



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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The committee met at 9:30 a.m.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Raymond and Mel, we want to welcome you here. We're very much looking forward to your testimony. We'll maybe just take a minute to introduce you to all members of the committee.

As you know, I'm Peter Prebble. I'm one of the Co-Chairs of the committee. I represent the constituency of Saskatoon Greystone. And I'll just let other members of the committee introduce themselves, starting with Arlene.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I'm Arlene Julé. I'm the MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) from Humboldt and I'm really happy to see you here with us today. I'm, as Mr. Prebble mentioned, co-chairing the committee with him.

We have some other very capable and wonderful members of our committee and we'll start over here on this side with introductions.

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

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

Ms. Jones: — Carolyn Jones, MLA, Saskatoon Meewasin.

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

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And we have absent at this time Don Toth. He's the MLA for Moosomin. He'll be able to join us this afternoon but he just couldn't be here this morning.

So we'd like to welcome you and just ask you to relax and go on with your presentation, be comfortable; and we're eager to hear from you.

Mr. Shingoose: — So do you just want me to begin?

A Member: — Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Shingoose: — Okay, my name is Raymond Shingoose. I'm the executive director for Yorkton Tribal Council Child & Family Services. And to my right is Mel Tourangeau. He's one of my program managers.

We provide services to 10 First Nations. We pretty well cover southeastern Saskatchewan. We're one of 18 ICFS (Indian Child and Family Services) agencies in Saskatchewan and we're just now going into our fifth year of operations. We're a fairly new organization but we're not old. I think the services were provided prior to the establishment of ICFS agencies in First Nations countries.

And I guess the purpose of this presentation is to talk and discuss child sexual abuse and exploitation of sexual abuse on children.

I would say the contact that we do have generally with all child sexual abuse cases within our First Nations is about, I'd say,

about 10 per cent of our cases that we're presently administering and providing services.

And I'd say about another 10 per cent of the overall caseload that we do have stems from our major urban centres — Regina, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver. We do have families with ties in these major urban centres and sometimes we do get children in care that bring the, I guess, the street culture along with them.

And I guess through our case transfers, whether it be from DSS (Department of Social Services) in Saskatchewan or interprovincially, and I'd say about 20 per cent of the overall caseload is pretty well hidden child sexual abuse.

When we initially started, we started flushing out cases — first, second, third, fourth generation — of child sexual abuse, and in all areas I guess coming from the urban centres, the street life, the prostitution that's out there. Sometimes the children of prostitutes come into our care and they also bring that culture along with them. And also with the legacy of residential school, physical and sexual abuse that occurred in that era. And also from the generations that are existing up until now in dealing in that area.

And also a new area is a concern for — and it's very limited right now — is ritual abuse. I guess all forms of types of sexual abuse that we're trying to provide programs for, and we're very limited with the resources that we do have right now in areas of prevention, intervention, outreach, and education, and awareness. I guess mainly providing for the best interest of our First Nations children and their families and the community-based program that we're trying to provide for all our communities that we're serving. We're very limited in our resources that we do presently have.

And I guess one area of concern is the legislation that we're presently using. Right now, we use a combination of the FSIN child welfare and family support Act and the provincial child welfare Act and Family Services Act. And I guess it's a more of a political nature, for in order to access funding to provide the service for these children, for example, section 61, I think it needs to be more clear and probably accessing the authority of the minister in order to access funding for services for our First Nations children and our families on-reserve. We never actually did get to those discussions but we're still there as we speak now.

But basically if we focus on our programming, whether it be talk about prevention or intervention and outreach, I guess, culture is one of our ... a major component of our programming and I believe that First Nations people are probably about the best experts in this whole area. It's in our social legacy. It is also the main factor which permits us to live together in a society. It gives us solutions to our problems. It helps us to predict the behaviour of others and it permits others to know what to expect of us. And these elements would exist within our extended family systems.

I guess as ICFS professionals we are more aware of the norms and values and the elements of our culture. And norms are

patterns of conduct, which are regarded as right and proper, which flow from the teachings of our elders. And when we advocate for these children, we speak from a position which comes from understanding of these norms and these values. We see these norms of conducts in terms of certain criteria which consist of objectives, ends, aims, or goals of life which are associated with the values.

We do a lot of dialogue and discussion with our elders in the area of developing programs for these children. And again we get into the resources, and we just do not have the resources in order to attain this because our front-line workers are more . . . they're more into development procedures for, I guess, reporting child sexual abuse, investigation, validation of the abuse, placement, apprehension, involvement of the justice system, voluntary or involuntary removal of perpetrators, community healing for the victims, victims' families, perpetrators, and the whole communities at large, crisis counselling, medical assistance for victims, and contact with an involvement of various services, and other procedures as required.

We are presently looking at treatment programs within our fairly new facilities that we're just now getting into, which is our treatment group homes. We only have one in the area right now and another one in the developmental stages.

The four agencies are presently working together in the Treaty Four Territory. There's Yorkton Tribal Council, File Hills agency, Touchwood, and Qu'Appelle, and we formed a stabilization and assessment centre out on the Muskowekwan First Nation. And we just opened the doors here November 1. And again there too I guess we're trying to attain resources in order to establish a program, a sexual abuse treatment and prevention program.

And again there we like to include I guess traditional community-based approaches: healing circles, survivor support groups, self-help groups for perpetrators, anger management programs, and counselling by our elders. And it will include, we hope, a residential program to provide specialized in-patient treatment for sexual abuse victims. And again, there we're consulting with our elders in this whole area. And again, too, we're . . . this is a fairly new area for us.

And the services that we do provide right now are very limited.

We do, however, try and work with DSS but we have a jurisdictional problem there. We're only mandated to provide services to on-reserve, but we do get a lot of referrals from off-reserve families and children that do live in urban centres who would prefer to go through the ICFS agencies. I guess it's because of the norms and the values that we're all associated with.

And we are open to that requirement. However, we do have some protocols, and one protocol specifically to off-reserve services, and also outreach and the services for children who have been exploited by the sex trade. And we're prepared to do that.

Maybe I'll stop there. Do you want to add anything?

Mr. Tourangeau: — I just wanted to add, in regards to what Raymond said, we do a lot of referrals from the cities, and when they do come to us, we don't have the resources available to accommodate some of these kids' problems because some of the kids that do come back to the First Nations are streetwise and when they do go to the reserve they bring some of their negative influences with them.

And one remark I heard from some people was a kind of a . . . kind of just stirred me up a bit, is in regard to the possibility these kids are starting to start prostitution on the reserves, First Nations level, young children, some of these young teenagers. And when they start that, a lot of things come with them, a lot of the social disease and stuff that come along with it.

But I would really like to see a lot more awareness, education and awareness in regards at the First Nations level. It's got to have a big effect on our First Nations people.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, thank you. We're going to open up some questions from the committee members if you don't mind taking those at this time. Okay, Ron.

Mr. Harper: — Well, thank you, gentlemen, for coming in and thank you for your enlightening presentation.

Are you aware of any sexual trade going on here in the city of Yorkton involving children under the age of 16? And by that I don't mean necessarily just somebody out on the stroll or on the streets looking for an exchange of dollars and cents for sexual favours, but any type of exchange, any type of reward that an individual would receive for exchange of sexual favours — whether it be shelter, whether it be food, whether it be cash awards, drugs, alcohol, anything like that. Are you aware of any activity like that in the city of Yorkton?

Mr. Shingoose: — No, not in the city of Yorkton. But maybe it's because of our lack of communications with the other organizations within the city.

Mr. Harper: — Do you believe that that might be going on on the reserves outside the city of Yorkton?

Mr. Shingoose: — Oh yes.

Mr. Harper: — You say oh yes with a great deal of authority. Would you say it is a large problem on reserves, at the reserve level?

Mr. Shingoose: — It's just beginning.

Mr. Tourangeau: — Yes, it's just beginning. I think the time now is to really get on it before it does come to the . . . a big problem.

Mr. Harper: — What would be the motivating factor behind it being established? What's causing it to take root?

Mr. Tourangeau: — I would assume that a lot of these kids, like a lot of our . . . they don't have the money or the material things like other kids have. And you see that in a lot of First Nations where a lot of people don't have what . . . you know,

like what normally kids'll love to have in regards to their name brand clothes, and teenagers are . . . you know, they want the best but in some situations they can't afford those things when on the First Nations.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you.

Ms. Draude: — I just have a couple of questions. I was interested to hear about the different Acts that you have to work under. You identified the one through FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) and also section 61.

I have a double question on this one. Is the FSIN Act that you work under, is that more clear than section 61?

Mr. Shingoose: — The FSIN Act is legislation . . . It's not legal right now but in the future we hope that . . . It's a framework Act right now; it's more geared to the design of programs for First Nations people — children and families.

It takes into account the . . . I guess the culture, the traditions. And also taking into account the socio-economic conditions that our First Nations people are living under, and I guess the environmental realities that we face. And I don't want to get into that right now but it still has to be revisited. But right now it's just a framework Act.

Ms. Draude: — Okay. I appreciate that. Maybe then if you're designing that Act, maybe you can give us some suggestions on how you'd like to see section 61 changed to work better for you.

Mr. Shingoose: — Well I think if we . . . Again we have to consult with our own politicians and our own First Nations leadership on whether or not . . . if we can invoke the minister's authority on First Nations country without impeding treaties, etc. Also that was a major concern that our leadership had . . . have.

And the other one again is the resources, the funding. If the province can allocate or give us some funds to provide services on-reserve, like we'd be prepared to do that. And I believe section 61 can allow us to do that.

Ms. Draude: — Can you tell me what in section 61 is the problem?

Mr. Shingoose: — It's not really clear. We've had the discussion many times regionally with other ICFS agencies. But basically, I guess it's in regard to the aspirations of First Nations people in order to provide services to their communities. There's nothing there in the areas of prevention, intervention because the Department of Indian Affairs does not provide us dollars for prevention or intervention programs. We're more protection orientated, where we go in after the fact rather than being proactive.

Ms. Draude: — So then it's not really changes to the Act, it's more additions to the Act and then . . . and finances to follow up?

Mr. Shingoose: — I think it's more utilization.

Ms. Draude: — Okay. So if you had to tell us what you think could be done to break the culture of child sex abuse and/or prostitution, what would your suggestions be?

Mr. Shingoose: — Prevention, education awareness, intervention programs, institutionalized safe homes of some sort, I guess working in partnership with DSS in order to try and address a lot of these cases that are coming from the cities that are coming into our area.

Ms. Draude: — I just have one last question that's . . . we've had many witnesses testify and the first time I've heard somebody talk about the elder abuse. Now maybe that's not really sexual at all . . . in . . . at all times but is that a concern; is that a growing concern?

Mr. Shingoose: — Oh yes, it is a growing concern. We do have a . . . I guess we have a . . . I don't know what . . . In this era, in this day and age, we do have a different breed, where I guess you could define culture in many forms. But there is a culture out there that . . . where the, especially the young people, are negating away from the values that were taught to us by our elders and where they actually start abusing these elders.

And also, we also have elders abusing children. That can go both ways.

Because of the, I guess, the conditions that we're living under, we have . . . I guess because of the roles, responsibilities are taken away from these children; because of how the mainstream society is set up, that too could be argumentative.

And also the responsibilities, again, the roles of the parents are very limited in . . . I'm just talking on-reserve here. The community members, the leadership, the elders — we have government organizations making decisions for all these entities in First Nations country. And they get frustrated. They have literally nowhere to go and they usually resort to family violence, drugs, alcohol, physical, sexual abuse. And that's where that stems from.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you. Carolyn, you had some questions.

Ms. Jones: — Just feeling a little bit unsure of your answers to Ron Harper's questions about is the sex trade happening on-reserve and you said oh yes. But then I got the feeling later in your answer that you were talking about children of the reserve being involved in this activity in town. Now I'm unsure as to what really your answer was — I believe it was yours — when Ron said, you know, are you aware of children involved in Yorkton and you said no. And then he said on the reserve and you said, oh yes.

So are they involved in the sex trade on-reserve, or are they reserve children coming to town doing their trade and then coming back home later.

Mr. Tourangeau: — That was Raymond that said oh yes.

Ms. Jones: — Oh, okay. Now we're all confused.

Mr. Shingoose: — Okay, that's just from the stats that come to my table. Like for example, the town of Kamsack, we have three First Nations in the area. It is a growing concern. It's not really out in the open yet but we do know it exists out there where the sex trade is starting to happen in these small — what do you want to call them? — these small/large towns where they're surrounded by First Nations. And again these children will, with the influx of children from the urban centres, you know, they put . . . they get educated there too and they try and . . . they're training grounds and . . .

Ms. Jones: — So they're being drawn in by the children from the urban centres but they're still living with their parents on-reserve. So they'll go to town and do some trade and then come back home.

Mr. Shingoose: — Yes.

Ms. Jones: — Okay. That's all for now. I may have some more in a minute.

Mr. Yates: — Yes, thanks very much for your presentation. I have some questions around the issue of child sexual abuse and children being drawn into the trade or recruited in your area. You use the number of statistics of about 10 per cent of the cases you deal with are child abuse cases and so on and so forth. Have you seen actual evidence of recruitment of children from your First Nations reserves that you work with being recruited to go into Regina or Saskatoon to work on the streets there?

This question comes from comments made from earlier presenters in Regina and Saskatoon, talking about there were kids coming in, children coming in from reserves just at certain times of the month — perhaps end of the month when there was no money — to raise money and that type of thing on the streets of Regina and Saskatoon. Are you aware of those types of circumstances?

Mr. Shingoose: — No. I have to say no, other than the contact that we do have, the relationship that we do have with the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and the referrals that we do get from them, whether we review files or case plan, other than the notifications that we get from the RCMP.

Mr. Yates: — Okay. My second question is are you aware of children, attendance of children in school. Are there times of the month where there's more truancy or those types of things that would lead to that type of problem?

Mr. Shingoose: — I'm not aware.

Mr. Tourangeau: — I think a lot of . . . there is some truancy in regards to . . . (inaudible) . . . because it goes down to social and economic situations again. I know a lot of kids don't go to school because of their no school lunch and stuff kind of thing. But other than that, I'm not really, like I didn't really.

Mr. Yates: — Okay, thank you.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Are there other committee members that would like to pose more questions before Mr. Prebble and myself do? Okay, thank you.

Thank you for your presentation. It was well done and we appreciate what you have informed us about. I just have a couple of questions regarding The Child and Family Services Act and c. 61 and the problems that you've sort of tried to articulate for us surrounding that.

So we've had this brought to the committee, in fact just yesterday, at hearings at Fort Qu'Appelle. And when I hear this a lot of questions come to my mind. So in Fort Qu'Appelle, for instance, we were told that there is funding that does come from the Department of Social Services for children that move from off-reserve back onto the reserve. And so that is for their maintenance mostly, okay.

So they identified that there isn't any funding in place for administration to be able to function — the child and family services administration. So for things such as travel or any other expenses incurred with administering intervention programs or prevention programs, that's where the problem lies as far as funding is concerned. Is that correct?

Mr. Shingoose: — Yes, that's correct.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, okay. So then the question that came to my mind was that I know that each band gets federal funding, a global budget from the federal government yearly. And so I'm wondering is there not . . . If this issue is of a major priority, and it has been stated by many Indian leaders and grassroots Indian and Metis people that it is a priority, is it not the responsibility of the chiefs and council to identify this as such and to then take the action, as far as using federal funding, to designate some of that funding for prevention and intervention and the administration of programs surrounding this issue?

Because if it is a priority issue, then it seems to me that . . . I don't know what the global funding is; I think it's per population obviously; it's administered or given out per population on reserves. But I'm just wondering if there has been any discussion throughout the . . . you know, in the Assembly of First Nations and so on about prioritizing the issue and possibly using some federal funding that comes from the federal government to be designated towards addressing this issue.

Mr. Shingoose: — We do access limited funds out of our operations budget.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Out of what?

Mr. Shingoose: — Operations. It's funded through 20-1. It's a document that came out of Ottawa to Saskatchewan region, and Saskatchewan region developed a child and care policy manual that they use regionally, and they fund us on a formula — on a population of on-reserve children. And it's very limited. Prevention and legal fees also come of that operations budget. If you look at . . . whereas DSS, they include that as part of their maintenance.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So is the operations budget a component of the larger global budget that bands get?

Mr. Shingoose: — No. It just deals mainly with administration, staffing, office space.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. You really have to help me and educate me here, okay. Because I honestly don't know how. So what would the bands use the global funding from the federal government for?

Mr. Shingoose: — The bands don't have nothing to do with the utilization of global budget. We're a separate organization from the tribal council.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — What do you mean you don't have anything to do with it? Does each band not get global funding?

Mr. Shingoose: — We have a board, a board of directors. They're the ones that enter into funding arrangements with the Department of Indian Affairs. And we develop a, pretty well a bare-bones skeleton budget that we have to operate within.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — But you get money per capita from . . . don't you?

Mr. Shingoose: — For on-reserve children only.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes.

Mr. Tourangeau: — I'll maybe just clarify this a bit. I think what you're talking about, the First Nations band; and we are, we're talking about ICFS agency.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — But you're part of the band. The agency is part of the band, of the band operations, isn't it?

Mr. Shingoose: — Yes.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So you're linked.

Mr. Shingoose: — In some fashion, yes we are.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — It's not as though the Child and Family Services agency is separate from the identification with the band. You're a component of the band and the services you provide are for the band.

Mr. Shingoose: — Yes. The band doesn't have any . . . we handle our own in regards to our operations and maintenance. We look after it ourselves. The band doesn't have an input in it.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — The band and council certainly have a broader view of the needs of the people on the reserves. Do they not speak with the people that are already providing some services like yourself?

Mr. Shingoose: — Yes, they're external advocacy, political advocacy.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I'm just wondering. I won't go

on with this because this can kind of end up in a big ball of wax, as it has. But I guess the bottom line is, funding is needed. There's no two ways about it.

So all I'm doing here is I'm wondering where it can come from and if money that's already being distributed, either from the federal government or from elsewhere, can be used as far as helping you with administration of some of these things. So I'm trying to understand why it can't be.

Mr. Shingoose: — There's some major differences between the provincial systems that we have presently incorporated within our billing procedures and also with billings to the Department of Indian Affairs in the areas of maintenance.

According to the child care policy manual that the Department of Indian Affairs implements on us, is we're only allowed to access 10 sections of the provincial legislation in order to access funding to provide services for children in care.

Now whereas when we bill DSS we could access section 5 and section 14, and whereas with IANAC (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) we can't access section 5 and section 14.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Well you know quite a lot about that. That's good. I'll have a further talk with you about that down the road.

Just one more question before I turn it over to Mr. Prebble. In your comments you had referred to the measures that are sort of being taken as far as your programming and trying to offer programs for girls that have been sexually abused and everything that surrounds the detriment to people's lives with that.

Now there's a lot of focus on providing those services and I sincerely hope that the design and implementation of those programs comes to fruition for you.

In your design of programs and education and awareness and how you're going to mete out your endeavour to have awareness and education, have you thought about and has there been any concerted effort to educate the men on-reserve to say no to the girls if the girls should approach the men to sell themselves? And possibly just an education and awareness program that is projected towards those people that might offend the children.

Mr. Shingoose: — We have ideas on how we'd like to go about it but no, we don't have the dollars to provide . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — What are some of your ideas?

Mr. Shingoose: — Well, in the areas of education awareness, I think we could utilize our elders. We could utilize people who have been through the system. We could use professionals that are out there. And all this usually costs dollars, usually by . . . either by way of workshops, symposiums, or programs within the education systems, in the health areas.

What we're lacking, I guess, and hoping that we can reach an objective out of this is maybe to come up with a treatment

model for children that we already have in care, and also to prevent children from coming into care.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. In utilizing your elders, has there been any discussions surrounding making sure that there's a respect and, I guess, honour upheld for the women that are elders to be able to contribute to raising cultural awareness and spiritual values again and re-teaching them.

Mr. Shingoose: — Oh yes.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Because that contribution is usually voluntary, voluntary and it would, I think, be a very wonderful way of involving elders in certainly a more meaningful way.

Mr. Shingoose: — Yes, it can be done.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Good.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Well, Raymond and Mel, I want to thank you very much for your presentation and your comments, and I'm quite excited by some of the ideas you have around prevention and awareness and safety on the, you know, on-reserve.

I think the one thing I'd like to do is explore a little bit more the area that you were raising with Mr. Harper and Ms. Jones, and that is for us to be as clear as we can about what the nature of the problem you face on-reserve is and what you think the province can do to help. And I think one of the things we hear you saying is that you'd like to see some amendments to The Child and Family Services Act; and obviously you would like to see more resources.

But for us to be clear, I mean I think we know in our communities, whether it's non-Aboriginal or Aboriginal, that we've got child sexual abuse occurring in homes. We know you face that on the reserve; we face it off the reserve.

You're now talking about another problem emerging, which is young people coming back from the cities where they have been involved in the child sex trade and influencing other children to become involved in it, and that problem is kind of cropping up both on the reserve and in urban communities off the reserve.

Can you — and I realize that because this is just starting, you may not have a full handle on it yet — but can you describe this in as much detail as you possibly can, and share with us any thoughts about how the province might help you in tackling it.

You know, how widespread is this problem? How many young people are involved? What are their ages? Who are they, yes, engaging in sex with? What's being exchanged? Is it money? Or is it, you know, drugs and alcohol or is it an exchange of money for shelter? And of course you've got a lot of different First Nations that you're working with, so I mean there's . . . this phenomena may vary from one community to another.

But can you describe it for us in as much detail as possible and share with us any thoughts that you might have about what the

provincial government might be able to do to help you combat it?

Mr. Shingoose: — Probably, I guess to prevent the recruitment of, I guess, children going into the sex trade either by way of providing outreach services, whether it be in the city of Regina, Saskatoon, or even here in Yorkton. And I guess working in partnership with DSS.

I think we have the expertise and the ability to provide programs for these children in areas of intervention, prevention, and education, and getting some people to really focus in that area. And I think we're quite open to ideas, suggestions, because this is a fairly new area for us also.

And I think we need to educate ourselves too in what kind of programs we have to develop for these children in order to, I guess, keep these children occupied, whether it be stay-in-school programs or some sort of incentives to make them feel good for healthy lifestyles.

And I believe a lot of . . . I guess a major area would be drugs, drugs and alcohol, but mainly drugs. There's a large influx of drugs on-reserve. And usually the sex trade is usually linked to the drug trade and they go hand in hand together. And for me that is a fear that . . . will happen on-reserve. And in order to prevent those things from happening, I think you really need to focus on prevention programs.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes. These are, I think, very good suggestions.

You'll know some of the children. You obviously won't know everybody who's being impacted by this, but how many children do you estimate are becoming involved in the sex trade on-reserve right now among the 10 First Nations that you . . .

Mr. Tourangeau: — It's hard to really say right now because recently just . . . like these things just came up just recently. And then that's when they kind of made me kind of — how would I say — just perk up a bit, something that's going have to be dealt with pretty quick.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Right.

Mr. Tourangeau: — And one way I was looking at it is . . . was thinking of doing is if we had a . . . for the schools, there's a lot of schools on the First Nations, the high schools and stuff, I'd make presentations to the kids on the reserve regarding what this is all about and what the negative things would come out of this.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Raymond, and Mel, we want to thank you very much for a very good presentation and for sharing your knowledge with us this morning. We'll make sure we get you a copy of our final report. And we'll discuss this issue more, I'm sure, in the months to come. Thank you very, very much.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you. And I just want to commend you for the work you're doing with Child and Family Services. Good luck. Thank you.

The committee recessed for a period of time.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We're going to get started. And we welcome you today and thank you very much for coming. It's much appreciated. Whatever you can offer us is, like I said, certainly appreciated, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Before we do that though, I'm just going to take a moment to allow the committee members to introduce themselves so you know who you're speaking to.

Okay, over here.

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

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

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

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

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And Kim, I'm Arlene Julé. I'm the MLA for Humboldt and I'm co-chairing the committee with Peter Prebble. We also have missing today Carolyn Jones. She is an MLA from Saskatoon and she had to leave early today.

So I'm just going to ask you to maybe just mention your full name to the committee and just give a little bit of a background, your background work.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Sure. My full name is Kim Kyle-Zwirski. I got married four years ago so I've got a huge last name. Refused to give up my maiden name. I've been working in the human services industry for probably the past 10 years. I've worked in an adolescent group home for troubled youth. I've worked as the director of the Boys and Girls Club of Yorkton and I've also worked at the Yorkton Friendship Centre in the past. My focus has primarily been at youth at risk, so when I got this it was very appropriate.

I guess that's probably my history in brief. I'm currently working towards my bachelor of social work, slowly doing it. And that's where my background is.

Currently — for the past month — I am the family services worker at the Yorkton Friendship Centre. It entails everything. It's basically . . . What our mandate at the friendship centre is to assist Aboriginals coming off the reserve into urban settings and help them with the adjustment with that.

We are currently looking at changing that mandate because a lot of the Aboriginal people have pretty much lived in the urban centres before and so we have to look at changing it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I thought it was the person that was supposed to be joining me tonight. Nope, that's not him. It's media.

When I was first asked to speak before this committee, I struggled with some ideas to come up with it . . . As I mentioned, in conversations before, Yorkton doesn't really have organized sex trade per se. However, saying that, it doesn't

mean it's not a problem. If anything, Yorkton has the potential for it to become a problem. Yorkton is currently experiencing some economic growth. They're predicting that in the next five years we're looking at doubling the population of Yorkton.

I have talked to Owen Genaille, who is a board member of the Yorkton Friendship Centre, and also works at Arcadia Youth Centre and works at the Yorkton Regional High School as a teacher's assistant in a special classroom. He has mentioned to me that he does know specifically of girls that are involved in the sex trade. Not for money, that they do it for whatever their need may be — cigarettes, liquor, CDs (compact disc), stereos, whatever the case may be.

I wanted him to be here this afternoon so that he could address some questions around that because he's got a better grasp of that than I do. As I've said, you know, in the past 10 years in working in the human services industry, I've haven't come across that issue. I have noticed that a lot of our youth do move to bigger centres such as Saskatoon, Regina, and Edmonton.

Yorkton is beginning to see some gang-related activity, which could also lead to a potential problem with the sex trade in that, that it's an open territory. And we could have gangs coming in that could organize a more formalized sex trade here.

I don't know if you've noticed, but if you look at some of the elevators in town you'll see some graffiti, and you'll have names in it such as the Winnipeg Posse. And what I have noticed now is that we do have them coming and crossing that out and putting other names in. That's a very, very good sign that you've got gangs happening.

Also when you see kids, where they sign their names and they put a number at the end of their names, that's usually the number that's assigned to them with gang activity. So that is happening in Yorkton. I would venture to guess that it's also happening in Regina and Saskatoon but on a bigger scale than what Yorkton has experienced or is experiencing.

I guess if we were to look at a need in Yorkton, I think what we have to start to focus on is developing programs for children and youth of all ages to work on issues of lower self-esteem.

Right now what we've — I sit on a committee called the Child Action Plan Committee— and what they've done is they recently did a study where they've . . . they're actually seeing girls in grade 11 and 12 that have very low self-esteem. And what's been happening is we've been targeting younger girls in the junior highs, 7 and 8. And you know, we have a kit that goes around that has to do with body imaging, but it's focused for lower age groups, and we were quite surprised to see that we have girls in grade 11 and 12 with really low self-esteem. And as you know, low self-esteem can equal bad life choices.

We also need to start to look at programs for children and youth living in poverty. Poverty, I don't want to say leads to the children in the sex trade but I think it also plays a big factor in it.

And we also need to look at children and youth that have been abused. And the reason I put that in there is right now when a

child is being abused in their homes, what happens to the child is that they're removed and put into foster care or into a home. But what happens to the man or the family member or the adult that abuses that child? Relatively nothing.

When I worked in the group home that became very prevalent. There was a young man in there had been abused by his father, you know. And he came to me and he says, you know, Kim, I've done everything I was told to do. You know, I reported him; you know, like I went through everything. And look what's happened to me. I've been removed from my home. I've been removed from my family. I've been put in programs. What's happened to my dad? He's still in the home; he's still with the family; he's not in any programming.

So it became very apparent that what's happening with our youth is, you know, we're removing them from the situation, putting them in temporary foster homes, and then six months, eight months down the road, we're putting them back in the home where nothing's happened. So I think that that's also a problem that we're looking at.

I think we also start to . . . need to educate parents on the cycle that abuse can take. I don't think that some of our parents realize . . . You know, parents that abuse their children are often abused, have been abused themselves and haven't received the necessary help. In my field I find that parents love their children regardless. It's just that they have so many life issues happening in their own lives that they can't be effective parents. So I think we need to start looking at programmings.

I know the CAPC (Child Action Plan Committee) is looking at the Healthy Start program where it's going right into the hospital and as soon as a new mom comes in there, they start doing programming with the new moms.

I think things like that is an excellent, excellent thing to bring into Canada. Right now I believe Healthy Start is . . . I think they've originated in Hawaii, I believe is where it was. And I think that we need to start looking at bringing something like that into Canada; not just into Yorkton but into Canada in itself.

I think we also need to start putting social workers into the schools. Right now our teachers are so heavily taxed with, you know, not just getting the curriculum out, but they've become mothers and fathers and social workers on top of it.

Guidance counsellors are wonderful people to have in the schools; however, a lot of times their focus is on attendance and what are you going to do when you get to university. And we're not focusing on issues that are . . . like I think kids fall through the cracks through that as well.

These are just some of the ideas that I would like . . . I think would help lead to getting children off the street. And I guess one of the things that came up to my mind first when I got this sheet was I was in school — and this is just an idea that was presented to me while I was in school by a city RCMP member in Saskatoon, and he wants to see prostitution legalized.

Now when he first said that I almost fell off my chair and figured this man needs to retire, he's been in the field too long.

At first I thought maybe I'd heard him wrong. But once he explained it, it made sense.

If we were to legalize this, prostitution, women would need business licences to operate a business. With that, we would be looking at zoning regulations. We wouldn't be looking at Saskatoon specifically on 20th Street by the churches. We've got a big complaint there that we have girls and women selling themselves there. Bad dates would be eliminated because women would have to report . . . women wouldn't be afraid to report the johns that beat them up because there wouldn't be any recrimination from police.

The other part in it would be for the children. That would eliminate the children on the street selling themselves because they would be breaking the law, number one, because they wouldn't have their business licence; and number two, they would be competition to the older women and the older women would be more likely to report them.

So it made sense. I'm not sure if it's something that I totally believe in. The feminist in me kind of comes screaming out. But it's just something that you know we should be looking at maybe.

So that's pretty much my presentation. This is something that's near and dear to my heart. I have a cousin from Calgary that was 14 when she entered the streets in Calgary, so I appreciate the opportunity to come and speak to you this afternoon.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you very much, Kim. That was an excellent presentation and you certainly pointed out a number of things that are happening here as far as initiatives working to try to help children and you've also pointed out some of the gaps that need to be filled in. You've certainly informed us about the situation in and around Yorkton.

I think we're probably going to turn some of the questioning over to the committee members right now so they can zero in on whatever they would like to. Yes, go ahead, Ron.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you for your presentation this afternoon. It was very enlightening. You indicated that you're not aware of any formal sex trade operations in Yorkton.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Harper: — Are you aware or do you suspect that there may be sex trade not in the normal term but where an individual may be exchanging, say, sexual favours for shelter, food, drugs, alcohol, that sort of thing?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — I believe so. Being that I've worked in the group home, I know of one girl in particular that lived in our home that was doing that. She was doing sexual favours for cigarettes and alcohol and CDs. There was a stereo that, you know, kind of just showed up in her room one day, and of course right away we thought it was shoplifting. But it turned out that she had sold herself, I guess, if you want to put it that way.

I think that in Yorkton that's probably what's been happening

mostly. I think that's why, when I contacted the Yorkton city RCMP for information, that's why he said that there was no legal charges relating to that.

Like I said, I think the potential does exist in Yorkton for it to become an organized sex trade.

Mr. Harper: — Do you sense that there's a number of cases of this in Yorkton, or would this be an isolated case or . . .

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — This was the first case that I ever knew about, and that was . . . let's see, that was probably about six years ago that that was happening.

Like I said, Yorkton, it's too small of a centre really right now for it to organize into something big like that. So I think a lot of our kids are going to Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, where they can, you know, make the money I guess if you want to put it that way, to become more organized.

I know when I was in high school — and I'm dating myself severely by saying that — but the fair was the big target. Pimps, I guess if you want to put it, would come in from Regina, Saskatoon, to our fair grounds and would literally recruit young girls in the evenings.

Mr. Harper: — Do you sense that recruiting is going on in Yorkton other than at fair time? Do you sense there's any type of organized recruiting efforts?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — I don't know how to answer that question. Myself specifically, I don't know of anything that's happening.

Owen Genaille was supposed to be here this afternoon to speak more to this because he's got a better . . . he's got his finger more on the pulse of that because he's working out at our Arcadia Youth Centre where we have Yorkton youth out there that have, you know, confided in him that it is happening on a quiet basis I guess if you want to put it that way.

I have talked to other people in the helping field in Yorkton and they pretty much confirmed what I had to say, is that we don't know of any, you know, particular organized sex trade happening. But I mean that's not to say that it's not happening here.

Mr. Harper: — Okay. Thank you very much.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much for your presentation. A couple of times you've said that . . . you talk about the youth leaving Yorkton and heading for places like Edmonton. I've never heard you say Winnipeg.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Oh I think mostly, like I said, the gang . . . I think the gangs are coming out of Winnipeg and coming to Yorkton to start those kind of things. That's pretty much where, in my opinion, I see it happening, is gang relations is coming out of Winnipeg. You know, we have Winnipeg Posse that is one that's coming into Yorkton.

So I don't know of too many going to Winnipeg. But like Owen

had said, Regina, Saskatoon, and Edmonton were the ones that he was pointing to.

Ms. Draude: — You know, you also mentioned that your real mandate at this time is to make the . . . to allow people to have easier access once they move from the reserve . . .

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — To urban centres.

Ms. Draude: — . . . to the city of Yorkton. Are you contacted by the band and saying that we have . . . one of our residents is leaving? Or how do you find out that they're coming into town?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — They find me. They find the Yorkton Friendship Centre which, I mean, most everyone knows where the Yorkton Friendship Centre is. They find me. And if it's not by finding me, the Department of Social Services contacts me because they've gone there first and they contact me to find the services that I can provide for them.

Ms. Draude: — I just wanted to make a comment on your comment, when you talked about an RCMP officer saying that maybe we should just plain legalize it — clean it up, legalize it, and tax it is what we've heard a number of times.

And the other thing we've heard that was maybe shocking at first was people have even suggested chemical castration. So you don't have to be shy about some of the things that you can say because we've probably heard quite a bit of it.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — You've heard it all, no doubt.

Ms. Draude: — We've heard it all.

On the education issue, I think that it's an issue that we have to — I believe and I'm wondering if you believe — that we have to start in the school at a low grade, or where do you think we should be starting to tell children about the dangers of . . .

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Yes, I believe kindergarten isn't too early to start with them. I think that — as you know — abusers, they know how to play the system. You know, like they, if they're abusing a child, they know how to play it. You know, they tell the child, you know, if you tell your mommy that we're doing this, you know, I'm going to kill your dog, you know, your pet. You know, like they manipulate the emotions.

So I think that if you have a program, you know, that you can start in kindergarten where you talk about, you know, that it's not okay to be touched in private places and, you know, the importance of telling, I think that kids aren't dumb, they can figure it out very quickly.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you.

Mr. Toth: — Yes, I was going . . . If you don't mind, Kim. You had mentioned and we've heard a fair bit about the fact that poverty probably plays a major role in some of the decisions and the choices that are made. For example, we've had girls tell us that the reason they were on the street is because mom and dad weren't around and they had siblings and they needed something to eat.

I'm just wondering, how do we deal with that question? Because we often hear as political parties and governments that we need to put more money into people's hands. But putting more money doesn't necessarily mean it's going to get into the hands of the children or make sure there's food on the table.

For example, a good friend of mine taught school for years in Regina. And on treaty day and the day that most of the cheques came out, basically for two days they told the First Nations students not to come to school with the hopes that if they were at home that their parents would be forced to make sure they spent some money on food.

So I'm wondering if, I'm not sure if you've run into something like this, but do you find that maybe there's a lack of money to put food on the table due to probably the drugs and alcohol up front, but would gambling be playing another role? Is this a problem from what you've seen?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Well I've only been in this position with the friendship centre for — this will be my fourth week with them. I'm mean, it's a stereotype but yes, bingo is a drawing card. I don't know if it's playing a huge role right now.

Like in Yorkton for the Yorkton Friendship Centre, we have the food for friends program. And I think that it might be more of a message of mixed priorities. You know we've got kids that are accessing the food for friends program which is free, but when you look at them standing in line, they've got Tommy Hilfiger clothes on and they've got Adidas and they've got . . . And I think that it's just a mixed priority. You know kids would rather have the labels on their back than the food on the table.

To answer, like what the answer is to it, I'm not entirely sure. Of course I'm going to say, money, throw money at us. But I mean, I don't know if that's necessarily the answer either.

I know our food for friends program just last year was deducted \$20,000 off of their annual budget. The reasoning behind it was said because they were creating a dependency.

Personally, I don't think it's creating a dependency; I think it's creating a place for children to come so that they have a hot meal so that their days can get . . . they can get through their days. I think if anything we should be looking at a breakfast program at the friendship centre as well so that these kids can have food to start their day off and not have to worry about lunchtime.

Mr. Toth: — When you're talking of children that are coming to the friendship centre, are we talking a large majority of First Nations or is it children of all . . .

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Oh it's a mix.

Mr. Toth: — It's quite a mix.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — We have quite a mix. We also have this Soup Haven which is another hot meal program for lunchtime and it's located in a basement church beside Yorkdale Central School division. And I mean they have . . . their numbers are just as high as our numbers and that's white, that's primarily . . .

Mr. Toth: — Oh that one is primarily . . .

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Yes, the Yorkdale is primarily white children.

Mr. Toth: — So what would be the percentage breakdown in general — 50/50?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Okay. I'm just guessing.

Mr. Toth: — Yes, that's fine.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — This is just an approximation. I would probably guess 50/50. I'm just guessing. You know, like, I have been at The Soup Haven a couple of times during lunchtime and I would say that their numbers are higher than our numbers. But I mean those could have been just the days that I was there.

Mr. Toth: — And what kind of numbers would you have, or average, on a daily basis as far as children accessing?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — At the Yorkton Friendship Centre?

Mr. Toth: — Yes, both, between the two.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — On average at the Yorkton Friendship Centre for the food for friends program, I would gather probably 75 to 80 kids going through a day. And now that varies. You know, like when we were talking about holidays, school holidays, where kids aren't in school, the numbers will go up — the numbers will go up.

So I wish I had brought Velma's — that's our food for friends program — I wish I had brought her stats. She has all the stats to justify it because we tried to find where we could get that \$20,000 back into the annual budget, because she's doing more with less right now.

Mr. Toth: — I guess the question would be what would the reason be for children coming and seeking your services for, like, the food programs you have? Just that the parents don't the time to make sure they prepare a lunch? Or the fact that it's available and as you indicated, well it's an easy source of dinner.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Well I think it goes back to what I was saying before, you know, that the parents, they love their children; I don't question that one bit. I think it's just that there's so many other life issues happening with the parents that they can't be . . . they can't provide the parenting role for their children. And then part of the parenting role is providing the necessary meals.

Yorkton is trying to work towards that. Currently we have community kitchens set up, where Janet Sharp comes and does community kitchens. It's something that I'm trying to implement in the friendship centre, where we can get the parents to come out and do low cost budgets, planning — meal planning — plus preparing the meals where they get to take a portion of the meals home with them, what they make for that evening.

So we are working towards it. It's just like I said, I think it's just parents are . . . they're so . . . they've got so many other life issues happening in their lives that, you know, that they just can't take care of their children.

Mr. Toth: — Would this be mostly low-income oriented? Or do you find that you even have children out of what you would consider more higher-income homes.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — I do. As the family services worker, I do have a mix of clients coming in, seeking services.

Mr. Yates: — Thanks very much. Thanks for a good presentation, Kim.

I have a couple of questions. My first one is centred around the issue of education. We're hearing a very similar set of circumstances in Yorkton as we have in many communities across the province.

But I'd like to explore for a minute what role the attendance at the school and perhaps a lack of attendance by youth in this community contributes to some of the other problems. And is there an excessive number of children not attending school and for what reasons in your mind, and what programs might be beneficial to deal with a problem like that if it exists here in Yorkton?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — The schools in Yorkton I find are very understanding of what's happening with our children.

Within the Aboriginal community I know a lot of times that it's a matter of our kids coming late to school, not getting to school before 9 o'clock. Sometimes they come in at 9:30. Depending on the teacher that's involved in it, like we've got some teachers in Yorkton that are very understanding and will just pick up and, you know, help the children catch up and progress with the day. We also have some teachers that are very rigid and by the book.

Right now, particularly, I've got a young girl at the regional college. She's 16. Her family life has fallen apart. She's got no structure in her life. She doesn't have any family supports happening for her. And as a result, you know, she's missing school. I mean I think it's just because there's so much things happening at home for this young girl, that school isn't a priority. You know going and reading Chaucer or you know Shakespeare is like, it's just not going to happen for her. And right now she has one teacher that, you know, is fighting desperately to keep her in school because the mandate — she's missed a certain number of classes so we need to kick her out.

I don't think that that's the answer. That's why I mentioned in my report or in my presentation that I'd like to see a social worker in all the schools so that that social worker could, you know, intervene and help this child.

You know, I think that's another problem that I'm experiencing right now is that 16-year-old girls aren't taking high priority in social workers' lives. Right now I've got the social worker with this young girl, that's involved with her, who thinks that a room and board would be fine for this young girl. I don't think so. I

think this girl needs structure and I'd like to see her in a group home. So that's what I'm fighting with right now.

But I think it's just like I said . . . You know, there's so many things happening in these kids' lives that getting to school just isn't a priority.

Mr. Yates: — Dealing with younger children, younger than 16, what's . . . do you have any idea if there are a significant number of children — 8, 9, 10 years old — not attending school?

We've heard in a number of communities across the province that there are significant numbers of children in that age group that aren't attending school on a regular basis. Do you have any knowledge of if that's a problem in this community?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Well I don't know if I can actually answer that question for you. Like I said I've only been in this position at the friendship centre for a month. I haven't received any phone calls from any of the teachers or principals from the elementary schools in Yorkton pertaining to this; however, just two weeks ago I sent out letters saying I was the new coordinator or the new family worker for the friendship centre so I mean I may still get phone calls, to answer that question.

And prior to that, like I said, my background is with youth at risk. So I primarily have worked with 12 years of age and up.

Mr. Yates: — My final question has to do with the new gang activity starting in the Yorkton area. We've had, recently in other communities, discussions that the new gang activity that they're seeing in their communities is predominantly centred around First Nations youth. Would that be the same in the community of Yorkton?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — I think because it is so new I'm not sure if I can adequately answer that, but I would probably guess yes.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Are there any other committee members that would like to pose another question?

Kim, what I would like you to do for us, if you could, is to outline some of the long-term detrimental effects on the girls and the boys who end up working the streets. Because there is obviously a large human cost as well as an economic cost associated with this if this continues and escalates the way it is and so on.

You had indicated that you had a cousin that was on the streets, I guess, of Calgary, and if you would be so kind as to, if you don't mind, maybe just referring to that or to other women that you have heard from, maybe that have recovered, and if they've told you their stories and just sort of to give us a little bit of a look at the costs of this and the detrimental effects on a human being.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Okay. Well it's my cousin Theresa. She was 14 years of age when she first entered the streets of Calgary. Her background — she came from a two-parent, loving home. They loved each other very much, my aunt and my uncle . . . were not financially stable but they loved their

children and provided their children with three square meals a day and gave whatever they could whenever they could to their children.

Theresa was failing in school. School was not a high priority for her. My uncle would drive her to school in the morning. She'd get out of the car, she'd walk in the front door of the school, my uncle would drive away, she'd walk out the back door and onto the streets of Calgary.

With Theresa, she's 37, I believe, now, she's still involved in street life. Last we've heard she's in Regina. The only reason we know that is because friends of my parents, their daughter works the streets of Regina as a city RCMP . . . or city police, pardon me, in Regina, and Sherry ran into my cousin on the streets. So that's how we know she's there.

Theresa has removed herself from the family. My uncle passed away. She didn't come to the funeral. We lost her for probably two years. We didn't know where she was. We found her in Cal . . . or no, pardon me, in Chicago. She ended up working in there.

Theresa is addicted to drugs and alcohol. Theresa and I talked probably about 10 years ago and that was . . . well, no, actually longer than that because I wasn't even working in the human services industry yet, and I said, like, why are you doing this? You know, the age of innocence kind of thing . . . didn't know any better not to ask the question. But I asked her and she said that she was looking for love. She didn't think she was getting it at home and her pimp said that he loved her.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Right.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Just the typical story. You know, she's looking for love. He brought her into his home, said that he loved her, started her on drugs, got her addicted on drugs, and said if you want more you have to do this for me. And that's how it started with Theresa.

Currently Theresa has absolutely no contact with her siblings. Her siblings have no contact with her nor do they want any contact with her. Theresa has five children and has custody of one of them right now and doesn't know where her other four are. So that's where we're sitting with Theresa.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you, Kim. When the committee was formed, one of the areas associated with our mandate was to find out why children end up on the streets in the first place. And what you brought forward today in talking about your cousin, that sort of underlying need for love, and there's some very basic human needs. And sometimes if they're unmet or even if parents sometimes try to meet those needs and it just isn't quite enough or satisfying the soul of the person, they will continue to look for love sometimes in all the wrong places, as the song goes.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Yes, that's exactly it.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — But that's something that, you know, you look at that kind of a thing and there's nothing really legislatively we can do about addressing that. But I think it's

important to know that, so that any kind of programs or initiatives that we take to address the needs of children that are trying to come off the streets and so on, recognizes clearly that this great need is still there and that somehow the programs have got to ensure that we have the right people in place and so on, so that there's a really wholesome kind of love that's projected and given.

So I thank you very much for that. The other thing I wanted to ask you in regards to your conversation here with Mr. Toth is you had mentioned that a lot of parents don't seem to be able to provide for meals and so on just because of their own life issues.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — I don't want to single that out but I think that that's just part of it. I think that because of their own life issues happening, like they're struggling to deal with those life issues, that I think that it's just a matter of sometimes, you know, they just think well the food's in the cupboard; let them go get it. I think that's what happens.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. So could you relate to us your understanding of what some of those life issues might be that people are dealing with? That they're sort of neglecting their kids and not really even recognizing what they're doing?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Well I don't want to say that they're neglecting their children. I don't want to imply that they're neglecting their children. I think that a lot of parents, like I said, have been abused in their past.

In the Aboriginal community specifically what I have seen is what I call the fallout of residential schools. As you know, residential schools . . . you know, Aboriginal children were removed from their homes and put in these schools. And I think what ended up happening is that the parents . . . they didn't receive parenting from their parents because they were put in these schools. They were in these schools for quite a long time. There was a lot of abuse in those schools. They lost their tradition; they lost their culture going into these schools.

They came out of these schools. They started a family, but they had no idea of how to parent because they never received any parenting. So now what we're seeing now is that these residential school victims — and that's what I call them is victims — are having children but they're not parenting their children because they were never parented themselves. Now these children are having children; they can't parent because they never received any parenting. And that's what I've noticed. We're seeing a really vicious cycle.

There are programs in Yorkton. The Metis women of Yorkton are doing a child and family services program where they bring the children and the mothers into the programming. There's programming for the mothers and there's daycare available for the children. They also provide transportation so we're meeting all the needs.

So there is programming and we are starting to look at that. You know, the Metis women bring in kohkoms and kimosôms, you know, to help deal with . . . bring in the culture. So they are starting to look at it. But I think that's what's happening is that,

is just that parents haven't been parented so they can't parent their children.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Another comment that you made, Kim, is that abusers are not being dealt with. I mean we're looking at programming and all kinds of initiatives to try to help the children get on with their lives and feel better about their lives and so on, and that's wonderful. But the problem of abusers, and really it's almost as if this aspect of the whole problem doesn't exist or there's not as much energy put towards finding what in fact in a society we could do or what we need to do here.

Do you have any suggestions about how . . . I know this isn't within your work mandate but I . . . just as another individual, if you could just give us your personal opinion on what you think might be done.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Well it's a tough question. You know, it's the old adage — if they don't want to receive help . . . You know, you can force them into it but if they're not willing to receive it nothing's going to change. I think that abusers have to want to change. And I think that's part of my role, I guess, or part of the social worker's role is to help them want to get that help or help them want to change.

It's just like alcoholism you know. Until they realize that there's a problem, they're not going to seek help.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So I say kudos to the ones that do want to change and good for them. For those that don't want to change that are continually abusing children and insist that they continue to do that, do you have any suggestions about how the law should maybe deal with them.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — You know, it's hard, it's a hard question to answer. It's kind of like, you know, a criminal — they don't stop to think okay, well, if I break into this store I could look at jail time and I don't want to go to jail, all right. You look at our jail systems, it's overcrowded. So obviously jail isn't an answer.

So I think that more studies need to be done with these abusers that are seeking help. I think we need to talk to the ones that go to crossroads, which is a program that we have in Yorkton for men who abuse spouses. You know, we have to go to them and ask the questions like what was it that, you know, put the light bulb on above your head that you realized you needed to seek help. I think when we start to access, you know, those roles I think we'll come up with a better answer to that question.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. And just one other thing I'd like to discuss with you is your reference to the Winnipeg Posse gang, gangs infiltrating places like Yorkton. And of course, you're correct because we've heard from people from Regina that have mentioned that.

Like I'm asking you some very, sort of, broad and difficult questions, but I'm asking you anyway because I value your opinion and I respect your opinion.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Well thank you. Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So in dealing with that, when you try to look at this bigger scenario and try to visualize these gang members coming in, what do you think as a society that we have to be aware of and that we have to implement and that we have to do, if anything, that would deter them from coming here?

And do you think that, you know, for instance, there should be a special designation of police forces to deal with this, to basically be vigilant and watchful, to sort of let the gang members know that look, you're not welcome here and we're going to be keeping on your case here and so you may as well go away?

Like I'm just sort of throwing out some of my thoughts but I'd like you to give me yours.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — It's interesting you said that actually. I just came from a CAPC meeting yesterday, the Child Action Plan Committee, and on that committee we have an RCMP member from the city detachment that sits on there and he even said right now, that our mandate . . . or the direction that they're receiving from our city council is traffic enforcement. That's where their focus is right now. And I think that . . . which is unfortunate because now we've got police officers that are being pulled off of the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program to run traffic tickets, you know, kind of thing. So I think it's a priority issue.

A Member: — Revenue.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Revenue, yes, revenue. Very much so.

I think that I'm a . . . obviously I'm a proponent for prevention. I think that prevention is probably the biggest key; that if we can do something to prevent these gangs from coming into Yorkton, I think it'll go a long way. I don't believe in waiting to do an intervention or waiting till we're in crisis.

But yes, I believe that, you know, that the police need to do an intervention — not an intervention — but they need to start to work to make it very difficult for these gang members to come into Yorkton.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — The whole thing about the gang members is, is their purpose to what they're doing, and that purpose is usually drug trafficking and so on. And they also know that in order to have the money for drug trafficking, they will exploit someone and use that person in order to whatever. In this case, we're talking about the trade, about exploiting young girls to go out and to make some money for them. And of course they've got them really entrapped and enslaved and in their clutches.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Very much so.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — One of the girls that have spoken to our committee, that was on the streets, came out quite strongly saying, you know, if you get rid of the people that demand this, then there will be no girls on the streets.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Well it makes sense, right. Supply and

demand.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Or not get rid of them, but I mean if you do something about that. And I think that, you know, when you think about why the gangs will come, they obviously know that there is nothing being done about those people that would demand the services of girls.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — That's right.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So it's quite interesting. And the whole idea of legalized prostitution . . . I listened to you quite intently about this and the recommendation of the RCMP. A number of women that I talked to maintain that really, whether women are, you know, selling their bodies, whether they're over 18 or under 18 years old, it still spells out that women are being treated as commodities.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Degraded. Yes.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And so we are not commodities. And until women get their heads wrapped around their own self value and worth and so on . . .

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — That's why I said I didn't totally agree with it, but then . . . (inaudible) . . . he was kind of . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And that's the voice that I'm hearing from a number of women. They said, you know, societally we have to esteem our women a little bit higher.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Very much so. Yes. Very much so.

Like right now with CAPC we have a kit available to young girls. It's on body imaging. But I'd like to see that kit expanded into, you know, self-esteem images, and for older kids as well. Again, like right now this kit targets grade 7 and 8 girls. I think we need to target it for all age ranges.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes. Thank you very much, Kim, and I'll just turn this over to Mr. Prebble.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thanks, Arlene. Thank you, Kim, for your presentation and for answering our questions. You're getting lots of questions here. I know you've got to go at 2:30 and I'm conscious of that, and that just leaves us about seven or eight minutes.

But I did want to focus in on a couple of the areas that you just touched on and didn't really haven't a chance to expand on in your presentation, around prevention. You've talked about programs for self-esteem, and I guess what I'd like you to do is elaborate in whatever ways you would like on how you would see some of the initiatives that you're envisaging in the Yorkton area, kind of working on the ground.

I mean let's take Yorkton as a case and let's just say that the province wants to support the local community in terms of doing some prevention work. And you've touched on some suggestions that you've got, including putting social workers into our schools, maybe introducing a Healthy Start program, and implementing programs around self-esteem.

So take us through each of those and help us . . . paint a picture for us about how you'd see those three initiatives making a difference in terms of young people who are at risk of not staying in school or at risk of getting pulled into the sex trade. Or I guess in the case of Healthy Start, of course the prevention would be earlier, I take it, but the impacts would be felt later on.

So why don't you take us through each of those initiatives?

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Sure. Well I wish I actually . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Just paint a picture for us of what could happen.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Okay. But the Healthy Start is actually a great program that, as I said, has already been implemented in the United States. We actually just met with the lady that's doing the feasibility study on bringing it to Yorkton and she's . . . I mean I've never seen anybody that excited about a program before.

She works with preschool children. That's her background. And she's just like ecstatic about this. She can't wait to get it started. Again right now it's a matter of funding. That's what CAPC is waiting for, is to get the funding, to see if it . . . this program can fly.

I think that if I had brought a proposal for you to read on the Healthy Start, I think that everyone in here would probably think like, why didn't we think of this before? It's just a great program.

And I would try to explain it to you but I don't think I would do it justice if I was just to do it off the top of my head. I think it's something that needs to be read. You can phone Tom Seeley at the SIGN (Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours) organization. I'm sure he could explain it to you much better than I can.

But I think that bringing a social worker into the schools without putting the label of social work on it, because I think sometimes . . . You know, that's a big word; it's a scary word for kids. A social worker is sometimes . . . You know, they've been involved with their families for so long, social workers have a negative connotation. It usually means somebody's been removed from my home or didn't receive enough funding or . . . There's like a negative connotation.

I think if you brought them in as social workers but brought them under the title of community worker, I think that it would be . . . children would be more receptive to going to that community worker because there wouldn't be any negative connotations attached to it.

However, it would still be the social worker because they would still have the mandate and the power to change things. They would still have the ability to remove the child from the home if it was deemed necessary.

It would also give teachers an opportunity to, you know, take a child from their classroom that they expect . . . or suspect that something's happening in their home and be able to bring it to a

professional that could deal with it, where the teacher wouldn't have to have six other jobs on her plate plus trying to make sure that this child receives the help that she needs.

Personally I'd like to see them in all schools regardless of stature — inner city school or, you know, like a school like Connaught in Regina or Wilfred Hunt. I'd still like to see them in there. I think that abuse happens in people's homes that have a lot of income coming in — it's just more hidden and it's not talked about. It's taboo. So I think that having a community worker in all schools where kids have an access to them, I think, would be more than beneficial.

As far as prevention programs and kits, that kind of stuff, I don't know if I could adequately answer that question. I would probably venture a guess is to bring it into your community and making sure that community leaders had input into it, such as like the CAPC program where we have everybody from preschool teachers in there right up to directors of organizations. I think that they all need to have input into those kits — those prevention kits — being that, you know, it takes a community to heal.

So that's kind of where I would be looking at for prevention. That would be where I would start. And you know, start with the education of the parents because, like I said, that especially in the Aboriginal community our parents haven't been parented so how do we expect them to parent their children.

I hope that was adequate.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Oh yes, that was. And I know you've got another commitment so . . .

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — I do. I have another client coming in at 2:30.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We want to thank you very, very much for coming and sharing your ideas and your concerns with us. And we'll make sure you get a copy of our final report.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Great.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — You've made a really important contribution today so thank you very, very much.

Ms. Kyle-Zwirski: — Well thank you all for the opportunity and thank you for inviting the Yorkton Friendship Centre to this meeting.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I don't believe there are any other witnesses so we stand adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 2:25 p.m.