care over or offered protection to, and the situation may be a father or an uncle or whatever, is there still . . . do you find there's still a very close attachment to that offending parent?

Mr. Kinequon: — Oh absolutely, absolutely. You know, regardless of what a parent may do to a child, I mean that's their parent and they love them. And sometimes these are the complicated factors in an investigation, is that disclosure is sometimes subject to those kinds of circumstances. Whereas a child doesn't want to get their parent in trouble or doesn't want to get this uncle . . . You know, it could be a really good person or whatever their relationship, except they do these other things. So yes it is.

Ms. Draude: — I have a couple of clarifications that I need. You just said something about taking the offending adult, whether it be a father or brother. Did you say that you may take . . . they may leave the home rather than taking the child out?

Mr. Kinequon: — Yes.

Ms. Draude: — So how do you . . . I mean do they just agree to that or is there some way that you make that happen?

Mr. Kinequon: — Well under section 11 of The Child and Family Services Act, basically the authority that we have to be there in the first place is under the Act and the parent voluntarily has to agree to leave. The offending parent or the offending person has to agree to leave, and that the person that we're returning the child to has to agree that there will be no contact, that there'll be no . . . the person will not be allowed into that particular home or in any circumstance where access would become an issue.

Ms. Draude: — So have you found in your experience that this is easier for the child to then cope if they can stay in the home and have the parent leave?

Mr. Kinequon: — Yes, yes. Because you know they require support throughout this whole process. And you can't take them and place them into a foster home and expect the same level of support or comfort through something that can be very traumatic for them.

Ms. Draude: — So in the case that the offending person leaves and they were the breadwinner, at that time do you have funds that allow you to support that family then once that person may be required to leave the home?

Mr. Kinequon: — I'm not sure I understand your question.

Ms. Draude: — Like if the person that no longer is allowed to go into that home any more because of the allegations, if there's no money in the home any more, then do you have funding to provide to the family?

Mr. Kinequon: — Well the expectation is that they would continue to provide for themselves financially. Like we don't remove kids and then put them back with the parents and give them money for taking care of their own kids. If we are taking that child and placing them with a service provider, that service provider is on a fee-for-service basis so we would pay that service provider but we would not . . . we don't provide funds to families to care for their own children, no.

Ms. Draude: — Did I understand that you look after . . . There's about 4,700 individuals on the reserve actually that you look after, or are you off the reserve? You said at the beginning that there was about 4,700?

Mr. Kinequon: — That's 4,700 band members who reside on-reserve.

Ms. Draude: — I see. So then a number of your band members from the reserve live in the town of La Ronge or wherever and they're off the reserve. So then do you ever get calls from band members who are not living on the reserve that ask for your help?

Mr. Kinequon: — Usually it would involve disputes with the Department of Social Services.

Ms. Draude: — So I'm just wondering, just trying to see if they would prefer to deal with you than the department.

Mr. Kinequon: — We have no jurisdiction to provide off-reserve services.

Ms. Draude: — Do they ask you to?

Mr. Kinequon: — Occasionally, yes.

Ms. Draude: — Do they feel more comfortable talking to you or doesn't that seem to be a difference?

Mr. Kinequon: — Would they feel more comfortable talking

to us? I would assume that's why they would be contacting us.

Ms. Bell: — We get a lot of calls like that.

Ms. Draude: — You do get a lot of calls like that? Okay, thank you.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I have just one question that I would like to pose to Flora if I could.

Flora, do you know whether or not there is any provisions for services for women that are possibly in their mid-life years or later years that are going through traumatic experiences now due to sexual abuse when they were children? So it's the sort of aftermath situation where they're traumatized by possibly continued sexual abuse when they were children but haven't been able to deal with it. Have buried it; have not had it looked at or been assisted with healing. And so basically they anesthetized themselves to what has happened.

And there is a sort of a syndrome that comes about, I understand, when women sometimes have experienced that and are moving into their mid-life years, 30's, 40's, 50's, and then go through an extreme traumatic experience.

And, for instance, in Saskatoon there's Tamara's House to deal with that kind of a situation to help women that are experiencing the trauma that they have not really dealt with in the younger years or previous to that time in their life. I'm just wondering if you have women that have talked with you about the need to deal with some of their trauma and whether . . .

Ms. Bell: — With our agency?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes. I know this doesn't have to do with child services but it does have to do with family services. So do you have anything within the Lac La Ronge Band under your mandate of child and family services that provides that kind of care giving and service to women that have been traumatized by . . .

Ms. Bell: — We do have our workers or family service workers. Our workers are open to anyone who needs to come in there for any kind of counselling. But professionally like as in our roles there, no. But we do listen and we do find the right resources for them.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — But you have no program as such targeted for use by that group of women?

Ms. Bell: — No.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Have you had any requests for that kind of thing?

Ms. Bell: — Not since I've been here, no.

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

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — This does speak to the question of what the healing process is going to be for children who have been sexually abused. What work are you doing right

now in terms of, you know, looking back at children who have been abused a few years ago and who may now be in their late teens or early 20's. Are there resources available to help those children deal with abuse issues? Do you have any kind of funding for that or are you able to offer any kind of services?

Mr. Kinequon: — Well basically our funding is through the Department of Indian Affairs. And when . . . unfortunately our services are primarily based on actual children in care. I guess the prevention services that we provide through our organization we've done so at our own will.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Do you mean by that you don't get formal funding for any kind of prevention work?

Mr. Kinequon: — Not necessarily no, no.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Neither federally or provincially?

Mr. Kinequon: — No. So what we've done out of our operations budget . . . because through our maintenance funding then, when we take a child into care, then we can access whatever services that we need for that particular child and then bill it back to the Department of Indian Affairs.

If we don't have that child in care, then we can't . . . it's not a billable expenditure, so then we have to find money from other places, and that usually means from our operation budget to provide for that. And we've done different things to establish a budget for prevention services.

In terms of the healing I think that, you know, you have to understand we're started late 1994. We're probably not up to the level of sophistication in terms of this organization that maybe the Department of Social Services is at, but I think that we've done reasonably well.

We access more services, specialized services, because by the time kids here get to 15, 16, their needs are much greater than what our services can provide. So then we have to look beyond to specialized treatment facilities.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thanks for clarifying that. Are there other questions, committee members? I wanted to ask you a question about children not in school — which I'd asked to Ron — and also kids on the street. Ron was mentioning that there are cases of kids under 16 who are not in school. To what degree is the problem of kids under 16 not in school and children on the street a problem in your communities?

Mr. Kinequon: — Part of the problem is that it's difficult to apprehend children for not going to go to school, okay? Now this is one of the things that I think that needs to be addressed through the political and community leadership. You know, what do you do with kids that don't go to school?

Previously children were taken into care and placed at Prince Albert's Student Indian Education Centre. So it was containment, removal and containment in another area. But for now that's one of the issues that we've been struggling with in Lac La Ronge Indian Band. And it's difficult . . . it places us as

an organization in a difficult position to go and apprehend a 14-year-old and place him into care because they refuse to go to school. So I would say, yes, it is a problem for us.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And is it a widespread problem or quite limited?

Mr. Kinequon: — Well I would say that it's probably . . . I started with Indian Child and Family Services in 1996 and I would say that I think it's better now than what it was previous. And I think that, you know, First Nations children are starting to see the benefits of education as you have more success; you know, students completing grade 12, things like that. I think that, you know, there's gains in that area.

But also in terms of the services. I think that, you know, we're able to intervene earlier so that, you know, you're not left with the same results that, you know, children provided no services would eventually just quit and just start hanging out and doing stuff like that. So I think that we're able to get to them sooner now.

So I optimistically say, I think that, you know, it is declining. That might be contrary to what other people feel, but I think it's getting better.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I just have one other question and that relates to the formal mandate of the committee, as you know, is to try to stop the involvement of children in the sex trade. And clearly, most of the sexual abuse that you're dealing with on . . . in your band is abuse that's happening in a home context or is by a relative or someone who's well-known to the child, who's part of the child's family.

These are questions really that Carolyn asked earlier but I think it's important for us to . . . they were asked. I don't know if you heard the question-and-answer exchange with members of the RCMP, but one of the questions that Carolyn asked was with respect to cases of pimping or cases where family members . . . You know, we heard testimony in Saskatoon and Regina, for instance, about family members in essence putting their children on the street or arranging sexual exchanges with other people for money. We heard some testimony this evening from members of the RCMP about their suspicion that tourists are exchanging money for sex with children in this community.

Have you seen any evidence of either of these phenomena in your own work? You know, evidence of pimping or . . . Well I've summed it up already, I won't repeat it.

Ms. Bell: — Well since I've been working with Indian Child and Family Services, I believe we've only come across two cases — and I've been here since 1996 — which . . . One involved in Stanley Mission, where the mother exchanged her daughter for beer. You know, you give me some beer and you can have sex with my daughter. That was one case.

The other one was a 13-year-old girl here in La Ronge, who, you know, was getting sex for money to buy clothes and whatever she needed. And there was only two cases that we had within our agency.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Right. And those were basically with people who were known, who were members of the community already. They didn't involve tourists there?

Ms. Bell: — No.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — So the tourist phenomena is one that you're just not sure about.

Ms. Bell: — I have no idea.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes, yes. Thank you very, very much. Are there other questions from committee members? Or did you have any . . .

Mr. Kinequon: — Can I talk?

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes, please.

Mr. Kinequon: — I think for us here the correlation is, you know, in terms of sexual exploitation involving drugs and alcohol, you know, relating directly to sexual abuse.

One of the things that I think, and I made a number of little notes. Some of them have actually been covered here, but I'll just kind of go over them. I think it's important.

Education. I agree with Sgt. Ron Savidan in terms of having — maybe not the homeroom teacher — sexual abuse as part of a curriculum, but I think somebody within the school system that is responsible for providing education to students throughout, right from the very start, right from when they get there to grade 12. There has to be some sort of relationship formed, and it has to be a person identified that deals exclusively with that.

I know with the budgets, education budgets and stuff, we had tried to place a social worker in a school and it didn't work out with ICFS and the school, as kind of a joint program. And just there was too many complications and I think part of it is that this position would be better suited if it was within the, you know, part of the school administration in terms of their curriculum.

Parents. We've been working with parents in terms of education, but it's difficult. We put on workshops and nobody shows up. So what do you do? You know, everyone is saying well, we need education. But, you know, if people . . . like have a look around here. How many people? How many community leaders are here tonight to come and hear about this? And I think that's paramount. If the community leaders don't understand that there's an issue here, how can we as service agencies provide services to the people?

One of the things that they need to do is influence people in order to attend these kinds of meetings, in order to attend our workshops. But before you can do that, you have to educate them and say we have this problem, you know. And they have to understand what the extent of the problem is.

Unfortunately this is a very sensitive area. People don't want to hear this kind of stuff, and they don't want to be asked any questions about it. That's why they don't show up. But in terms

of the political and community leadership, I think that's very significant in education endeavours. I think that that's kind of where we have to start. It's a kind of a top-down effect.

Reporting procedures. One of the problems with sexual abuse or sexual exploitation is the reporting procedures, is that people are afraid, you know. What if I say something or what if they find out? Right now in La Ronge we have a crisis line, but it's kind of connected to the Piwapan women's shelter and I'm not sure that people really perceive it for that kind of thing.

I've worked in Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service in Saskatoon and people identify that, you know. They know that that's a place that you can call and something will happen. So, you know, in terms of a call centre for La Ronge specifically, you know, for these kinds of issues, children's issues, I think would be beneficial.

Better training. In order to get a disclosure from somebody, you have to know what you want out of that person. And especially if they're three, four years old, you have to be qualified. We've only been able to send one person to the RCMP depot in Regina to receive the sexual abuse investigator training — one person in the . . . you know, since 1996 since I've been here. There's not enough spots; there's not enough training, ongoing training.

So, you know, as a service agency that deals with this, what do we do? You know, they say well, this is the only time we're going to be having it, in February here; it's for three weeks; you guys have one spot. You know, we had to, the last time we had to fight to get that one spot; we wanted two. So we only have one certified investigator. So there has to be . . . You know, the First Nation agencies, I think there's 18 in Saskatchewan now. A lot of those people don't have certified investigators. Even in DSS (Department of Social Services). You go over to a DSS office right now, and you go and ask them how many people here are certified to do investigations? None of them. I can tell you that right now. So, you know, how can you start to deal with the issues if you can't even have people out in the field that know what to do? How to respond?

The safe home for children. Social Services and our agency have been discussing having a safe home, and part of it is that sometimes you need a place to put children for the night, just until you figure out what's going on in the daytime.

Staff Sgt. Savidan talked about well, you know, a social worker picks up this kid and then they're home the next day and you wonder well what's going on. Well maybe there is no place else to place that child?

And I know with Department of Social Services, they're limited in terms of the service resources that they have. Sometimes they just don't have any place to put them, you know. For a community this size, if we were to work together and have a place where intakes . . . Intakes are the ones that that's the first contact. That first contact might be at 11 o'clock at night when somebody phones up and says . . . Joey here just said that so and so was touching them, and we may have to go and pick up that child.

Fortunately, we've been able to acquire more resources so we

have a better resource base, but still there are times sometimes when you pick up a child or there might be three in that home, you have no place to put them, so what do you do with them?

You know we've had workers that have had to take kids home because there is no place else to put them. So, you know, when you're talking about things that you can do, these are some of the things.

A reporting system on charged or convicted perpetrators. There was a little bit of discussion on a data base system. One of the things that as a service agency that deals primarily with the issue here today, is that we don't know who's who in the game here. How do we, how do we, you know, if we were doing a foster home study, a home study on a family, you know, this person could have been charged in Prince Albert. Maybe they weren't convicted but if they were charged and those are registered, you know, then if we had access to that information.

Plus that in terms of contact, you know, we have to be careful of course with the constitutional issues here but as an agency, like we need to have that information and I agree completely. I think there should be a data base. I think there should be reporting of convicted — I don't know what the term is — johns or whatever it is. And if they're going to P.A. for that or Saskatoon or whatever, if they're from this community I think that there has to be a mechanism in place that we find this out. Because they have families here, they have access to our children, you know, on a daily basis, and nobody knows what goes on in this town probably underneath all the cover than we do.

We know who's who. You know we try and know who's who, who's got this in their past or whatever because we're the people that need to know, you know, on reserve, eh.

Community sex offender support programs. I think Ron had spoke a bit about this. One of the things, I think, is that you know a statement was made earlier tonight that there is no cure for sex offenders. But nevertheless, these people still are from this community and I think it's important that, you know, it's that they come back here that they have some sort of community support.

You look at AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) and people like that, I mean they get together and, you know, is there something going on in that area that is perhaps through justice that that could be going on, that these people would have the support that they need from each other as well.

I think one of the . . . You'd asked about, Ms. Julé, about the gaps in the system I believe, and one of the biggest gaps is inter-agency co-operation. Everybody agrees this is an issue, you know, like any other that we face in the community but it comes down to sharing resources. Everyone says, well, hey, this is our money; we're going to use it just for our services. But they won't share with other organizations. I mean we have people that are trying to do the same things but independent of each other.

So there was a couple of years ago, I believe, there was an inter-agency committee here and they'd get together and have

lunch or whatever and coffee and talk about what they're doing, but nobody really was working together. And I think that's where we're missing the mark here.

There has to be some system. Like maybe we're not educated enough to understand how we could do this. Maybe if somebody came in and told us how we could work together better. Now there's a wraparound group and stuff like that that are starting some stuff.

But I think the divisions, the divisions between, you know, maybe . . . Well look at DSS, Social Services, and ICFS — the division is you guys work over there and we work over here. And you know, we're doing our own thing and they're doing their own thing. But you know addictions, there's a number of areas that I think that that's probably something that we could do here without a panel to come in and hear stuff like that. But it just doesn't happen. Everybody talks about it.

I think another area that's really important . . . And unfortunately recreation programs are the last programs; whatever's left in the pot for money at the end of the day, that's where it probably ends up. You take these kids that are running around at night. Part of the reason that they are running around is because they have nothing else to do. What has the town committed, what has the band committed to having some sort of evening recreation programs? You know, we don't have the city here. We don't have the show that they can go to or whatever.

So for a smaller community like us, that can be pretty significant. And unfortunately, like I said, they don't get the money for recreation.

That's all I have to say.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Well thank you very much. That was really very informative, and there were some things that you mentioned that other communities have also mentioned they needed and there's some that you mentioned that are new to us. So we thank you for that because it will help us to assess what kind of things can be done. You have been very specific with those things and that's even a greater help.

If there are no other committee members that have questions or if there's anything, nothing more that you have to bring forward we'd like to thank you so very, very much for coming and sharing with us.

Mr. Kinequon: — Thank you for having us.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — There's one other presenter but I think — Liz, you were interested in, were you interested in making some comments?

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — If you have time . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We do. I was just going to suggest that we have a quick stretch break if that's all right with you, and then we'd very much look forward to hearing from you.

The committee recessed for a period of time.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We'll continue with our hearings. We're missing our Co-Chair but we've also been advised that we have to wrap this up about 10 o'clock because there are people that have to make sure that all of the equipment and so on is packed up and ready to go.

So I'm going to go ahead and introduce Liz Tait — I don't know quite to pronounce your last name — Gruhlke. She's the assistant director of the Kikinahk Friendship Centre. And, Liz, if you could just give the committee just a little bit more of your background that would be very helpful, and then proceed with what you'd like to present to us.

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — Okay. How I'd like to address what we've been discussing is I'd like to speak on my capacity as assistant director at Kikinahk and the programs we provide. And what we try to do to address the issues of sex abuse and exploitation of children. I'd also like to speak from my capacity as past outreach crisis worker in the community of La Ronge and community Action Plan for Children coordinator. So I've worked with the children and I've worked with the mothers.

I'd also like to share with you that we have an extremely high rate of domestic violence. Our shelter services the northern communities and it operates at a 95 per cent full capacity at all times.

I'd also like to share with you that we have an extremely high rate of FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) and FAE (fetal alcohol effects) — parents and children.

And I'd also like to share with you that we have 11- and 13-year-old mothers in our community. Mothers who are children themselves.

I'd also like to share with you the impact of the residential school system on our community. The way it has impacted is that families are severely lacking in parenting skills. So there's a cycle that continues on and on. And you cannot have healthy children unless you have healthy families.

And this is what we try to do at Kikinahk. We have a prenatal nutrition worker who starts working with the young mothers during her pregnancy, encouraging healthy lifestyles. We provide life skills, parenting classes, just empowerment, self-esteem classes; we provide resources.

When that young mother is finished with her prenatal and postnatal care, she's then referred over to our teen and young parent worker who works with her and helps support her and helps empower her to have healthy children.

Considering that a lot of these young moms are coming from homes where violence and sexual abuse has been rampant, it is a multigenerational situation that we're trying to break the cycle now.

The Minister of Social Services was recently here and said there was going to be a new initiative to look after children in the first three years of life with providing home visits. There's going to be money available for FAS and FAE, and we're hoping that maybe we can access some of that money when it does come.

As far as the exploitation of children in the sex trade in La Ronge, I agree with Sgt. Savidan. The exploitation for the purposes of prostitution are from outsiders. But these children that are doing this are being exploited badly because these children are doing it for basic need, not for alcohol or drugs — for basic needs. The caretaker of sunrise apartments, just over here, was approached by a 10-year-old girl. This is a gentleman in his late 50's, early 60's. He was approached and offered sexual favours by a 10-year-old girl wanting a cigarette.

So it's a basic need. I mean it's a result of hunger, addictions. We have a high rate of alcohol addiction. We have a high rate of gambling addiction. We do have a lot of kids on the street. But the reason very often those kids are on the street is because they're afraid to go home or they don't want to go home.

For the off-reserve side of it with Social Services, myself as outreach crisis worker, I covered off for mental health, evenings and weekends. If there was a situation where a child was sexually abused, the on-call workers are very often not qualified to deal with sexual abuse. So any dealings with the child's trauma has to wait to the following day until there is a mental health worker or a social worker that's qualified. I'm talking about off-reserve; on-reserve may be different.

The other thing is there is an extreme shortage of housing in La Ronge, in town and on-reserve. In reserve there's many family members living in the same house. Off-reserve we have two buildings over here, you've probably noticed, that are in very, very poor shape.

Those buildings, one of them for sure and one over here at sunrise, have been leased out to NORTEP (northern teacher education program) students that are attending . . . taking education classes in the community. If there are women trying to escape the community, their community, with their children because of violence or sexual abuse, there's no housing here for them; there's none at all.

So housing is a big issue, poverty is a big issue, transportation is a big issue. There's also a lot of cultural issues involved whereas what one family member does reflects on the whole family, on the whole community.

So therefore very often sexual abuse isn't reported because that person that's the perpetrator may be an authority figure, either within the band council or with Social Services, and people are reluctant to disclose. It's something that comes out through a relationship of trust. It's not something that just . . . and especially if an extended family member is employed at mental health, ICFS, within the band or within Kikinahk, they don't want to talk about it. That's an issue as well.

Like I said, selling sex for the children, I believe it's more for a basic need than anything. And many of these children are FAS/FAE so they have no clue about consequences. You know that their need is being fulfilled immediately. And they're probably going to go and spend all that money right away, either at KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) or something, you know. It's a basic need that they're trying to fulfil.

We've had incidences where 10-year-old boys have violently

assaulted 4-year-old girls in our community, in this area, right here. It's a learned behaviour. How Kikinahk tries to address it is through our programs, through developing a relationship of trust with our clients.

We also provide a lot of conferences. Our conferences are well attended. They are free to the community. We use our government funding for our programs to bring in people. We bring in Indian people who present . . . for instance, Don Burnstick. We've brought in people to talk about AIDS (acquired immune deficiency) and HIV ((human immunodeficiency virus)). We've held a youth wellness conference. We've held FAS/FAE (fetal alcohol syndrome/fetal alcohol effects) conferences.

We've tried to bring the elders and the youth together because the elders are very important to the youth in our community and that's what they want. And I really believe that more involvement between the elders and the children is what's needed.

There's also an issue, too, where a lot of people would like to embrace their heritage and find healing through tradition. And unfortunately that very often is not regarded in a good way by the parents because a lot of the parents are predominantly Anglican. And if the young people want to find healing through their traditions and by going back to their roots, they're afraid of upsetting their parents, of upsetting politics. So being able to find that healing is sometimes difficult for them.

What we do at Kikinahk is we work with the families, we work with the parents, we provide programs for the children, and we do attend the interagency meetings. I'm part of the wraparound committee. We've introduced the wraparound plan in La Ronge and it's just starting off and I'm sure that'll really help us a lot.

We do have a sexual wellness coordinator employed by the health centre and she has done some things with our youth outreach worker, taking the youth to conferences in the South relating to sexual wellness.

We've really been trying to use every aspect that we have. And then, of course, we have the Aboriginal Head Start preschool. And we use the second step — domestic violence curriculum in there — and we try to teach the kids empathy, hostility, to get in touch with their feelings. So those kids are three and four years old and we're trying to help them that way.

We also have issues where there's . . . Many of the perpetrators are children themselves, you know. And they don't understand the consequences of their actions because of their FAS or FAE situation.

And, for instance, I just want to share something with you too. It's not only men that are sexually exploiting in our community. There's young girls who will sexually exploit young males or older males. They'll approach this person or they'll party with this male till the male passes out. And he's going to wake up in the morning and he's going to be robbed. And this is what the young girls do. They're exploiting for a basic need, not for sex.

So that's really all I have to share with you. It's a different

situation than in the urban communities. That, in my opinion, in the urban communities it's people that have left their home community without any support within their home community and they've just taken their problem from one place to another. Because I really believe it begins here.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you very much, Liz.

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — You're welcome.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — That was presented to us in very clear, concise language, and that's helpful for us. I thank you for that. And I'm just going to ask the committee members if they have any questions that they'd like to ask right now.

Mr. Yates: — I'm glad you brought up the point of what the role of residential schools played. And earlier this evening I talked about that in a question. And I agree we have multigenerational problems as a result. And parents becoming parents without parenting skills and then not being able to pass on what they don't have to their own children.

And you talk about some of the programs you've introduced in the community and to a centre to deal with that, but realistically do you have the resources and the abilities to change the cycle with the current . . . in the current situation?

We're dealing with a . . . each year or each generation, I would imagine, the parenting skills are further and further diluted or are changing. Have you . . . do you believe you have the resources in the community today to deal with this problem?

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — I don't believe we have the resources but I believe that if everyone can, if we can save one mother or one child, then we've done something.

And I also believe that if more people would take the time, if they see children walking on the street . . . For instance, there was two young girls here this evening. I sent them home. It's dark outside. I'm afraid for you. Go home. Rather than use an authoritative approach, you know — I'm afraid for you; would you please go home. It lets the child know that somebody cares about them rather than using a get out of here sort of an attitude.

Mr. Yates: — Do you believe the community understands the problem? Because one of the first stages in dealing with a comprehensive complex problem in the community is to understand you have the problem. Do you believe the community understands?

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — I believe the community does understand to a certain extent but I don't think enough people can look at the problem from their heart. That's what I feel. I think they look at it as a dysfunction in society rather than something that can change.

Mr. Yates: — So they've accepted it as a norm basically — the dysfunction as a norm?

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — I think some people have, yes. And another issue too is we're extremely short of social workers in the North. Extremely short.

And Social Services just brought in a new policy that you have to have a degree for employment, whereas in the past you could work in the North with a certificate. And there's many qualified people in the North with a certificate or with the life experience or the caring to work in that aspect. And of course now we've been cut because you require a degree rather than a certificate.

Mr. Toth: — One question — how many people do you have helping you in your centre?

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — We employ approximately 25 people. We have a family service worker, teen and young parent worker, prenatal nutrition worker and assistant, mediation diversion worker, youth outreach worker, recreation director. And we're constantly trying to bring in new programs.

We have a wonderful staff in the way that they want to do something for the community, and all it takes is one person to do one thing.

Mr. Toth: — And where would you receive your funding from? Who do you receive your funding from, I guess?

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — Some of our funding comes from Health Canada for the prenatal nutrition and the Aboriginal Head Start preschool. The rest of our funding comes from Social Services and Justice and our core funding comes, of course, from the Heritage Fund.

Mr. Toth: — Okay. And I guess one other question. In all the dealings you've had with young people, and I think maybe . . . I may be wrong, but it seems to me that as a result of the, whether it's the sexual abuse or early involvement in sexual activities, you do have a lot of young, especially First Nations girls with babies on hand. And maybe . . . from what I've heard, that's a situation here, even in this community.

Your group, agency, I take it, is trying to address and help these young girls realize their responsibilities of having given life to a little child, the responsibility of trying to raise them. A question I have is, are you finding that you seem to be accomplishing some of the goals you've set for yourself in trying to raise the esteem and provide some parenting skills?

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — It's strange, but with the younger girls that come, they enjoy learning. They enjoy learning about healthy lifestyles, what's healthy for their baby. And I do believe we have a greater success rate with the younger girls learning some positive parenting skills and healthy lifestyles, because they simply have not become addicted yet to alcohol and drugs. Whereas a lot of the older mothers are already addicted and that's more difficult of course.

Mr. Toth: — And one final question. Is there any way of addressing the consequences of open sexual involvement resulting in pregnancy?

When you're dealing with a lot of these children and realizing the consequences, like if it's an assault, there's not much they can do about it. If there is just open activity, then there may be some ways of preventing possibly that pregnancy they may not have wanted.

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — Then our prenatal nutrition worker has developed a relationship of trust with those clients and she will support that young girl or older person in any decision that they make. And what we try to do is empower them to make a decision that's right for them.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Can I just follow up that last comment quickly. How do you try to empower them? Like what strategies do you employ to empower these young girls?

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — Self-esteem, talking about self-esteem, positive reinforcement. Many of us get our self-esteem from our accomplishments. We run a cooking and sewing program once a week. We have talking circles. We have conferences. We have programs. And through that way.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you. Are there any other members of the committee that would like to . . . Okay. I just wanted to ask you one quick question before I turn it over to Peter then.

Oftentimes your efforts or people's efforts are sort of thwarted in a sense because politics gets in the way, and I wonder if you could tell us whether you've experienced that and just how that happens, and what you would suggest to try to alleviate that problem.

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — I can give an example. Our prenatal nutrition worker is an Aboriginal person. A lot of the women in the community want to come to her but she can't go on-reserve because on-reserve has their own prenatal nutrition worker.

There's a lot of transferring back and forth as well. For instance a member of a family may leave a reserve, transfer over to off-reserve, then she'd become Social Services. And there's a jurisdiction issue involved and that's politics and jurisdiction. And it's very unfortunate because I agree with Dexter, we could work together better if there wasn't that political and jurisdiction issue.

And it's the same for Social Services too. They can't go on-reserve, but we are a friendship centre and people from reserve are welcome to come to our centre any time. But of course if they live on-reserve and they need prenatal care or addictions treatment, then we will refer them to the reserve workers.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you very much.

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — You're welcome.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I just really have one question, Liz, and I guess, I mean, you have a wealth of experience here at the friendship centre with all the issues that you addressed. In terms of a . . . I don't know if you've thought . . . And you've obviously got a lot of good programs in place, and despite the duplication that may exist and the jurisdictional problems, there's still a lot of good work happening.

But in terms of a . . . It sounds like the sexual abuse issues —

and this is only one dimension of a much larger problem that we're only beginning to explore tonight — but it sounds like the incidence of sexual abuse in the community is alarmingly high, and it has many dimensions to it.

At the local level here, through the friendship centre or elsewhere, has there been any thought given to kind of a collective strategy for addressing this issue? And if there has, what parts of that collective strategy have you not been able to put into place yet, but would like to put into place?

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — The only thing that we can do at the moment is be a part of the wraparound process, be involved with the sexual wellness coordinator, provide sexual wellness awareness. That is all that we can do at the moment. Our administrator is presently working on a proposal to try and get someone in to look after sexual health and victims of sexual abuse.

And if we do have a child disclosed to us here — say if it's in the preschool or the after-school program or any other area — we immediately refer that to our family service worker, and our family service worker contacts Social Services for someone who is qualified in child sexual abuse.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Right. Well listen, thank you. Are there any other questions? I don't want to cut off questions. Thank you so much for a wonderful presentation and for your generosity in making this space available to us.

Ms. Tait Gruhlke: — I wish you well in your endeavours.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thanks a lot, Liz.

The committee adjourned at 10 p.m.