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

Hansard Verbatim Report

No. 30 — November 29, 2000

Regina

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Twenty-fourth Legislature

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

Arlene Julé, Co-Chair
Humboldt

Peter Prebble, Co-Chair
Saskatoon Greystone

June Draude
Kelvington-Wadena

Ron Harper
Regina Northeast

Carolyn Jones
Saskatoon Meewasin

Don Toth
Moosomin

Kevin Yates
Regina Dewdney

Published under the authority of The Honourable Ron Osika, Speaker

The committee met at 9 a.m.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Well, ladies and gentlemen, we're going to begin our committee hearings this morning.

We have with us today Dick Cornish, and Dick is from the Regina wraparound program. And I understand Dick has a great amount of knowledge and understanding of what happens out there in our world and on the streets with our children, and has certainly been very instrumental in the progress of the Regina wraparound program and its success.

And I think there's, from what I understand, there's quite a lot of development in fact that, you know, could take place yet. But it's been quite successful in the approach they're taking. So we're happy to have you with us today, Dick.

We're going to get started with committee hearings without the Co-Chair here, Mr. Prebble. He will be arriving shortly.

And before you start, we'd be pleased to have each of the committee members maybe introduce themselves individually to you. And then we'll have you give us a little bit about your background and proceed. Okay. Could we start up here?

Ms. Draude: — Dick, my name is June Draude, and I'm the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from Kelvington-Wadena.

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

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

Mr. Yates: — And as you know, I'm Kevin Yates, the MLA for Regina Dewdney.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. And I was pleased to meet you, Dick, just a few minutes ago. Arlene Julé is my name. I'm the MLA for Humboldt. And like I said, we're very pleased to have you here.

And we're going to just ask you to proceed in whatever fashion you feel comfortable with. And after your presentation the committee members will most likely want to converse with you, ask some questions, and so on. So we'll just ask you to go right ahead.

Mr. Cornish: — Okay. My name is Dick Cornish, and I'm with the Department of Social Services. And I'll just give you a little bit of background about myself and how I got to the wraparound project, very briefly.

I originally started my employment around 1986 with the Paul Dojack Youth Centre and moved around within the system at Paul Dojack Youth Centre, went back to school, did a B.S.W. (Bachelor of Social Work), worked for a while at child and youth services, and then got the opportunity to supervise what was then being referred to as a new, sort of pseudo-residential community project.

And I was hired through Dales House in November of '98 to sort of write and organize and get up to speed a project that would address some of the needs that currently existed in the Regina region of Social Services.

So I'll just . . . I'm going to read a little bit to keep myself on track. I was saying this morning to Randy that I'm sort of used to giving the day presentation on wraparound, so I'm going to have to sort of confine myself to notes to keep myself from wandering off. Because I saw underlined, sort of the 10-minute time frame. And I think that if I give you an introduction you'll know what you want from me, and you'll be able to ask me the questions that will bring forth what you need.

The Regina community wraparound project is situated within the family and youth services division of the Department of Social Services. Wraparound project is fully funded by the department and it presently includes a staff of eight: myself as supervisor; five full-time facilitators or caseworkers; we have one full-time teacher therapist who attends to all of the school-based needs of our client group; and we also have one part-time support staff. The project is located is old Wetmore school at 2241 Wallace Street.

With the staff we provide immediate and intensive in-home coverage including crisis support and long-term planning. We provide those services from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, Monday to Friday, as well as weekends and holidays.

So we have a split shift of workers — some would work from 8 to 5, some work from 1 to 10 — so we ensure coverage into the evening hours which is mostly the crisis times for a family. By the time kids get home from school . . . sometimes you're done at 5 o'clock and we found that our coverage, by the nature of our clients, necessitated that we went into the evening and weekends and holidays when there are additional pressures on families when they're together for a longer period of time.

The wraparound project started in February 1999 with clients, and we've seen approximately 60 client families to date.

The Regina community wraparound project was created to address sort of a dearth in bed spaces that was occurring and had become an issue in the family and youth services area. And what had happened was some of those care spaces had tended to plug up and we were trying to address that need and to unplug those spaces.

Wraparound's mandate was to work with children, age 9 to 16, and their families who had been identified as at risk to access department-sponsored care. So that would be either through a residential facility like Dales House or foster care or many of the team homes or therapeutic foster homes that we have.

Wraparound target families are further narrowed to those identified with complex needs that span more than one life domain area. And within our model we talk about needs rather than problems, and the needs we identify are involved in about 13 or 14 different life domain areas that would encompass things like educational life domain, legal, psychological, housing, emotional, safety, family — things like that. So we try

to target things into those areas and then formulate a more precise plan from that.

Using the wraparound process, workers help families to identify and reduce risk factors in order to have the child remain in their home setting. Wraparound also seeks to re-integrate children who have already been placed in care. This process assists to free up department spaces for families that would benefit most from the specialized structure and support offered in the care settings that we offer.

Families are referred to wraparound through a regional placements committee and we deal with emergent needs through telephone conferencing as well. So we can have a family into our program and have a worker out and seeing them within an hour if we have to.

The targeting of wrap families ensures that the most high-risk families are receiving the specialized intensive services that will best allow them to transition the difficulties that have affected them.

We aim to have the top 2 per cent, and for anyone who's . . . We've all seen those pyramids where they say this is that bottom sort of 80 per cent of people in any sort of area that you talk about, then the top 20 per cent get the most services. And we're targeting the top 2 per cent of that pyramid. We're looking at the people that have the highest risk, the most complex sort of needs, systemic or generational problems, that we can go in and put our efforts where they're most needed.

Wrap families aren't time-limited, however regular reassessment and review process keeps things moving along towards termination from the first interview. Workers seek to normalize all plans in order to make all learning experiences more easily generalizable for the child and family.

So when we initially were proposed, they talked about replicating a lot the good points of residential care — structure, support. And as we talk more about a project, we thought that probably we would be in the best interests of our clients not to create a situation that's very artificial and it's hard to generalize to the community.

So we thought if we worked within the community, directly within the families, any lesson they learned are immediately applicable to the family setting because they've learned it within their own house.

Facilitators work with between four and six families at one time depending on the level of needs involved in each case. And some families have very complex, even generational sort of needs, where the family has been in the system for a long time. Also we have families that have a large number of children that are all involved in the system in some way, and so that affects how many families we put with a worker.

I'm going to talk about briefly some of the key differences in wraparound from some other programs. Social Services, probably about four or five years ago, brought in a family centre case management model. And that's different from the old sort of medical model, where social workers would go in, assess, and then prescribe sort of intervention for a family.

How we try to work within that model in Social Services — and wraparound fits really nicely with the sort of values that Social Services has adopted in that family centre case management model — we try to work with them in a real collegial manner. We look at the client as expert, in that they have the experience with their family over the last 20 years. They are with their kids 24 hours a day, and they have a good understanding of what works and what doesn't with their family.

We're very solution-focused in that we're looking towards finding things that have worked for the family. Rather than go through and just prescribe sort of those stock, standard interventions, we go in and we ask them what's worked in the past.

We also look to the community for resources rather than rely on sort of typical categorical services that are offered. So we try to find if there's an official service, say child and youth for counselling. It's not normal for a person to have a child and youth counsellor and a social worker and a probation officer.

So what we try to do is we try to bring in community members that can fill those same needs. So we look at the need. So the need is for somebody to listen to you, someone to support you, someone to provide supervision. And we try to find people within their family and their community that can fulfil those roles rather than professionals.

What we're looking at in doing that is providing sort of a more permanent off-ramp from Social Services. In that if we help our clients to establish those supports and resources in the community, when the next crisis occurs they don't have to come back to intake at Social Services and re-access our whole service continuum again, especially since one of the things that the studies that have been done find is that your best . . . the best way of telling if a person is going to be involved with the system is previous involvement. So we want to keep the previous involvement to a minimum.

We're a voluntary program that's suited to work with motivated families or to build motivation and competency where necessary. We're looking for sort of a customer search. So many times we'll go in with a family and they aren't very voluntary. But what we'll do is we'll look for them as a customer to some maybe small piece of service, we can build a relationship with them, and then start to work on some of the issues that have brought their family into contact with the system.

The first thing that we do with a family when we go in is we ask what we call sort of the wraparound question, and that is: how can we be of help in improving the quality of life for you and your family? And so it's client directed in that we let them try to target where we're going to work within the family.

Now one of the things that sets people off a little bit about the model is they say, well people will avoid that. And it hasn't been our experience nor the experience of other projects that have preceded us that people ignore their safety issues or their protection issues or the drug and alcohol issue. They come to

that. They come to the table with that and say, I need to work on this.

We find that when we get some of that hesitancy we talk about, it's disrespectful to think that our clients don't want help with those things. And if you treat them collegially and with respect, they will come to the table and offer all their difficulties and try to identify where they need to work. So we haven't found these things where you ask them that sort of question, how will things be better? And they say, well I'd have a new car and a million dollars. Our clients really want help, and so they are able to clearly articulate what they need for help.

We let the family tell their story and sometimes we miss that step when we go into sort of a rapid assessment and crisis planning mode. People need to tell their story until they're ready to stop. And in hearing that story we're able to identify the strengths of the family. So these are really concrete steps that we really hammer into our workers to have them do, because without those steps we become just another assessment and intervention program.

We identify needs, not problems. Now people think that sometimes that a little verbal slight of hand — in that you say, okay, well it's really a problem we're identifying. But if we talk about the problems, you can get really rooted in a sort of a me-versus-you thing. Kevin and I could argue all day about what the problem is between us, or we could talk about what our need is, identify what the goal is and the solution, and we'd be out of here in five minutes maybe. So you know it's a lot more respectful to clients to talk about their needs rather than their problems.

We talk about those needs in terms of life-domain areas which I mentioned earlier. We want to be needs driven, not service driven; so we don't look towards having a service plugged in immediately to a family and say, okay we've got this service, let's stick them in that. So quite often we would get a family in care and they would get sort of the unholy triumvirate. You'd get maybe some sessions with child and youth, you'd get anger management, and you'd get a probation officer. And so you'd get sort of those categorical services.

What we're trying to do is really individualize the plan for the family and find something that works for the culture of the family. When we talk about culture of the family we don't mean an ethnic culture, we mean that culture that exists within everybody's family. We may be a TV-culture family or someone else may be a real outdoors-culture family. You may be a yelling-and-screaming-culture family and emotional and things like that.

So we try to really individualize our program so it makes sense and it fits for people. We don't want people doing charts that hate charts. We don't want people doing long homework assignments or reflective kind of reviews of their family history if that's not what they're about, if they're real active-oriented people to getting things done.

So we really try to find out what that culture of the family is. In doing that we engage the family in what we call a strengths chat. And a strengths chat is just reviewing what the strengths of a family are.

To get through . . . We get a lot of families with teenage kids — 15, 16 years old, 14 years old — and so after 15 years, if you've survived that long with a kid, you've got a lot of strengths. And when you've survived that long with eight grandkids in your house and things like that — like some of our client families have — you must have an incredible amount of strengths and dedication towards family.

So what we do is we try to identify those strengths and bring them forward. We try to make sure that our plan grows out of the strengths. It's easy to go in and say, okay I see that you have a lot of strengths, and then bring people on board and say, okay but here's the plan. And you've already given that plan out three times that week because it's easy to do, it's workable, the services provided are professional, they do good assessment — there's all sorts of reasons to do things like that.

What we want to do is identify those strengths and make sure that our plan grows out of the strength. So if the family is very dedicated and is emotional and expresses their feelings, we want to make sure that our plan together with that family involves that type of regular expression, appropriate expression of their feelings. If they're not comfortable doing that, then we want to make sure that we guard people from being threatened in meetings by bringing out those emotions and doing some of the things that maybe the culture of their family doesn't buy into.

Lots of times families say this is the culture of our family, but this is how they operate. And so in talking about what they feel are the strengths, you are able to sort of look at the incongruities and help them to reach the goal that they want to achieve.

The other thing that we do, that I talked about already, is that we look for naturally occurring resources within the family's community. And for everybody, when we have times of crisis — either financially or marital or other relationships, work, or even a child care crisis — we look within a circle that we have, and we like to talk about it as a family, faith, and friends' network. And that's where we look. We look for family first, maybe friends, and then within your own faith community.

And we try to identify that with our clients. That's something that we naturally fall back on. By the nature of our clients, where they're at, many of them have been . . . experienced periods of great transiency. They've also experienced great isolation, and so they don't have that sort of automatic network where they can access family.

They've moved from somewhere else; they're isolated from family. Or because of alcohol or drugs or marital break-up, they're isolated from family. Maybe they're isolated from friends as well because of a move, or because they're embarrassed about the problem that's brought them to the attention of Social Services.

So we try to reattach them to those sort of three f's — the family, faith, and friends. Because we find that if people have those three things, they are better able to handle the crisis in the future, once you've helped attach them to those . . . reattach

them to those resources.

The next thing we do is we try to pull together a child and family team. And that's a little bit different. That's the four to 10 people who know the child best. And ideally we want that to be 50 per cent of what we refer to, and I want for a better term because it's called . . . we call it non-professionals, and that seems to suggest a bit . . . that people are a bit lesser in that role.

These are the people that are community resources for them — not the general child and youth, Social Services, probation, other systems, education — that become involved with the child and may not know a whole lot about that child or that family. We're looking for the people that know that family best and so are able to provide real insight into how that family operates and what will be successful for them and has an investment in that plan.

Pulling together a child and family team sometimes is difficult, and we need to pull in surrogate resources where necessary. We need to sort of hold on until we've rebuilt some bridges that have been burnt in the past due to, as I mentioned, like isolated family structures. So we've brought in things like surrogate friends onto a team where we had a youth . . . a same-age youth that was in a situation that they were able to provide some support.

We've tried to utilize surrogate parents in some ways. We've got a mentorship program that we've started with the Riders and the Prairie Fire. We've accessed tutors for our youth in educational life. The main area is from the library, University of Regina, volunteer students. And so when people haven't had that immediate family, faith, and friends' resource area, we've tried to put in surrogates in that way and then build a team from there.

We even just recently brought in a couple of women from the community. We had a couple of young women in our families that were suffering from eating disorders, and so we attached them with mentors in that area. So building surrogate resources is often necessary because people will say well, you can't build a team; this person doesn't have anyone. And they'll identify I don't have anyone. So we try to build those surrogate resources.

One of the final things is that if a plan doesn't work, we change it. There's no use banging your head against the wall. Someone — I can't remember who it was — said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. And quite often, we've done that in Social Services in that we've continually put people back into the same program and said well, this third time's a charm, maybe it'll work this time. And families have clearly not been able to operate within that setting.

So if a plan doesn't work, we consider the fact that maybe it was our fault. We didn't understand the culture. We go back, we review it, we revisit, and we change the plan again. And we try to find something that works.

The final thing is unconditional care. Nobody's ever kicked out of a wraparound. What we do is when we bring a family in, we're there for them for the long haul. And some of our families, it's going to be long haul — it's going to be years before we're finally out of there.

We've had situations where I've had workers come back to the project and said: I'm fired; how do you do unconditional care when you're fired. And so we've said: you're not fired, you're laid off. And so we have a couple of workers right now that are laid off from cases.

We've sent out — rather than a closure letter — we've sent out a re-invitation to wraparound. We've sent a letter saying, we would invite you when things become better for you — or when things become worse — that you would re-involve us and we would be willing to change our planning and help you to do things better in the future.

So we try to make sure that people always have an opportunity. Lots of people will fire you when there's a crisis and they still need help. So we can't just walk away from that and take it personally. We need to be unconditional in our care setting.

So what does that look like in practice? One of the characteristics of a good wraparound facility is sort of the ability to provide direct services where it's necessary. So this isn't just a fancy planning process where we go in and we call ourselves facilitators, but it's integral that you provide direct services. Lots of time, especially in emergent sort of wrap plans, you'll walk into a crisis setting and there needs to be some immediate roll-up-your-sleeves, hands-on involvement.

So we'll go in, we'll do suicide assessments, safety planning. We'll drive people everywhere. We'll pick up the kids from school. We'll sweep the floor. The other day somebody was sweeping the floor at one of our client's houses. We've delivered and found appliances and helped people to move. And we've helped install doors and build walls and do all of those things that were immediate needs for our clients. They couldn't go on with sort of the . . . Well, it's tough to go on with all this planning and deciding that things will better in the future when the door's hanging off and it's 10 below outside.

So it's very important that our workers are involved in direct service. And they actually . . . when you talk to workers about that, they sometimes say, well, I don't want to do stuff like that. And some of our workers had concerns about it in the future, but it's the real part of human services. It's the human part of human services, in that you're really connecting with people.

When we haven't had a program that fit the needs of our clients, we've had to create it. And whether that was a parent support group which we ran for a couple of sessions, or the sports mentorship, or food baskets for families, or the Christmas hamper for a family that wasn't there, you know, in a program on the 24th, or as I mentioned the finding of appliances, or accessing sports venture for kids, or getting the little bit of extra money from one of the local sports club so that we could have a kid attend a Cougar's camp, or do some of those other things. Those are the things we've tried to do to reattach kids into the community.

Those are sort of outside the scope of usual programs or usual work. But our workers have been extremely creative and

they've been given permission to really work outside sort of the box. Our workers are equally comfortable in the home working on crisis planning or advocating for client needs or soliciting a bond between community partners and our families.

We had a number of young people in our program that were coming up to graduation, very low on funds, lots of self-esteem issues, and we had about six or seven young women at the same time. And one of our workers, Mike Mclean, went to the beauty salons in town and said, listen these girls need to look nice for grad; they can't afford it.

So we ended up having a whole night. They did their nails, they did their hair, they developed a bond with these kids, and one of the women is providing free hair cuts to them. One of our girls is now looking at doing a hair program through the community college here. And so there's lots of creativity in that way.

One of our other workers went a place probably nobody else would have and we were giggling at first when she mentioned it, but she had a shoplifter who had been terrorizing the local mall. And on her community team she has the pharmacist and the hardware guy, because the kid was going in there and stealing.

And they're saying, he's bored and I need someone to shovel snow and I need someone to do this and maybe we can work something out. So they're now on the team. They've gotten to know this kid; they really like him. The guy from the pharmacy asked the other day, he says, I've got extra Pats tickets, can I give them to the family? No problem.

So by bringing people from the community in, it automatically sort of amplifies the need and they take over. Community members want to take over. They want to own problems in their own community and help to solve them.

Clients' experience with the process has been very interesting to observe. Because we've sort of trained clients at Social Services and child and youth and all sort of the departments, we've trained them to be very service oriented. So when you come in they're asking, so what service do I get? So are we in anger management, do we get this, or how are you going to do this?

And when you come in and you want to talk about strengths to a person who's used to the very first meeting in Social Services — we usually introduce people and we do sort of the family history. And so what we've done previously in a lot of ways, not just in Social Services, when you go into an education session, we read that sort of social history where we talk about this is what the family's done. So we list all of their failures and all of their involvements with the law and the systems and things like that. And so many people, they don't look above their shoelaces for that first meeting.

And we talked about that when we were first starting, at how were we going to stay dedicated to the strengths and not go back to that. And there was some argument over whether we thought that people should go through that social history. It was important to sort of lay the path and underline what the problems were. And so we talked about it in a somewhat joking manner and said well imagine if you were out on your first date with somebody and they came in and gave you a long list of all your failings in life — your bankruptcy, a couple of car crashes, four failed relationships, you know, all those kind of things — and then you said okay, bye, have a nice dinner at the Keg. Very hard to start a relationship from there. So we try to start it from that strength space.

As far as clients, we had one client — and this will be my last story and then I'll sort of finish off — right near the beginning where she was telling her next-door neighbour, she was saying, this social worker wants to come over and she wants to talk about my strengths. Like, is she crazy? And so when they were done and they were doing closure with the family she said, you know that felt so good that first day when we talked about the strengths that I had as a mom because I felt like nothing but a failure, and that really encouraged me not to put my child into care and to give it a try again.

And so they had a lot of rocky times in the six months they were with our project and they had a lot of difficulties and they will continue to — like every family. But by focusing on what the strengths were rather than going through the problems, she said that was what gave her sort of the start again with her son and the ability . . . she had a son and daughter that she was having difficulty with both and so it was the ability for her to carry on.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Very good. Thank you. That was quite an enlightening explanation actually.

I had, and I know the rest of the committee members had, heard of the concept of wraparound at another hearing from the city police in Saskatoon and it really needed to be explained in more depth. So your explanation certainly has helped me a great deal today.

And I know that Joceline Schriemer, the policewoman from Saskatoon, will be expounding on her notion of this in Saskatoon and giving us, as the committee, the information that she has. And so I think it's going to be very interesting to hear her as it has been hearing you today as far as how this program works.

And I guess it's not really a program as such, like the ordinary programs that have been there in the past. And I think it's very beneficial from what I hear.

But I'm going to ask committee members if they'd like to ask questions, Dick, right now and we'll . . . Kevin?

Mr. Yates: — Yes, Dick. I've got a number of questions. My first one is the wraparound program deals with, like you said, very complex problems in families; many of which have dimensions that fall into, sort of, the authority or responsibility of other groups than Social Services — perhaps Justice and so on and so forth.

Do you find that you have a good level of co-operation from those other agencies in moving in the direction you believe? Or is it a struggle to sort of coordinate things because of responsibility? Let's give an example: financial assistance responsibility lays in another domain; an issue of probation

order lays in a different responsibility area.

When you're trying to integrate all the needs of putting together a case plan for the family, are you finding that there's a high level of co-operation between government agencies in doing this? Or are there things that a committee like ours could recommend changes to make the process work better?

Mr. Cornish: — I think that, I mean, being a new program, things are different in some ways in that you have to introduce yourselves and when you tell people what you do the first time, they never really seem to understand. They have their own picture of that. And so it takes a while of working with people to do that.

So in the beginning I think we had difficulty letting people actually know what we did. And so we had some difficulty but in the last year, we've had a real sort of co-operative — I would say very co-operative — sort of stream of workers come through the project from other agencies, whether that's in Social Services or child and youth.

You mentioned, like, if you had your probation in another area or things like that. We had a youth who, through no fault of his own, he had several placements break down and came back to the project and said, I'm going to jail aren't I because I can't . . . I've got to go back because I can't be supervised properly. And we said, no, we're going to find you something. And we had to actually find him an extended family member probably, well an hour and five minutes outside of the city.

And we were able to — that is not our area — but we were able to stay involved. We managed to convince the young offender worker to stay involved. And at the same time we had great co-operation from that region in helping us to access some funding and some care and helping us to establish when that placement broke down — again through no fault of his own; grandparents had to go give care to elder grandparents and he was suddenly without a placement . . . or their elder parents and he was without a placement again — and so they helped us tremendously to try to establish a place where he could continue to go to school. So there's been lots of co-operation in that way.

So at the worker level, it's been really good I think. It took a while initially but it's really come along. I think it's very co-operative.

We don't hold a file ever, Kevin, and I know you probably know how things work down at Social Services; you've had lots of contact. And we don't hold the protection file; there's always a protection worker involved. And so we need to work with the protection unit. We need to work sometimes with the Y.O. (youth offender) unit. And sometimes you have, like, maybe a section 10 worker for kids that are over 16. So we've had to sort of balance all those things.

At a little bit higher level, I think there's been a commitment from a number of departments with the integrated case management model that they've put out. And I was at a meeting last week in Saskatoon where they have . . . they just call it the integrated case management forum and now it's integrated case management/wraparound because many of the people who have explored integrated case management are using wraparound as a model to deliver it.

And so I think the co-operation at those levels . . . To have education say, okay, we've got some money here; we're thinking about doing some funding of this project coordinator, and it's benefiting Social Services, it's benefiting the police, it's benefiting all these areas that are involved. So I think that people are finally, in some ways, they're starting to get it right.

If you could make recommendations, I think that the recommendation would be to find the strength in that and recommend they keep doing more of the same, you know, as far as the things that are working.

Obviously there's going to be lots of stumbling blocks along the way when you're trying to truly integrate case management between departments that have different mandates and different sort of funding, whatever they're called, funding silos or things like that.

I think that . . . I've been amazed at the co-operation that comes forth. And then at the same time some days, you know, you throw down your hat and go, how come we just can't co-operate on this? So I think that there's really good movement in that direction.

Mr. Yates: — My second question is if there were resources or things that could be done to expand the wraparound program throughout the province? My understanding is now it's very much centred in the two large locations, Regina and Saskatoon.

Mr. Cornish: — Actually that's where it was centred over the last couple of months, but there's been a real explosion in sort of the Yorkton-Weyburn area. A woman named Bernice Purich has trained, in the last six months, I think she's trained 140 facilitators. And so they're going crazy down there, which is great.

And she's been instrumental in trying to make sure that that doesn't just . . . Like we're funded and centred in Social Services here in Regina. We're one project, and so we do outreach and talk and do those things. But Bernice has really made sure that she's tried to span all the sorts of agencies and community areas and try to train a whole bunch of people so that when they get together to work, they already understand the process together.

So I'm a teacher who's taken the process of social worker and community worker and we all get together and we say, oh I saw you at the conference; well let's do this.

Mr. Yates: — Okay. Thanks a lot.

Mr. Cornish: — Sorry. Did that answer your question, Kevin?

Mr. Yates: — Yes, it did.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Dick. I'm just wondering how many of the children that you deal with are . . . I meant, how many of your customers are children that are being exploited on the street through sexual abuse?

Mr. Cornish — At this point in time we would have probably . . . well I would include four — four kids and families. Because I would include some of the kids who are involved in the other end of the street trade as well, because they're young enough that when we have a youth who's being drawn into pimping and doing those things, I consider that person being abused as well. They're being drawn in on sort of a generational level by older relatives to be a part of that and groomed to be a pimp.

So I would say . . . I would say four at this point in time. And over time we have probably had . . . That would probably be our experience in the last two years, probably four of our families. And that's not a lot, but definitely they've had some very complex needs involved, no matter which case.

Ms. Draude: — So do your workers have to take additional training or knowledge to deal with children that have been abused?

Mr. Cornish: — Because all of our workers are trained by Social Services and most of them have social work backgrounds, BSW, they have that generalist training in the manner that they understand, the issues behind abuse; they understand the issues that come forth from that. But as far as a specialized training in children that are involved in the street trade, no, we don't have that. We try to rely on other people to bring that in.

So we've looked at accessing some of the other areas in Regina that have worked with kids in the street trade and we've had to defer to them. We have difficulty . . . You can't be an expert on everything, and so we've tried to draw on people with expertise in that area.

Ms. Draude: — So if you have a family or a child that's brought to you or that comes to you that you feel is being exploited, do you deal with the entire family? And if you need additional help, who do you go to?

Mr. Cornish: — We would deal, yes, with the entire family and as many of the other people in their community that we could, because we feel that's the draw. So we would try to establish a network of people that could pull that person back off the street.

And who have we gone to? We've gone to some of the projects that work great on the street with people when we've had kids that we have suspected have been involved in the street trade. We've gone to of course the Albert Scott police right away to try to identify that. We've approached the people with SWAP (Street Worker's Advocacy Project). SWAP, is it? Street Worker's action — I'm bad with acronyms — Advocacy Project. Oh I just called it action — advocacy.

And we've also approached the . . . Oh I forget what her name is. Just let me make a note and I'll . . . it'll pop into my head again. I'm sorry, June. But we've tried to find who's out there and make contact with them because we don't have a real good knowledge of that.

We have one employee on staff who did a long term of service at Dales House. And so we tend to defer to Norm and ask him questions sometimes, because he's gone a long route with many young girls who have been on the street and at Dales House. They'll run, and they've had to go and confront people and pick those girls up and bring them back home and do those things.

So we've tried to look to him for sort of some ideas about how do you deal with the people that are surrounding the victim? How do you bring that person back in? What do we think sort of needs to be done? So he would be a person that wouldn't have specialized training but has a lot of experience in that way.

Ms. Draude: — Have you dealt with the community schools with any of the children that you work with?

Mr. Cornish: — Yes, yes.

Ms. Draude: — How is your program and the ideas surrounding community schools, do they work together well?

Mr. Cornish: — I think they do, in that the community school's idea is obviously that the child is not just centred in the school, and so what we do with a wraparound model is we look at all life domain areas.

And so we're coming from a Social Services point and reaching into the schools and saying this kid is having difficulties. He's come to the attention of Social Services. Surely they're going to need assistance at the school level as well. You can't spend eight hours a day and not have some of those issues come out at school. So we try to be all encompassing in that way.

And I think the community workers are reaching the other direction. They see the behaviours in school and say, surely this cannot just be happening at school. There must be some issues at home as well. So we're trying to treat the whole person. And so . . .

Ms. Draude: — Pardon me. Do you have . . . You said you normally try and have about 12 people who are sort of non-professionals that work with the group around a person. Do you ever go to the schools then to have one of those — a teacher's aide or somebody from the school — as one of those 12 people?

Mr. Cornish: — Oh yes. We try to include teachers on every team.

Most of our kids, by the nature of the fact that we've got that . . . we're trying to target that top 2 per cent, they aren't just having, you know, trouble occasionally at home. They're having trouble at home. They're having trouble in the community. They're having trouble at school.

And so Dorinda, as our teacher therapist, her job is to really, really support the schools. And so she'll go out to the schools. She'll offer to teach a class so that a teacher can spend time with that student. She'll go and take the student out of class and work with them. She'll do sort of plans with the teacher surrounding how to get the kid to school.

Dorinda has gone in and she tries to engage everyone at the school from the principal, the vice, the social worker, the

teacher. She's had plans and surprising success in that she was at a meeting where a kid wasn't making it to school and the parents weren't willing to step up. Nobody was willing to do anything. And the teacher said, I'll pick him up everyday. And Dorinda said, she said Jeez was I ever stupid. I said, well that's not your role. And the teacher said, whose role is it then?

And so we, yes, try to engage the teachers. And they're invaluable as far as a resource to get to connect and know the kids and family, because they got the kid for 6 to 8 hours a day. They know him better.

Ms. Draude: — I have just one other question. You just said that . . . I think you said you have 60 clients? Is that what you said?

Mr. Cornish: — No, not at present. That's how many we have worked with. We generally have four to six per staff member, so right now I think we're at 27 today.

Ms. Draude: — Twenty-seven families then?

Mr. Cornish: — Twenty-seven families.

Ms. Draude: — And you're funded through Social Services?

Mr. Cornish: — Yes.

Ms. Draude: — Do you get a percentage of funds — beyond the wages of the people that are working for you — to deal with the other needs that a family may have when they contact you?

Mr. Cornish: — We have . . . I don't understand how budget works to be honest, June. But we have never been wanting. We've been able to . . . lots of times we end up supervising or supporting a kid for days and days at a time. And so when we've had to submit receipts to get food for the kids or do things like that, we've never been turned down. They're very flexible with our funding. I think we have a block of funding, and they've been flexible with it.

One of the components of wraparound in general is that you need a strong component of flex funding, they call it. In Canada we don't need that as much because most of the stuff that is a need is paid for through the department. But we also have been able to access funds from some of the sports groups in town who have had extra money and said, we will help out.

And so when we needed to send a kid to Cougar camp or something like that and the family couldn't pay, when we had a girl who needed to pick up her summer school and the parents weren't eligible for funding on it and they couldn't pay for it, we found the money from a community donor to put that forward.

But I think we're really taken care of as far as those needs. We've accessed local hardware places to provide us with a door and the fixings and things that we needed to do.

And so the workers have been super creative in that the one sports group, the Prairie Fire, has made money available to us and said, this is money you can use. And after two years we haven't touched the first year's funding really. We've used maybe . . . we've used it maybe three or four times.

Ms. Draude: — I just have one follow-up question then. If you have a . . . if your worker comes in and decides that obviously they need the door fixed so you can go on about your business and you have to go buy hinges, I mean is that something where you just . . . Social Services pays for it then?

Mr. Cornish: — No. We haven't approached Social Services on that because we've been . . . I think not because we couldn't swing it eventually although it would be nice if that was part of sort of a category that said if the people need this; I think that would be great. But I think Social Services, we have a certain amount of funding, and we really try to use it and conserve it carefully and use it for those purposes.

So when we've had this community funding, we've found that if we can take that money and use it or take that help from somebody else, it tends to be that Clairol shampoo commercial thing where they tell two friends and they tell two friends. And we've had tremendous amounts of offers afterwards.

Like people will phone us and say . . . We had a person phone us and say, I know there's the food bank, I know there's these other things, but I work at a produce company and can I drop off fresh, nice produce to you guys?

So the answer I guess would be, I've never tested that to see if the hinges come out of that account. The hinges have come out of other places.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I have one question that I'd like to ask you, Dick, and it builds on Kevin's question about expansion.

I mean, the testimony to this committee is that we've got 250 children under the age of 18 in Saskatoon who are on the street, and this isn't including the male pimps. And in terms of young girls in Regina, we've been told 300. And we've been told that by community groups, street outreach agencies, the police, so I'm assuming this 300 number in Regina is accurate.

And it would seem like every one of those families should be, or at least the large number of them could potentially use a service like this, and a service that puts one key person in their life. I mean one of the things I really like about this is that you're not working with dozens of different agencies in your life, or what you're trying to do is reduce the number of agencies that the family has contact with.

So I guess what I'm wondering about is, how would you envision this service being expanded to address those children's needs?

And if you did suddenly find that you were working with a larger number of kids who were on the street, in families, what sort of change in the program can you envision, given your experience with the four families you've had? Say you suddenly had 150 of the 300 kids, if you can imagine that for a minute.

We need to find some kind of way of working with these kids. And I guess one of the things that I've found frustrating is that, you know, we know who these kids are, but we're obviously not touching their lives in a substantive enough way to get them off the street very quickly.

So I mean if we looked at the wraparound process as one possible long-term vehicle for doing that, how would you imagine the program expanding and maybe changing slightly to address those needs?

Mr. Cornish: — Well I think that . . . that's really hard to say, because there is no doubt that wraparound is used in all sorts of areas. They use it with elder care. They use it with crack addicts. They use it with everybody. And it's a process, more than a program.

And so it's interesting in that probably one of the more senior members of Social Services, when we brought them over and did an outreach sort of to them about the wraparound project, he was pretty clear about it. And he sort of stroked his eyebrow and said, so what you're saying, Dick, is you guys do good case management. You guys do good social work. And I said yes, if I had to describe it, I'd say that's what we're doing. Wraparound gives you a really nice format and a really nice outline and some really great values and principles to guide you around how you deal with people.

Whether wraparound is the answer with kids in the street trade, I couldn't say. I would hope that wraparound would be helpful to the families, but I can't say that. I haven't seen anything — and I've looked at, probably over the last two years, almost everything they have on wraparound — and I really haven't seen anything targeted directly to kids being abused on the street.

But I would suggest from our experience that some of the issues that we are built to deal with in building that team that helps to re-attach a person to their community have been helpful in dealing with these kids. We've had some good success. We've had some monstrous struggles too. And we've had what we hope are only temporary failures that have been awful for the families and the workers involved.

And I think that if we were going to expand wraparound to do that, I think that the best part of wraparound is the fact that we're trying to bring in people that mean something to these kids. You can sit them down at child and youth and they're not going to talk, you know, because it's a stranger. You can sit him down with my workers, the first meeting they ain't saying anything either.

You do need someone. I think you said it best; you have that one person that means something. And the building of the relationship is really important, and the respectful manner in which wraparound approaches clients and the sort of gentle but realistic interventions that begin at the beginning are what builds that relationship and allows you to do the human part of the human services that is really necessary. We can't hope to go in and have sort of a quick intervention that's going to pull a kid off the street, because they've spent 13 years getting there.

And so I think that wraparound, the integrated part of it, where they're able to work with a number of different agencies and try to build a team together, I think deferring to parents and the family and saying to them what do you think will work for you and really investigating those things is also good because I think that, you know, plans being individualized are the best hope for success in that situation. Because there are many, as far as I understand it and I'm not an expert in the street trade, but I would say that there are many sort of streams that bring people in there and so an individualized plan would certainly be helpful in that manner.

Does that answer your question?

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes, well it begins to. You know, if we had more time I'd like to explore what the history has been with these four families, but I'm just conscious of the fact that we're running out of time.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Well, Dick, some of what you said, I can see how the wraparound program could be coupled with other initiatives that might be taken to help, assist street children.

When I try to envision the wraparound process, it's difficult because I haven't been a part of it. But what I envision is you identifying, for instance, a child somehow or other that needs some help, and that family needs some help. But what I also envision is that there might be multiple sorts of areas of need that that child has.

And so that's why I think that it would have to be . . . the whole concept would have to be expanded in order to ensure that there is, for instance, adequate drug and alcohol space and, you know, the discovery or discussion of how everything works in tandem for that family. And that might take a long time. So I understand you're speaking of this as a process rather than a program.

I just have one question because we do have to move on, Dick, and I know I'll have the opportunity to talk to you in the days ahead so I'll most likely do that.

Mr. Cornish: — Yes, please feel free.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Dick, what is the average duration of time that you would work with a family up to this time? Has there been . . . I know you've mentioned that it's, you know, there is no timeline as such, you work as long as you have to. But what are the indicators that would tell you that, you know, that the process, you've done as much as you can and that the families are indicating that they feel they are strong enough to go on on their own? Or have you had that happen yet?

Mr. Cornish: — Yes, we've certainly had families that have exited from the program. And I think that lots of that is self-directed as well. And we've gone in and we try to re-evaluate on a regular basis. Weekly we sit down and we talk about what our goals are with this family; where we're heading; how we feel they're doing; what's needed to sort of kick things up to the next level. And what we've found is that many

families have been able to say, we're just phoning to tell you this is how we dealt with this. And so they tend to transition themselves out when they're ready.

Some families we've had to say, I don't think we need to show up for this next meeting, and we think you're ready to handle it. So as far as transitioning out, there's a number of different avenues that come to it. But we're not going to remove someone from the program when they're not ready to go yet, because then their only access back in is sort of through the system again.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, thanks, Dick, and just one more question. When we were speaking with Joceline Schriemer, a woman from Saskatoon, — and there's another woman there; her names just escapes me right now — but they were talking about the wraparound process as they'd like to get it moving a little more in Saskatoon. They indicated that it would be kind of costly.

And so I'm asking you today, as far as your concern about that or I'm sure it would be the taxpayers' concern eventually, do you see the cost increasing due to the fact that a caseload would be much less than it is now for any social worker assigned to this?

Mr. Cornish: — I think that . . . I mean we can talk about cost upfront. If we turned it all over and did it tomorrow, yes, it would be more costly. But in the long run, no, it's not going to be more costly.

Obviously because we're looking at a service that tries to transition someone back to the community which owns those problems and which owns those people — they're part of that community; they're not a part of Social Services — and so if we provide that permanent exit ramp, that's plans and tests and do all those steps along the way to help that family to reattach themselves, then we're not going to see them coming back in.

Lots of times what happens is we're able to fix things in the short run and the crisis runs out. And if we don't have time to deal with that family, lots of families will exit Social Services themselves. They'll say, okay, we're not in crisis anymore, we're going, we're moving on. But they'll come back in it and take again and again and again. So I think long term, the studies that they've done with wraparound in Alaska seem to suggest that using that top 2 per cent model and those most needy, most complex need families, they find that it's very respectful to taxpayers. Thanks.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Very good. Well thank you so much, Dick. It's been a pleasure hearing from you today, and we thank you for coming and certainly look forward to speaking with you in the future. Thank you.

Mr. Cornish: — Thanks. It was a pleasure to talk to everyone. And as you said, Arlene, if over the next couple of days or the while people want to give us a call at wraparound and talk a little more, they're more than welcome to give us a shout.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — That's very nice, Dick. Thank you very much.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you. The committee is requesting a five-minute break. So we will break for five minutes before our next presentation.

The committee recessed for a period of time.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — The committee can resume now; we've had our 5- to 15-minute break.

We have with us at this time, Ken Svenson. And, Ken, we're very pleased to have you with us. Ken is a therapist with Associated Counselling. He's just done a great deal and a variety of counselling for different people throughout the province. And I think I'm going to let Ken expound a little bit more on his background a bit before he gives us his presentation.

But, Ken, do you know everyone around the table here as committee members? You do?

Mr. Svenson: — I do, everyone. I should probably introduce the people that are with me though. Behind me is a business partner and my wife of 36 years, and sitting beside me Chris Lafontaine, who is a business partner of quite a number of years now — not as many as 36, but quite a number. And we have an organization called Associated Counselling Network.

And I've been trying to think of a central concept that might explain to you in a few words where we generally come from in terms of our approach to things. We do counselling in individual and family counselling plus we do a lot of consulting work.

And probably the central concept that guides a lot of what we do is that we believe that the solutions to the problems that people have, the seeds to those solutions are within the people themselves. And that, you know, they may not have all the information and they may not have all the skills, but those can be added on to where they are.

And so that a lot of the work that we do is capacity-building work — not necessarily delivering services or solving problems for people, but it's helping people build the capacity to deal with their own problems. And so a lot of the consulting work that we do is along that line as well. And when it comes down to us discussing some ideas of what might be done in the area that you're concerned about, you'll see some of that coming forward too.

We have a number of biases, and in some cases we're going to be very explicit about our biases. And sometimes we may say things that will challenge what you believe or what you've heard before, and we hope that we can do that pleasantly. But we do have biases. And we don't have much time to really lead you into a gentle discussion, so we're going to say some things once in a while that are very upfront.

Now to begin with, I'd like to stand. I can do this sitting down, but my mind focuses better when I stand. So if you don't mind, I'll stand.

Just another general comment before I start. I watched you all

as the last presentation went on, and I want to congratulate you because you all appeared to be good listeners. And I've sat in on the receiving end of presentations before where people have come and gone, and I've found it very difficult to maintain a focus on listening to what's been said. And so I was just watching to see whether you'd become jaded yet, and I didn't see it. So if you are, you hide it well.

I was really interested in, when I read the heading that's the title of your committee. It's called, Preventing the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade. Now preventing is probably the area that we're going to spend most of our time on. Because, you know, I listened to the last presentation and I expect you've heard a lot on what can we do about these people that are in the sex trade.

But if we're really going to do something that's going to have an impact in the long run, it's the preventing area that we need to dwell on. And probably the main concept that we're going to talk about is you need to work on the roots, not just on the symptoms. Because as we see from what we've done, and we generally end up in our practice getting people after the fact. We end up with adults who have been in the sex trade as children and have been abused as children. And a lot of the work that we do in the counselling area is dealing with adults who have been sexually and otherwise abused when they were children.

And one of the things that we want to drive home is that children don't just get involved in the sex trade haphazardly; they're trained to be there. And the things that we do in our society in families, in the other aspects of our society, train people to end up there. And so we want to talk about some of the roots, not just the symptoms.

One of the things that we look at is, and your previous speaker talked about it too, he said that he got 80 per cent and 20 per cent. This is the iceberg. And I think the sex trade isn't just, isn't the 20 per cent either. The sex trade in terms of the abuse that goes on, the abuse of children that goes on, really is much less than the 20 per cent. But it is an iceberg and you've got at least 80 per cent of the iceberg that's below the surface.

And that iceberg — if you look at it like this — the stuff that's above the surface you can see and it becomes the issue we're talking about today, is the sex trade issue; but the stuff that's below the surface, that's the training ground. That's the area that prepares people to be in the sex trade. It prepares victims and it prepares perpetrators. And so we want to talk to about, somehow, how that preparation occurs.

The other thing that we want to emphasize is, now let's just assume . . . And some of the things that I heard as I listened to your previous presenter, I heard some good things and liked some of those things. But they're focusing on the tip of the iceberg. And in your experience as you look at that image of an iceberg, if you take the tip off, what happens? The iceberg simply rises up and you've got a new tip.

And that's what we're into from our experience in this, that no matter how much effort you put on that tip of that iceberg . . . and it's valuable effort because there are people there that need some of those interventions and that need to have opportunities to move out of the traps that they're in, and they're people's lives and they're valuable. And so it's important that that work get done.

But if all you do is that work there, basically what you've done is you've created an employment system for social workers and psychiatrists and psychologists and police and law enforcement people forever. It's what goes on in the training ground that we need to pay some additional attention to.

Now I want to tell you a story about a young woman and I'm going to call her "Carol". I had hoped today to have a client that we're actually working with now to come and visit with you. But when it came down to it, she wasn't quite prepared. She's 19 and has been working with us for just a few sessions and she ended up not being ready to come. So she backed out. And so what I'm going to tell you is the story of "Carol"; and "Carol" is partly this person that I was going to bring, but partly other people too that we've had in our experience.

And I'm going to just go through the story quickly about how people end up there, in the sex trade.

"Carol" has alcoholic parents. She was, as a young child often left alone or in the custody of . . . or both in the custody or having the responsibility when she was very young of looking after siblings or being looked after by cousins. And sometimes they were left alone for extended periods of times. Sometimes they were left alone to the extent that there was no more food in the house, and the traumatic experience that comes out on that — part of the training ground.

Part of the training ground occurred in her case in the education system. There was a grade 1 teacher that after one of these episodes where she'd been left alone, she showed up at school the next day where she had prepared herself and her siblings to go to school. And the teacher noticed that she was unkempt and her clothes were dirty and she just was not looking like she should be at school. And the teacher's comment was, you dirty little Indian, can't you keep yourself clean? And that's part of the training ground too.

At the age 11 she had some young women that she associated with that she thought were her friends, and at one point after school she was at home and she was home alone. And the result of some of these friends got together with other young women and they came around her house and knocked on doors and windows and teased and taunted her and she thought that some of them were her friends. She felt betrayed.

At the age 14 she was raped. She was raped by a 16-year-old young man. At the age of 15 she was into drugs and part of what . . . well I should tell you a little bit more of the story here.

At the age of 15 she was at a party. And she'd gone to the party by herself but she'd intended to go with a friend of hers, and the friend was 16 and had a driver's licence and was going to drive her, but at the last minute the friend backed out but "Carol" went anyway.

The party started to get into things that she didn't really want to

participate in and so she called her friend's home. Her friend was not there and she wanted her friend to come and get her and take her home. And her friend was not there but her friend's father decided that he would come and get her, and so he volunteered. And he did come and get her, but on the way home, he sexually assaulted her. And as part of keeping her quiet, he promised that he would keep her supplied with drugs.

And so that was the beginning of her trading sex for drugs, and it started with him and it expanded to a limited number of other men as well, where she would trade sex for drugs, because she needed the drugs.

At age 16, the first time I saw her, she was sent to counselling by an aunt. And she came in and her hair covered her face. She was . . . she just did not want anybody to really see her. She would not look at me. She really did not want to be there. She came about two or three times and then she did not come any more. And I didn't see her again until she was 19.

At the age 19, she's now a mother, has a child, a young child. Between 16 and 19, she had run off from home to Edmonton with a young man where she lived with him for almost two years. That's when she got pregnant with the child. And he abused her physically and otherwise. He beat her a number of times.

And anyway when she became pregnant she started to make some decisions in her life. And she decided she did not want her child to become like she was. And so she went to work to make some changes. She moved home, back to her parents' home, because that's the only place she could go, and she decided to come back to counselling and she called me.

Now those are just the events; that's the surface. The challenge is to see the roots. What does these little events that I've talked about . . . what difference do they make in people's lives. The roots we are able to see are often restricted by the basic assumptions we make about human nature, and so I want to talk about human nature a little bit.

I brought you a visual aide. And my ball keeps losing air and there's no way of filling it, so one of these days, I'll have to do something about getting a new one. But I've used this quite often.

If you look at that, what do you see? Most of you will see a label that says physical. Some of you, over here where June is, can see that there is an emotional side to this, and over there where Ron is, he can see that there's a mental side to it.

If this is a person, how we look at that person really dictates what we see. And most of us, as we look at people, we see their body. We see their face and their body type and we can say . . . we tell a lot about people from looking at their physical characteristics. And so they look at that.

But, you know, and there's . . . and the whole medical model of things is based upon — and your previous speaker talked about the medical model — is based upon the assumption that a person is their body and that everything has its solution in their body.

So if a person has an emotional problem, what's the solution? Well the problem really is a chemical imbalance so you feed them Prozac and tranquilizers and all sorts of pills to fix their emotional problem. Because the problem's in the body, isn't it?

If they have a mental problem, have trouble learning at school, we label them attention deficit disorder, or learning deficiencies, or all sorts of things like that. And what's the solution? Well the solution is to medicate them, so we feed them another kind of medication.

And so in the society in which we live there's a lot of medicating going on. And some of it's prescribed medicating and some of it's what we call drug addictions. But they're all addictions. And they're all based upon the assumption that we are our body and that the solution to our problems lies in our body.

There are people that say we are what we think. And there's a whole genre of approaches to people that are based upon that. And all of the basic assumptions surrounding the training of sales people is based around, we are what we think. And it's called positive mental attitude, PMA. And it's all based upon, if you think that you're a good salesman, you are. And if you just have to think it and repeat it often enough, then that's what you become.

There are people that believe that we are what we feel. If I feel good, I'm good. If I feel bad, I'm bad. So I'll just do the things that make me feel good. And taking drugs helps me feel good; so then I'll be good.

And there are people who see this side too — the spiritual side — where we're not just a body but we have a spiritual element in us and that that experiences pain too.

Some of you will recognize this. And it's just a matter of taking a different perspective and you see four different things. And Chris and I do a lot of work with First Nations people, and that's really the model that they use is that there is a spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental part of us. And out of those parts comes some basic needs that we have.

Out of our physical needs, there's the need to live — food, clothing, shelter, health, and safety. And if you look at the programs that government mounts, the largest part of them deals with those kinds of things — our health, our safety, our income, and our economic system. And that's where you spend most of your discussion time, isn't it, is on those four things. And they just fall in this area here.

Now out of our mental capacities is the need to grow, to have new experiences, to see things differently, to learn, to gain new skills, to have variety in our life. And we have some institutions that focus on that too. Our education system does.

Out of our spiritual capacities we have the need to feel important, to have a place, to be of value, to have a purpose in life. Some of those kinds of things fit in there.

And out of our emotional nature we have the need to love and be loved, to have people that we care about and have people

that we know care about us.

And those basic needs drive everything that we do. But as you look at the society around you, where do we get the capacity? What develops our capacity? What supports our capacities in the needs to feel important and to love and be loved?

And you think about it. If we don't get it in our families, we don't get it. It doesn't come very easily from anywhere else if we don't get it in our families.

So I liked what your previous speaker said when he said we start with needs. But I was wondering, as he said it, whether we start deep enough. Do we look at all the needs and do we have a balanced approach to it?

But all of the things . . . and there's a little saying that we've sort of used in our work and that's that misbehaviour arises from deep and unmet needs. So if people are in the sex trade, there's some needs they're trying to meet.

Another thing I need to tell you about Carol. There's some feelings that she talked about all the way through as we have explored her life. And I didn't talk about that; I just talked about the incidents. But the incidents generate emotions. And emotions really fall into two major categories and then I've tucked another one in separate.

First of all, there are feelings of isolation. She continually talks about, and stills does, how lonely she is.

Feelings of rejection. As we explored that one, that was when we started to find out about these friends of hers. That was a critical one. The friends that had apparently turned against her when she was 11. Abandoned, used, abused, fear, and panic.

When she first started to come after she was 19, what really drove her to come was feelings of fear and panic that she had recurring over and over again. And she didn't know how to cope with them. She didn't want to take drugs to cover them; she wanted to deal with it. So that's largely what we worked on to begin with.

The other set of feelings are feelings of self-hatred: I'm unworthy, dirty, shameful, guilty, empty, worthless. And you can cover a whole bunch of those.

And I've put anger in a third category, because anger is generally a second layer. It occurs after something else. And we use anger to bury other things too. And I'll talk about that in a minute.

But these, as you look at those feelings, the two categories — feelings of isolation and feelings of self-hatred — what do they tell you about the needs that are not being met in her life? And you go back to the basic needs model that I showed you just before, and feelings of isolation, they relate to the need to love and be loved. Feelings of self-hatred relate to the need to feel important.

And so her emotions tell you a whole lot about where she's at. And we tend to start exploring people's feelings first because as they talk about their feelings, it tells you a whole lot about where they're coming from.

Now I want to just show you a little model here. We talked about feelings of isolation and what happens if we don't know how to cope with our feelings of isolation, especially when we're very young. What do we do with them? We don't know how to resolve them or fix them. Loneliness, rejection, used, abused, abandoned, and familiar to Carol.

So what happens to her as she starts to try and cope with those? What does she do with them? And what people do with them is they engage in actions of self-indulgence. They use something else to hide from their pain. And substance abuse . . . And that's one of the things that Carol used. She became addicted to drugs and she used it to cover up her emotional pain.

Substance abuse, gambling, work, sex. A lot of sexual predators are using sex to cover up their emotional pain. In our work we don't get a lot of people who are predators, people who are perpetrators, come forward, and partly it's because they're hiding. They're hiding not only from their emotions; they're hiding from exposing themselves to legal proceedings too.

Power and controlling behaviours. A lot of the drive we have to control others is so that they won't remind us of the pain that we have, so we try and keep them in places where we're comfortable.

Self-righteousness, scattered thoughts. We do a lot of intellectual stuff that keep us. Sometimes caretaking behaviours, doing good for other people is sometimes driven by the need for us to cover up our feelings. Because some of these kinds of things create feelings in us which can mask our pain.

The longer we spend in self-indulgent behaviours, whenever we try and back out of them — like substance abuse, when we back out of it — we end up thinking about our pain again. It comes back. And so we spend more and more time in it. The more time we spend in it, the less time we have to deal with the other aspects of our life and we start to wonder whether we're capable.

It enhances our feelings of self-hatred, our shame, our guilt, our emptiness, and our powerlessness, all of those kinds of things. Those contribute to a need to engage in actions of self-concealment, to hide ourselves. You can . . . I could tell when Carol was hiding when she was 16 because she was hiding literally her face. She did not want me to see her, and so she was hiding.

We lie, deny. Denial is a lie we tell ourselves. We build facades; we build fake images of ourselves out here, things that we think are acceptable to other people. We seek the badges of acceptability. We live in the right neighbourhoods, build the right kind of house, have the corner offices. You can talk about all those kinds of badges.

We keep our relationships superficial because if somebody gets too close to us they'll find out who we really are and how bad we really are. So we keep them out there at a distance. We sabotage relationships. If somebody tries to get too close we'll

do something to push them away. We'll create an argument. Arguments are good things because they allow us to blame the other person for doing what we're doing. And we engage in people-pleasing behaviours. So there's a whole bunch of things that fall in there.

Actions of self-concealment reinforce our feelings of isolation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All right we'll cut it short. Chris says we've only got 10 minutes. I just want to pick up a couple of other things.

See "Carol" is in this cycle. And she's still in it partly; she's still addicted to men. She hasn't dealt with all the loneliness issues. A lot of her fear issues are gone but the loneliness issues are not there; she's still addicted to men.

And she's actually living with a young man that she knows is not good for her and who abuses her in some ways but she's not prepared to give that up at this point because she's lonely. She keeps being there.

The other thing is these feelings of isolation and feelings of self-hatred generate beliefs in us — beliefs about who we are and about who the other people in our lives are and about what importance they are in our lives and how we relate to them.

Some of the beliefs that are created out of feelings of isolation are: people hate me, I'm unloved, I don't belong, nobody cares. And you can build that list as long as you like from your own experience.

Out of the feelings of self-hatred we generate beliefs about our worth: I'm no good, I'm weak or hopeless, I'm stupid, I'm unlovable, I'm worthless and all of those kinds of things.

So what do we do now? Whatever approach you decide needs at least two areas of focus. A focus that will help the existing "Carols" to get out of their problems, to build their capacity to meet their own needs. It's a capacity building thing. And sometimes they have to get past their emotional pain in order to do that, so there's a healing process involved here not just an educational process. And the second one is a focus that will work on changing the training ground. How do we change things that create the people who we're trying to help?

Let me talk just a minute. Existing "Carols" need to change, need to regain their power over their own lives. They need to take control of their own beliefs. They need to take control of their own healing. They need to be able to help others. And we could spend an hour talking about each one of those topics. And they need the power to decide their own problems, decide their own solutions, and implement their own solutions. And they need to be able to build that in their life.

If we come down. Our earlier speaker was talking about a certain kind of case management. The case management that needs to come is the case management that "Carol" does herself, where she's in the middle of this network and she manages her relationships, she finds people that help her. And part of the process is not only helping her deal with her emotional difficulties, but part of the process is helping her find resources from her experience areas in her community. Find the resources that she can use, people that she trusts.

If you want to get out of the compulsive cycle that we talked about a minute ago, she needs to find people that she can be self-revealing to. Not just a counsellor, but other people that she feels comfortable with that she can talk to her about her issues, about how she feels, about what's important to her. And she needs people that will give her supporting, caring messages all the time and reinforce those messages that she's loved and that she's of value, and those need to come. So we could spend a lot of time talking about that one too.

I want to talk about the other side for just a second. Many of our helping approaches create dependence rather than independence. And dependence is just another . . . is part of the training ground really. I put "another" in there but that's probably not appropriate. Dependence is part of the training ground. Any time we create or train people to be dependent, we're training them to be victims and we make them vulnerable to exploitation.

We often use the active expert and the passive client models. That means as the counsellor and the expert in this person's life, and I have the ability to diagnose and prescribe a treatment. And what the person that comes to me, their role is to sit there passively absorbing anything that I want to inflict upon them. I'm just continuing the victimization by doing that. I'm continuing the dependence-creation process.

And so we don't want to use that kind of model. We do not have a holistic vision of human nature. We assume that a person's just a body and we talked about that.

What do we do with the training ground? We need to focus on parenting and families. And I was glad to hear that your previous presenter talked about including the whole family. We need to do that. But most of the things that we do isolate people. We send them to school, which is an isolating experience from the family. We send our kids to daycares, which is an isolating experience from the family.

What messages do we send to everybody in our society about the value of parenting? Isn't the message in our society that parenting is something that you can do in your spare time, but the real contribution that you can make comes from employment. And if you really want to develop yourself, you've got to go get a job, and that's where the value is. There's relatively little value in parenting. It's just what you do in your spare time as part of the drudgery of your life.

What messages do we send to children about their value? We send a lot of them that say, you're not of value; you're not important. We need to help parents nurture self-reliance in their children.

And we need to stop replacing the family with institutions. We've already been down that road and I'm just going to make a short statement, and that's the most extreme example of replacing the family was the residential school experience. And we know the outcome. If you want to move in that direction, you can expect results in that direction. And so we have a lot of challenges.

Now I know that I'm not coming up with specific things that are solutions. And I don't have lots of good answers. But I know that we need to look in some of those areas. We do need programs or assistance or help that will help the "Carols".

And you asked a question of the previous speaker that I want to answer because it's an important question. And that's . . . you asked the question, well if you expand your program to look after all of these sex trade victims, what increases in cost does that incur? And that says to me . . . I don't remember who asked it, but it says to me that you're still thinking in terms of programs. And it isn't programs, I think, that we need.

But he gave the answer earlier in his presentation when he said that there was a woman in Yorkton that had trained a hundred-and-some-odd facilitators. You don't need a program; you simply need to change the mindset of the helping people that you employ, in all of the helping agencies. It's not a matter of creating a big, new program.

We've got lots of people that reach into the lives of people, but we tie their hands with the model that we give them to work with, and the program guidelines that we give them to work with. And we keep them from doing their job.

And I'll just want to stop there. That's probably enough controversial stuff.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you very much, Ken. At this time I just want to mention . . . or ask Chris rather, if you have anything that you'd like to add.

Mr. Lafontaine: — I'm just going to make three statements. One is . . . just a little bit about my background. I've worked now for about 34 or 35 years in the Aboriginal community, and I've done almost everything from economic development to counselling. And one of the tragedies that I think that you have a direct responsibility and opportunity to do something about is the models that are creating dependency in Social Services, in Justice, and in Health.

I know that you must think about these things because I see it in some of the conversations that you have that what is now happening is not working. But I want to tell you; you're killing people with kindness. You are creating dependency at a rate that nobody can afford, and I think the government has a responsibility in this area.

You're using the wrong model. I don't know how to be kind about that. I've worked in Social Services, I've worked in Justice, I've worked in Health. And when you start talking about such things as integrated case management, it's the wrong model. It creates dependency.

When you talk about the wraparound programs, if you give that wraparound concept to people that have been trained in the integrated case management models, it's the wrong program. It's the wrong model. It creates dependency. You're killing Aboriginal people every day with your kindness, not creating the responsibility, the independence that people need.

The second thing I'd like to say is that as you go forward and start doing these types of things, emphasize, as Ken has just stated, it's not new programs we need; we need to be a little more critical of the things that we're doing and why we're doing them.

A lot of the people that are involved in the Social Services counselling area are victims themselves trying to work out their own lives. And as they go forward and they try to work out their own lives, what is happening is that they're trying to do it hopefully by helping others. It's a sad situation. I see it in education.

And I just have 30 seconds so I have to say it as plainly as I can. The answer, in my view, is in the family. We do things in government we do things in our society that is devastating the family. You need to really rethink that.

I just read in the newspaper this morning where one of the judges, when one of the children was being disciplined by the parent, was charged. You're taking away, you're becoming a rescuer of families. You're starting to try to do everything that families should be doing themselves. And I think you need to rethink it.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you very much, Chris. I certainly think that all committee members appreciate that. Because I think that that's recognized by a number of people and it certainly is something that is coming to the forefront of people's thought, that that has not worked in the past, and we need to empower people and build capacity in people and families.

However, someone has to provide some services eventually in order to help people address their capacity-building potential.

So I guess we just need a little bit more discussion as far as the comments that you made in regards to dependency, you know, creation of dependency.

Mr. Lafontaine: — I know we're going overtime, but maybe we can take four or five minutes. There is a little model that you might want to use and may want to think about.

I want to give you about a three-minute personal example. I have five children. And when one of my children was old enough to walk, one of the things that I did to protect him, because I have a responsibility as a parent for the safety of my children, is I set up a protective barrier. And let me just give you an illustration.

When a child has no skill to manipulate the stairs, what do we do? We put up a gate across the stair. It's a protective barrier. It's a gate that stops children from hurting themselves. While they develop the skills, until they get the skill, we leave up this protective barrier, okay?

I came home one day and the gate was down. So I thought those kids. I put the gate back up. All night we went and jumped over the gate. Next night I came home, the gate was down again. I says, time for a family meeting. What's going on here? You guys are creating a danger for my little child. My wife says, don't call the family together. I took it down. And I said, are

you out of your mind? She'll fall and she'll hurt herself. She said, come here, I want to show you something. You know, you got to be taught some of these things. And so she showed me how my daughter could manipulate the stairs well enough that she could take down the protective barrier.

The challenge here is when you take this down.

Let me put this into the context of Social Services. Social Services, when people have no skill, put up protective barriers: foster care, they'll take away kids, they'll do things to guide while parenting is not there. Very seldom do they develop the skill, but some good social workers do develop the skills.

But what happens, very seldom is this protective barrier is never taken down. It is changed. And the frustration a lot of parents have is they get through one protective barrier — you want your foster kids back, you have to do this, this and this — and then you find another protective barrier and another protective barrier. Never do children or adults get the opportunity to develop the skills so that these protective barriers come down. That's the problem with dependency and the creation of dependency. Right now, we've got social workers, counsellors often making decisions for every aspect of a person's life.

I work with a family and they've given me permission to use their example — 6 children; they had 14 workers. I'd ask the lady, well what are you going to do because we were talking about budgeting. One of the things we're trying to help because we volunteer in the community. We want to take down the protective barrier of them budgeting themselves. I have to phone up my social worker and ask. What about your child at school? Well I've got a protection worker I've got to talk to.

I mean we've got so many protective barriers here that we often overlook, in our anxiousness to protect people, the devastating impact we're having on people. We never teach them how to do things themselves. It's just gate after gate after gate after gate until people say, hey lookit, the gates are up there so why should I even try?

Your models that you're using are putting up too many gates. You're not building capacity. You're creating dependence. And dependence is expensive because this Carol that you're talking about, that Ken talked about, is going to be on social assistance or would have been on social assistance for most of her life. And her children — we've got eight generations, in some cases nine generations of welfare recipients in Regina that we work with. When do we realize that Social Services is not working? And part of it is the models that we use.

The people have real good intentions. Like don't get me wrong — I'm not criticizing the individual desires of people to help. It's a good thing. But it's like building a house with an axe. I mean unless you're a good log builder, it's not going to work. We're trying to build different types of buildings with the wrong types of tools. We're trying to build people with the wrong types of equipment. And it is really causing a lot of problems.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you, Chris. I would love to have more time, as I'm sure all committee members would. And we often face this dilemma when we're kind of constrained to time limits.

But I thank you for your perspective on that. It's valuable, and it's true. So I thank you very much. And we'll have to have an opportunity to . . . or make the opportunity, rather, to further this discussion in the days ahead. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Svenson: — Thank you for letting us come and getting our tirade done.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Oh, you're very welcome; pleasure to have you. Are committee members fine with us continuing onward without a break? So I think we'll hear then from our next witness, John Keen.

Members of the committee, this is John Keen, and he's a concerned parent. John, I'm going to let members of the committee introduce themselves to you. John's partner, Alice, is in the back. So we want to welcome you both. And, June, why don't we start with you in terms of introductions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — So, John, we're so pleased to have you here, and just proceed with your presentations.

Mr. Keen: — I hope that is the way it remains.

Now I submitted a form but I imagine I would read it too?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — If you would like to, certainly. Do you have it with you?

Mr. Keen: — Yes.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — All right, yes. If you would . . .

Mr. Keen: — Did you get copies?

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes, we did get copies and we thank you very much for getting this material to us in advance.

Mr. Keen: — Well maybe I will. It will just . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Please yes, go ahead.

Mr. Keen: — I call this, society's early warning.

In almost all jurisdictions child prostitution is illegal. But in 1994 there were over a half a million child prostitutes in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the Philippines. That's a report from the United Nations. So the fact that it is illegal in these jurisdictions doesn't seem to be having much effect.

Trying to solve the problem of child prostitution by using the police is little more than an exercise in displacement behaviour. These girls and boys are the canaries in society's mine shaft and when the birds begin to flutter we don't call in the law, we improve the ventilation.

The police are not stupid and they can tell when there is no real intent to correct the problem. As a result, policing will become desultory and will almost signal acquiescence. There is a place for enforcement but it is after the community has shown that it is willing to be a partner in solving the problem.

You can be sure that any graph showing increased child prostitution would be paralleled by graphs showing increased child poverty and income disparity. When you have people living in substandard housing, with substandard expectations, and without either decent jobs or the hope of decent jobs, then their children will be at risk.

And as participation in this undesirable behaviour increases, so will the acceptance of this behaviour by the peer group. Familiarity will lead to experimentation and finally to greater participation.

I wonder if the people who prey on children, both those who purchase and those who sell them, realize the extent this vicious trade is dependent on courses of action initiated and carried out by many of our most eminent citizens. Every car that cruises in search of children is occupied by the shadowy images of prime ministers, premiers, finance ministers, and other eminent people who have helped to lower the standard of decency in our world.

For the last 30 years the trend has been to greater rewards for those at the top of the financial food chain, slowly at first but as greed has become respectable, greed has grown.

In Canada, the select group of cloud dwellers — the top one-half of one per cent of our families — each gain close to one and a quarter million dollars every year from the actions or inactions of government. Money that should be building a better world. That means over 60 billion dollars is divided among the 50,000 most favourite families. This is not their total annual gain in wealth, this is only money gained as a benefit of influence and affluence.

To arrive at this figure, I extrapolated from the American federal reserve study done in co-operation with the American IRS (Internal Revenue Service). Every three years, the American government does an exhaustive study on income and wealth accumulation — in income and wealth accumulation. I just assumed Canadian patterns to be roughly similar. Canada has not done such a study since 1984, although one is promised this year.

Of the total, possibly half the money comes from such measures as tax expenditures, tax remissions, or transfer pricing, and half from interest on government debt. It is the interest on debt that I look to for the funds to correct society's ills.

Largesse built into the tax system is incorporated into the economy and requires care in dismantling. But . . . (inaudible) . . . income can be reduced by debt reduction and will be less traumatic as the money that people have invested in government paper can be directed elsewhere.

A case can be made that our debts — provincial, municipal, and federal — have resulted not from ineptitude or overspending, but from a desire to use government debt as an excuse to reduce social spending. It's distressing to think that governments have conspired with capital to reward wealth and to punish poverty.

We have just finished an election during which nothing of consequence was said. Various people proposed ways to spend an imaginary surplus at some future date. No one addressed the 60 billion-plus being wasted on interest by all governments. That amount and its multipliers that flows through the economy would provide the fresh air needed to revive our deteriorating society and save our suffocating sentinels.

Imagine our country with that much new money entering the real economy. For our province it would mean 2 billion plus the new tax revenue from the economic activity. There'd be more teachers, nurses, and carpenters; more investment in wind energy, solar power, roads; more money for farm programs, and more for foreign aid; increased spending on housing, infrastructure and research; additional funds for education; and interesting, exciting jobs when school is out.

When we can offer these children a decent present and a real future, the problem will be reduced to manageable proportions. Then our police can be used as they should be to deter crime, not as a gesture to ease a guilty conscience.

Now I attached a sheet from that IRS study that's done in the States that shows distribution of income and wealth. The problem here is that our society is deteriorating. We see it every day as we go down roads that are deteriorating. We talk about our hospitals are overcrowded, our classrooms that are overcrowded, and our lack of a future. And this is all our fault.

At my age, I remember a little bit of the depression and I can remember a steady succession of things getting better, steadily, steadily. And then around about 1975 things began to slowly get worse, and I think the process is accelerating. No one can tell me that things have to be this way, because I have seen them be different.

For 30 years we built roads, universities, hospitals. We built housing in this country. We had not housing after the 30s. We built all that housing. We paid down debt. We did all these things and were very, very successful — the seaway, the TransCanada Highway.

All these things can be done again. But if you want to see what happened, an incident, what happened, somehow we've got this defeatist attitude or mentality. Oh we have this terrible debt

with which we are burdening our children.

Well our children should be so lucky. I drove in here today on a road into a building that's paid for. There's an airport that's paid for. There's a hospital paid for, another hospital that's paid for. There's libraries. We've got about $6 in assets to $7 in assets for every dollar in debt.

And here's the real clinger. None of that debt bought anything. All of it constitutes interest paid on interest. That debt would not have existed if, during the early '70s and '80s, we had adopted a policy of attempting not to have a debt rather than attempting a policy to have one.

I'm going to say some things that are rather . . . possibly a little strange. What had happened was that for a period of about 25 to 30 years, money flowed from people who had money to people who had less. Part of that was because, for example, we had long-term mortgages where you've got a mortgage for 25 years at 6 per cent. There was inflation took place. The people that lent the money for that mortgage, they lost money. They lost purchasing power with their money.

The people who bought the house, they gained. So for a period of time there was a relocation of money from people who had it to people who didn't. And I couldn't go on because they were just simply not going to lend money and they were going to drive things up. Plus there's the fact that people with money have influence. So we made a bit of a U-turn and we began then to protect capital from being . . . from deteriorating.

At first we simply raised interest rates and we changed the attitude of the Bank of Canada. I think if you remember Graham Towers was the chairman of the Bank of Canada when it first was built. And it had a very interventionist system. Then we went to James Coyne and he and John Diefenbaker got in a hassle and Coyne got turfed out.

Then we went back to Louis Rasminsky who was again an interventionist banker and, oddly enough, a very compassionate banker — oxymoron. But when Rasminsky retired, then we got Gerald Bouey. It's odd that Bouey was appointed by Trudeau, because here was a very conservative banker appointed by a Liberal following a liberal banker who had been appointed by a Conservative, so things were rather strange.

We began to . . . not to use the central bank in an interventionist way. And this is an extremely important thing. Because if you look back, if you draw graphs of almost all these things that you'll find where society is deteriorating, you'll find a point in 1975 which seems to be the focal point for most of these things.

We began to lower taxes. Everybody complains about taxes. Most people don't have any idea what taxes they pay. Taxes in this country are a bargain and we're not overtaxed. We think we're overtaxed because we've been told for so long by the Fraser Institute that we're overtaxed, we're starting to believe it.

The point is taxes are somewhat uneven, I'll grant you that, but taxes are not heavy. And taxes are absolutely essential if we're going to have a civilized world.

But what we did was we began to lower taxes in the early '70s. That left us short of money to run the country. Then we borrowed and we borrowed from the sector of society that receives interest.

We do have a central bank and one of the reasons that the central bank was put in place was as an avenue by which we could affect the ways in which societies work. We could use that central bank, and we did use that central bank to a some extent, never to a great deal. But the fact is that almost everybody here would agree that it's better to borrow money at zero interest than to pay interest. I mean that's elemental.

When we stopped doing that we gradually began to show deficits. And those deficits gradually increased. We only owed $17 billion at the start of 1970. And that was from the time of Confederation up until that date. And we had, as I said, billions and billions and billions of dollars of assets.

The reason I'm going at this is because I think the way to correct the problem we're talking about here is to build a better society, not to use police.

Everybody's got to have a job, a decent job. And when these kids go to school, they don't sit there and tell the teacher . . . the teacher says, well you've got to study and get a job. And they say, oh hell, there's not going to be any jobs anyway. No, there's going to be jobs and there's going to be good jobs and there's going to be jobs that have a purpose behind them. What I'm trying to do here is to show you an avenue by which there is money.

Government has immense power. And one of the greatest powers government has is the power to do nothing. And that's been practised quite widely over the last 25 or 30 years. If you want to be a little bit more militant and take action . . . During that period of time when we get into about 1980, that's when we really began to build a debt.

Milton Friedman, from the University of Chicago, he decided that it would be a wonderful thing if we had about 10 per cent unemployment so that we'd have this reserve force of labour that was unemployed so that we could hammer down wages.

The budget director in the United States, David Stockman, he wanted immense deficits so that they could curtail social spending because they could prove absolutely by the size of this deficit that we could not afford those social programs. It's irregardless that the deficits were caused by reduced taxes, not be overspending.

There's a study by Mimota and Cross, the Department of Finance in Canada here in 1991, that shows they went looking for the reasons for our debt and they discovered the reasons for our debt were simply interest and reduced taxation. About 6 per cent was made up of spending and only 2 per cent of that, about a third, was made up of spending on social programs. Our debt is not a reflection of the fact that we cannot afford to do things. It's a reflection of the fact that we decided to transfer enormous amounts of money upward. Over 25 years, we relocated a trillion dollars. Most of that, if we follow this pattern here, about half of it went to the top one-half of one per cent.

We took a fortune from people and gave it to people who had a fortune. I mean, this is totally irrational. Greed alone doesn't account for it because greed might demand it, but we didn't have to give it to them. We acquiesced and we simply allowed them to take it. And when they took that, they took the jobs.

We can go and get it back, and oddly enough the very fact that the debt exists gives us a way to do things. If we are currently kicking out $60 billion a year to do these things, to pay interest on it, if we were to spend that money on useful things, we'd get back close to another 30 billion in new taxes for the new economic activity. We couldn't possibly spend $90 billion in this country. There's absolutely no way we could. Unless of course we decided to give a bunch of it away again.

So I think what I'm getting at here is the tools are there; there would have to be some modifications.

In 1991, we did away with statutory reserves for the banking institutions in this country. Again, an absolutely foolish thing. We were one, I think, of only three or four countries in the world that don't have statutory reserves. The Americans have statutory reserves; they're about 3 to 5 per cent. If we went back to that level, we could immediately start to have the federal government sell government bonds to the Bank of Canada, interest-free, at about the rate of $5 billion a year. That would bring us down here to around about what . . . about one . . . how much would that be . . . about what, 5 billion divided by 30 . . . about $170 million or something, coming into this province.

All of these things would have to be done gradually. You could go higher, you . . . but what you do is when you start pumping stuff into an economy, you begin to . . . you do run into difficulties with inflation.

But we need about 40,000 houses, more houses, a year — again I'm speaking of federally, right across the country — we're short about 40,000 houses a year. There's houses here, and in Winnipeg, in Saskatoon, and Toronto if they were inspected tomorrow, they'd be torn down but there'd be no place for the people to go. Forty thousand houses a year is 40,000 jobs a year — or more.

We have a need for, as I said there, solar power is becoming . . . is growing rapidly. The only limits on solar power and on solar heating in the United States, is limited by the amount of people they have manufacturing them. We could go to wind power here. All of these things are very possible. They're exciting work. They're interesting work. When Denmark got into wind energy a few years ago, it was an expense and now they're making . . . they've got 45,000 people in Denmark building windmills. They've made a world-class enterprise out of it.

Can you imagine if we start rebuilding these districts in downtown Regina here, or let's say in the bad areas of Regina. We start to remodel those and rebuild them. We would not only have the houses, we can do something . . . different things. Two, three, four blocks, and we have a sewage system, one of these living sewage systems so that we don't overload the present system, which is beyond its capacity. And we could have attached greenhouses. Greenhouses where people in the neighbourhood could go to work and take their children, almost as a daycare. There's no end to the things we can do.

But all these things take money, and fortunately all the money is there. There's absolutely no problem. If we can give away $60 billion, as I said, in interest on debts that never had to exist and we do have the mechanisms to go and get that money back and put it in place, what is required.

And the reason . . . I know I'm talking about federal things, but provincial government should be able to hold a federal government's feet to the fire and I haven't noticed much of that. You people are entitled under the law, under the Bank of Canada Act, and I think somebody from commerce talked about this with the Finance minister a little while ago. You're entitled to borrow one-quarter of your annual revenues at nominal interest rates. That will give you about a billion and a quarter dollars at roughly 1 per cent.

That will save you a nice piece of change — 75 to $100 million. Enough to hire all the nurses you need. Nobody has . . . as far as I know, there's never been an official presentation made to the Government of Canada to get this money.

Nobody has ever . . . I don't remember anybody ever really objecting strongly when the government, under the banking Act, decided to do away with statutory reserves. And doing away with those statutory reserves, we gave up about a billion and a half dollars in savings that the federal government would have realized year after year after year. And nobody complained. Nobody did anything.

I think part of the reason is, over a period of 30 to 40 years, that Milton Friedman's poison as an economist has spread through the economy to the point where most of these avenues aren't even taught any more or discussed. So it's almost as if I'm talking about something that simply doesn't exist. But it does exist. It is there and there are economists, if you seek them out, who have these answers. They're not in the ascendancy right now, because we have been sold a bill of goods; it is better to have NAIRU.

You know what NAIRU is? Everybody knows what NAIRU is? NAIRU, that's the non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment, which means if we have a specific number of people unemployed, then we won't have problems with inflation.

In Canada it was set at a little over 10 per cent some 10 years ago. Gradually it's dropped down to about 7 or 8. But can you imagine setting out to have 10 per cent of the people unemployed? The waste is incredible. Not just the waste in human ambition or human feelings, but the sheer waste in economic matters. My God, every time we drop unemployment about 1 per cent we pick up close to $100 billion in gross domestic product.

If we came down 5, 6 per cent in unemployment which is well within our reach, we'd have a gross domestic product over a trillion dollars and if they want to have our hospital care at 9 per cent of gross domestic product, we'd have 50 per cent more money to spend on hospitals.

Now this is somewhat similar to starving the damned horse instead of feeding him. You're not going to get any work out of it; it's just going to collapse.

And again all these things are present and the reason I'm, say, using this as a . . . almost as a medium, boy, you go down and see those kids. And to think that a bunch of comfortable people with nice clothes and good homes have done it deliberately and we've allowed them to do it.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — John, thank you very, very much for your presentation.

Mr. Keen: — Sorry, I can't quite hear you.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I just was saying I want to thank you very much for your presentation. And I think we've got some time for questions so if you'd be willing to take questions, I'm going to open it up for a discussion.

Mr. Keen: — Yes. Oh yes.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I think we should try to limit our questions, I might say, to the social side of policy. And I know your basic . . . I know the thrust of your basic premise which is that, you know, if we invest in jobs for people, good decent housing, and be willing to sort of spend on the social side of things, that we will reduce the current problem that our committee has a mandate to examine.

So I'd invite members of the committee to ask any questions they'd like to.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Kevin, do you have any comments or questions? Any other committee members?

Ms. Jones: — My comment is that I enjoyed your presentation very much and realized from the end that you have a genuine concern in this area so I thank you for presenting. But I really don't have a direct question.

Mr. Keen: — I threw an awful lot at you in a very short time. But I would hope that some of you will find it in your . . . let's say you would pursue it a little further. What we're faced in this country is a whole group of people in the administration and in government who do not really understand these things. And this is a sad lacking.

Every person who is elected in this country, these last people who were elected, there should be some compassionate economists to teach them, maybe just a short course, maybe just a videotape, but to give them the weapons they need. Because the people you're against . . . and it is a battle. The battle is as old as history. Heck, poor people have always tried to get money from rich people, and rich people have tried not to give it to them.

What government does. . . I just about throw up when people say, well now they're spend . . . tax and spend. What the hell else does government do but tax and spend. If we're fortunate, they do it wisely. But that's your function, is to tax and spend. You're the mediator between the barbarians over there and the trampled masses over here, and that's your function. When you do it well, then we have a really healthy society with nice homes, with libraries, with everything else.

What we should be doing in this country right now, we're crying about our farm crisis. My God, it would take no more than $4 billion to solve our farm crisis. And we would get close to $2 billion of that in new economic activity. What is $2 billion when — as again I keep coming back to it — we're throwing away 60. Things are wrong . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . oh, yes, sorry.

Ms. Jones: — It's okay. One of the things that we're constantly met with when we're having presentations by people is, you know, request for funding non-government organizations, all the competing interests out there who are genuinely trying to make a difference to people with problems. But there are a lot of . . . there's a lot of competition for dollars. And so hearing that perhaps there are other ways of looking at things is never harmful. So thanks again for your presentation.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — June Draude had some questions.

Ms. Draude: — I don't have any questions either. But I also want to thank you. And the note here says that you're a concerned citizen, and I think that's what we need. As a committee here we have to know that people are concerned. They bring forward various ideas. And it makes us know that what we're doing is worthwhile, that children are important to everyone. And there's always the dollars involved in it.

So thank you very much for your time, for coming down here. And continue to be concerned, because people have to be.

Mr. Keen: — May I take another minute to show you how you can get money for nothing? There is a free lunch, you know.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Just before we do that, John, let's hear from Ron, who I think does have a specific question he wanted to ask you.

Mr. Harper: — Not so much a specific question except I also want to thank you for your presentation. It was very enlightening. And I think, as we look back throughout history of certainly the western world, the world as a whole, we recognize that when we have enjoyed a . . . or those areas, those countries that have enjoyed a full employment factor have also enjoyed a very positive social factor within their society.

And I think that's so very important that if we have full employment, people themselves will find their own way out of the predicaments they find themselves in, rather than being resorted to living in the bottom scale of life as a result of being held down economically. So I think your presentation was right on. I really appreciate it. Thank you.

Mr. Keen: — I could give you a quick example. We wanted to twin these Trans Canada Highways across Saskatchewan a couple of years ago and we still want to do it. It costs about $200 million, right? — $189 million or something.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I think we should try to focus

a little more on the topic, John, at hand.

Mr. Keen: — This is.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We've got to remember the mandate of our committee is stopping the involvement of kids in the sex trade. And I know the linkages you're making, and some of them are very valid. But let's try to stay on the social side of . . . if you want to talk about social investments, I think that's quite relevant to the topic at hand.

Mr. Keen: — Well the same thing would apply. Let's take a look at housing. As I said, we need about 40,000 houses across this country. Housing provides local jobs, and if it's done properly, you can have people . . . I think that the Habitat for Humanity is a bit of an example where people lift themselves, and that's a good thing.

Housing, again we need funds. We need long-term, low-cost mortgages. We have to go back to those businesses where we used to be able to get a mortgage for 25 years and you could bank on it. And as you went by in the 5, 6 per cent, you were in good shape and you got better off financially as you went along so that you could afford to send the kids to university.

Right now Canada Pension Plan is beginning to take a very, very much larger bite out of paycheques. Everybody talked about tax cuts in this last program. The tax cuts for somebody earning about 35,000 are around about 250 to $300 a year. Canada Pension Plan is going to increase $1,200 a year. There are going to be surpluses in the Canada Pension Plan fund of 10 to $12 billion a year by the year 2004. We need, roughly, if we're going to do 40,000 houses a year, let's say a round figure of about 4 billion, there's another place to go and find money.

If working people are the predominant suppliers of money to the Canada pension fund, then surely they can have the right to borrow their money back at a good interest rate in order to improve their living status. That only seems to me to be . . . what we're using it for again is just simply investment capital. And I don't think you could invest in anything better.

You go down these streets . . . monetary value, you're going to send a $55,000 a year for policemen to chase a 14-year-old kid and the guy that's picked her up. And then if you're lucky, you're going to put them in jail and that's going to cost more money and the court proceedings and everything else.

It's such a drain on your resources for no return. There's no way at all you can balance one with the other. There will always be some child prostitution I'm sure because there are always people who have . . . But just trying to move it so it's out of sight, I don't think is the answer. You've got to change that whole underlying strata.

I don't know how many people . . . Here's another thing that's a real problem: most people have never seen a poor people. We live in an affluent society and there's an awful lot of us — 30, 40 years old — that have never really seen what it's like to be poor and have no understanding what it's like to be poor. They think it's completely the fault of those people; those people. And without that bit of an understanding . . .

Again back to when, well when some of us were kids. We knew there was the odd poor family around even in the early '70s but there was lots around in the '30s. Oddly enough I don't think there was as much child prostitution because when everybody's poor, that's different.

I think one of the things that drives this is the disparity in income where these girls and boys go to school and see others having possessions that they can't possibly aspire to. I think that's a real . . . creates a real demand.

And would you like to get rid of me now?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Well we are going to have to close down unless there are other committee members that have any comments or questions?

We'd like to thank you very much for coming today, John.

Mr. Keen: — Well I don't think you have to thank me because I wanted to or I wouldn't be here.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes, well we're pleased that you wanted to come.

Mr. Keen: — I want to thank you for listening to me.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Right, very good.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — John, thank you very, very much. I think you've made quite a compelling case for the need for more social spending and avenues where government could look for money to do that.

Mr. Keen: — Yes, that's the big one. If you're willing to kick over the milk pail a couple of times, you might find some.

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

So, members of the committee, we stand adjourned until 2 o'clock when we'll hear from Barb Lawrence, the director of the Street Workers Advocacy Project, SWAP.

The committee recessed for a period of time.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Good afternoon, committee members, and good afternoon, all our guests that are with us today. We are just going to ask if our presenters will come and sit at the microphones, please.

So we have with us today Barb Lawrence, who is director of the Street Workers Advocacy Project; and accompanying her is Darlene Shepherd, a board member with SWAP (Street Worker's Advocacy Project). And we just want to say how very pleased we are to have you with us today and thank you for taking the time and the energy to come and give us your presentation today. We're very eager to hear of your knowledge and your views and your suggestions to the committee today regarding the child sex trade.

Before we get started though, we'd like to have the committee members introduce themselves to you. I know you've spoken

with a few of them before we started here, but I want to ensure that you know all their names. So if we could get the committee members to introduce themselves please.

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

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

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

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We've met, and I'm Peter Prebble. And my constituency's Saskatoon Greystone; it's the university area around Saskatoon.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And I think you know me too, Barb. Arlene Julé, MLA, Humboldt.

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

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We have with us also today one of your friends just seated at the back of the room. We'd be pleased if you could introduce yourself to the committee.

Ms. Rowan: — I'm Karen Rowan.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Welcome, Karen. And we also have Adrienne Batra with us as an observer. Adrienne is a researcher with the Saskatchewan Party caucus.

And so, Barb, we are going to just allow you to begin in any way that you feel comfortable, and I want to assure you we're pretty ordinary people. And even though the table seems to get in the way of us sitting down and just having an informal talk, we want you to feel comfortable, so just start in whatever way you feel is best.

Ms. Lawrence: — Thanks very much, Arlene, and it's nice to meet you all. And we certainly look forward to appearing before the committee. You know, honestly, these kinds of presentations are not something that I necessarily look forward to, but on the other hand, this is a very, very important issue, one that we are very concerned about. And we're certainly glad to see that the community is as equally concerned and interested in doing something positive about it. The table is a little long but we'll try not let that be a problem for us.

Just a couple of things I'd like to mention first. I do have a presentation, and I apologize that I wasn't able to get it to you in time for you to go through it. I know Randy had certainly mentioned that, but I was working on it this morning. It's been a work in progress, right?

I do have copies of it here. I have also included just as some background information — because I'm sure you guys don't have a lot of work to do; you've got, you know, you've got lots of time to read things — but there's not a lot here. But there are a few things that we've done over the years.

One is a presentation that was done to a conference on child prostitution that was sponsored in part by the University Women's Group in, I believe, 1996. Now we had gotten together a group of young people. There was probably — I can't remember — it was probably between 8 and 12 young people. And we said to them there was . . . this conference was taking place. And we asked them what did they think it was important that people hear at that conference.

So they sat down and we had some really good discussions. And they chose two of their peers to present their views. And we've included that presentation. It's handwritten; it's certainly not the best quality. I ask you to just bear with it.

Another piece that we've put in here is a short piece. We had been asked by a researcher with the police department in '98 to give her some information on young people involved in the street and what their needs were. And I've included that.

And in April of '97 there was an interagency committee or interagency conference called . . . at the Four Directions Health Centre here in Regina on this issue. And we again made a presentation to that group, and I've included that as well.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Barbara, if it's all right, I've just asked Randy if he'd hand around copies of that, if that's fine with you?

Ms. Lawrence: — I think there's about nine copies there, Randy. I hope there's enough for everybody.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thanks for getting all this written material for us, Barbara and Darlene. That's very helpful.

Ms. Lawrence: — I'm going to just spend a couple of minutes at the beginning of our presentation here talking just a little bit about SWAP. I'm not sure how many of you are familiar with us. We don't have a very high profile in the community. We don't have a big public relations component to our program. So I think it's important that you do know just a little bit about our background, and I'll try and keep that relatively brief.

SWAP is a community-based agency that was developed with the support of over 30 community agencies and government departments and concerned individuals. In 1993 a participatory research project was initiated that focused on interviewing those working on the street. Implicit in this approach was the idea that those in the street were the experts. They were the ones in the best position to tell us about their lives and issues and how their needs might best be met. After four months of conducting interviews, the final research report was released in January of '94.

Service delivery began in July of '94 with the opening of the drop-in centre and the provision of street outreach services.

Through our evening street outreach program we distribute condoms and bad date sheets, provide counselling, referrals, crisis intervention, and information on other resources in the community. The evening outreach program is critical to the rest of our work as it often serves as a bridging mechanism for the delivery of other services to this target group.

Through our drop-in centre we provide a variety of other

services that include counselling, advocacy, referrals, court support, peer support, and self-help support groups. We help those in our target group deal with whatever problems they are experiencing at any given point in time. Most importantly we listen.

Since December of '97 we have been providing an alternative education program for street-involved youth and adults. This program contains both an academic and a life-skills component.

We also provide educational presentations on the issue of prostitution to the community at large. One of the key elements in our presentations is being able to offer the experiences, knowledge, and insights of those who have been on the street.

Beginning this coming January, we will be offering an employment readiness program to assist people in obtaining the basic skills and knowledge they require to enter the workforce; and we will also be offering a youth program which will involve recreational, cultural, and leadership programs.

I'd just like to also note that in 1996 we held a visioning workshop and at that time identified the need for a 24-hour drop-in and safe shelter, a 24-hour crisis information line, day care programs, recreational opportunities, and the development of a longer term transitional shelter to provide more intense and structured support to people attempting to leave the street.

We have recently submitted a number of proposals to a variety of funders that would move us closer to fulfilling this vision, including a proposal to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation for a five-year plan that would lead to the development of an alternative healing centre which would include long-term residency. Programs offered in this centre would also be available to those unable to reside at the centre and to family members as well.

That's a little bit about our agency, our vision, and kind of what we've been up to in the last number of years.

In terms of our involvement with children and youth, we'd just like to mention that long before the Regina Crime Prevention Commission was created and long before the provincial government committed money targeted towards children and youth working in prostitution, SWAP had been delivering services to this group of people. We raised our concerns about this issue with our funders in the human service community and pleaded for the additional resources that would allow us to provide the intensive, long-term supports that these young people and their families needed.

When the funding community finally responded, it was with typical top-down approach driven by government bureaucrats. While the decision makers emphasized their commitment to community-based initiatives, it quickly became clear that the new programs were nothing more than typical Social Services initiatives masquerading as community-based programs.

These bureaucrats found a couple of hungry agencies ready to front their plans and off they went, blatantly ignoring the concerns raised by many community agencies. The fact that the majority of agencies in the community refused to support what was going on did nothing to deter them.

Indifferent to these power struggles, the young people on the streets continued to come as . . . come to us for support and assistance, and we continued to work with them to the extent that our resources would allow.

Through our involvement with these young people we have gained some insights that we would like to share with you. And I know just from reading some of the other comments and discussions that have taken place at this table, a lot of this will not be new to you. I think it simply reinforces much of what you've heard in the past.

While generalizations are always problematic, there are certain commonalities in the lives of many of those we work with. Our experience indicates that over 80 per cent of those involved in street prostitution in Regina are Aboriginal. Because of systemic racism and policies of cultural genocide, many of these people are alienated from their own cultural traditions and values. They are also alienated and marginalized from the larger community. Their only identity is the one provided for them by the street subculture.

They come from backgrounds of extreme poverty. Often there are high rates of family involvement with drugs and alcohol and a high incidence of involvement with the legal and Social Service's system. Many have been sexually abused as children. And like their adult counterparts, many of the young people feel that they too have few options.

A report that was recently commissioned by the city of Regina indicated that the majority of teen prostitutes do not exercise free choice when choosing the sex trade. It went on to say that particularly female adolescents enter prostitution because of severely limited options to earn money.

While the author implies that approximately 44 per cent of the adolescents involved in prostitution in Regina don't fit into the situation because they continue to live at home, he ignores other findings included in his own report that confirm that many of those living at home do live in extreme poverty without assurance that their basic needs will be met, and often with considerable other dysfunction in the family unit.

These young people are not only victims, they are also survivors. They have developed a whole array of coping skills that allow them to function relatively independently and without the support of adult figures. They have been living with a significant degree of autonomy and freedom. Nor do the majority of these young people see themselves as victims.

The majority have had previous contact with the Social Service system and other human service agencies in the community, and yet they refuse to avail themselves of the support and services these agencies offer. In fact they will usually go out of their way to avoid contact with these service providers.

Typically they find the attitudes and interventions of these service providers as more problematic than life on the street. The interventions are usually developed by those who have no knowledge, understanding, and respect for the lives of these

young people and their families. And the services are usually imposed upon people rather than offered.

This leaves them with extremely limited options. No one to turn to but their street friends and no way to support themselves other than turning tricks on the street. Many of them have been in numerous foster homes or institutionalized for a significant part of their teen years.

Because they are often punished for speaking honestly and openly about the concerns, feelings, and issues within these institutions, young people often shut down emotionally and simply tell people what they want to hear in order to get out as quickly as possible.

Instead of the beginning of a healing process, these experiences often leave these youth more embittered, distrustful, hardened, and streetwise. A comment by Ross MacInnes of the Calgary Street Teams kind of speaks to this whole point when he says that many young girls are victimized by the very system that is there to protect to them, and they decide to remain in unhealthy, dangerous, and abusive situations.

While the Saskatchewan Minister of Social Services has thus far refused to endorse an approach that would see these young people detained and locked up, our experience suggests that, in fact, many of these young people are being incarcerated in youth facilities.

The unfortunate reality is that we often see these young people back out on the street upon their release because they have not received help in dealing with the issues they need to and because they usually return to the same environment that lead them to the street in the first place, with no other supports in place. And they simply become caught in a revolving door.

One other major issue that we would like to bring up to the committee relates to the figures that some individuals have put before this committee in terms of the number of children and youth working on the street. It would appear that the figure of 300 children and youth that has been thrown about by some individuals appearing before this committee was an error that was made at a community agency gathering in 1997. In fact, I believe it was the child prostitution forum at the Four Directions Health Centre.

Despite the fact that we have taken issue with this figure since that time, others have chosen to continue to put this number forth without checking with the original source, which I find quite troubling.

In the first six months of this fiscal year, we estimated that we made contact with a total of approximately 175 individuals involved in street prostitution in Regina. That's a total number of individuals of all age categories. Approximately 60 of these are 18 years of age and younger; and out of that 60, we estimate that there are approximately 20 to 25 youth under the age of 16. We had only two contacts with children under the age of 12 in the first six months of this year. While we would be the first to admit that these statistics are not 100 per cent accurate, we are confident that these numbers reflect as accurate a representation of the reality as is possible.

In conversations with Regina Health District street project, which does a needle exchange program, we find that their figures are very close to ours over the last several years. And I would like to say that in terms of street outreach services, the Regina Health District and the Street Worker's Advocacy Project have been working on the street longer than any agency in this city. Probably our years combined totalled close to 18 to 20 years of doing this work. This is intensive work.

We've had meetings with them fairly recently and with another group in terms of trying to develop a statistical tool that's consistent for all agencies that allows us to gather information as accurately as possible. And our conversations are very interesting because I don't know that we're ever going to be able to develop a tool that guarantees us 100 per cent accuracy.

However, I have, as I indicated, very much confidence in the figures that we have put forward. We are out on the street four to five nights a week and we've been doing this for six and a half years. And for anybody to suggest to me that there are 300 children working at street prostitution in this city is mind-boggling. We talk to the young people out in the street and they laugh, you know. It's a ludicrous figure.

We are very concerned about this discrepancy. If you are considering providing resources and services to a particular population, you need to know how many people you are dealing with in order to determine the level and extent of the service provision.

This situation highlights the phenomenon that we have observed since we began our work in this community. It often seems that people want to grab onto the most horrendous stories, the most sensational situations. Isolated instances suddenly become commonplace; gossip and rumour become established as fact; and people who have no credentials to act as experts on the issue become public mouthpieces.

In terms of what needs to be done, and I really hope that you do find the time, and I know you don't have a lot of time, but to look at some of the background material because I think it will very much be consistent with what I'm about to say here.

The approach that we advocate is a holistic approach which involves working with those in the street, their families, and the community. And, Carolyn, I believe you mentioned just briefly as we were chatting that this is something you're hearing that we need to be addressing this issue at all levels.

Our approach is one that attempts to restore emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical well-being at all levels of the community. Many of the factors that leave young people vulnerable to a life of prostitution are beyond their control or the control of their families. Issues such as systemic racial discrimination, generational poverty, ineffective or impractical Social Services policies and regulations are beyond the scope of most individuals or families to cope with, never mind change in any meaningful way.

These are issues that must be addressed by the entire community. It's too easy to point a finger at a few individuals and lay all responsibility at their doorstep. We need to treat the

entire community, not just a few children and their families, if we are to get rid of the conditions that allow prostitution to flourish. This means a commitment to erasing the attitudes that permit racism to exist, to uncovering the subtle faces that racism wears, the invisible barriers it creates to participation and equality.

It means providing people with the adequate economic support without forcing them to resort to other less desirable forms of support because our welfare system is so inadequate, insensitive, and punitive. It means providing access to meaningful and realistic opportunities in terms of both educational and occupational opportunities. It means providing supports to parents in a manner that is not offensive and disrespectful. It means supporting people and making their communities safe with access to family and recreational programming.

We believe that we need to develop an integrated vision and a service delivery system that is consistent in its philosophy and in its approach. We need to build on the foundations of those agencies that have proven themselves in the community, that have the experience, credibility, organizational capacity, and the connections to do this work. We do not need to create new agencies to reinvent the wheel.

We need to allocate adequate resources to allow agencies to carry out the mandates instead of tying their hands behind their backs with inadequate funding. While we have five outreach projects focusing on a relatively small number of people in Regina with most of them doing little more than addressing immediate health and safety needs and providing limited crisis intervention services, we have a much, much larger community that is vulnerable and at a risk. And we are doing nothing in terms of prevention with this group.

All the crisis intervention services in the world aren't going to stop the constant flow of young people onto the streets. Why are we waiting until these young people are on the street?

Until we are prepared to make a serious commitment to provide the necessary resources and supports to the community, we are not going to make a dent in this situation. For every person that leaves the street or that dies on the street, two or three more will take their place.

We need to allow these young people to lead the process, to take ownership, to feel their own power and strength, and to learn to value the gifts they have. We need to show them the respect they deserve.

We need to provide them with an unconditional acceptance and support, and we need to be available 24 hours a day. We need a 24-hour, safe shelter accessible to all of those who work in prostitution. We need to be able to allow those who come in to do so voluntarily and to leave voluntarily. We need to allow them to establish the rules.

We need front-line workers and administrators who know street life, who understand the issues, who have journeyed far in their own healing. We need good counsellors who are healthy, who truly understand the issues and circumstances of this group, who do not act in a patronizing, condescending, or arrogant manner. We need people who are balanced in their own lives to work with these young people; people who have dealt with their own issues.

We need a long-term healing facility for those working in street prostitution where they can find the safety, support, structure, and stability to begin their own healing journey.

And we need to set aside the politics of power, race, culture, and community. These issues have little or no importance to people on the street but rather are issues that bureaucrats and funders bring to the table. Government must recognize that the community has as important a role to fill in this process. The community has the experience, knowledge, passion, and commitment that government lacks. The community also has credibility, connections, and accessibility that government lacks.

And we have found that the government often contradicts its own commitment to developing partnerships, encouraging co-operation and community-developed approaches when it arbitrarily makes decisions, exploits and manipulates individuals and agencies, and dictates the development of programs in areas in which they have absolutely no expertise.

And finally, funders, government agencies, and the human service community must be open to challenge and must be prepared to be held accountable and not punish those who bring legitimate concerns to the forefront. In this community we appear to have a great deal of difficulty in opening and confronting the problems which are hindering us from moving forward and effectively addressing this issue.

Those are my prepared comments, and I'm not sure if Darlene would like to add anything to that or not.

Ms. Shepherd: — I wasn't prepared to speak on anything. This kind of shocked me.

Gee, there's so much reality about what you're speaking about — about life on prostitution. And it's just like running through my life with all the problems of even today.

You know I'm a . . . I was telling that lady like it never ends even though you get off the street. Like there's always still barriers, problems. And even today, I mean you're straight, you're still run into everything, everything that put me there. Just like I'm still, I'm still vulnerable to the street.

You know I've been there on several relapses over the many years but in my struggles, in every issue, in every aspect of my life . . . my life was dysfunctional and I can see everything. There's just so much to it than just . . . you say prostitution. I go into this big whole thing of like, you know, the one answer is taking people off and it's not like that. The adjustment period, it's hard. I mean it's a life of . . . (inaudible) . . . To me, it's black and white and it's a struggle to even . . . it's new things that you're just not accustomed to.

I don't know, I've been there like all my teenage years and all that stuff. It's just really difficult. Even today, like even survival

today, you know, on welfare and kind of stuck in that situation. And I do get a lot of support in every aspect of my life — the healing process, past issues, you know like the abuse, the alcoholism, I'm still dealing with that boarding school — you name it. You know, there's a whole . . . are we allowed to swear? Just kidding.

But anyways, even that, you know, it's difficult. I've always said, you know everyday, at the time I wake up, I deal with okay, I've got a home. I've never had a home; I've been on the street. I used to live in a room with a little raggy bed and a pile full of dirty clothes. And we'd be lucky if we even had noodles in the cupboard, you know.

Fortunately that kind of life took me to jail. And without help, I was forced from parole to do certain things with my life. The change wasn't easy. It's like taking a life away from you, putting in new things, and saying this is what you can't do. I'd been familiar with being in the bars, being with drunks, being with old men who provided you money, meals, whatever you can survive.

And it was really hard, because the transition to me was totally normal. I hated normal. I don't know what normal was or I didn't like that. But for me, even today, it's supporting me through this day. I have to go to an AA meeting and I got to say okay, life is really tough today. The only thing that used to keep me surviving was drinking and whatever, easy money, you know.

I'm not at all rich today, whatever. But I have to keep that common ground and support and say hey, today I got food, I got a home, I don't need to go to the streets . . . with help of other people. And it's a daily thing. It's not just say okay, prostitution, that's it. It's just like that. I can go back there and say oh shit, man, you — excuse me — I need some money right now, I need money, I want to dress nice, I want a new hairdo. It's just like that. I can go and get it, you know.

But it'll take me back, I got to remember that. To stay on the street life because it's like dominos for me — once I start going back, I'm going to hate what I'm doing and I'm going to need a drink to survive again and again and I'm going to lose my home, I'm going to lose everything I've worked really hard for. It's like that. It just takes that and I'll be back where I was. And may not come back again. And that's a struggle of what reality is for me, you know.

I always hear people, oh God, prostitution. You want to talk about prostitution? You say take them off the street, fix them, put them in . . . you know. And you're saying about locking them up and that's not going to change them, you know. It makes us worse, you know.

There's so many things, like even in the daytime, if something goes wrong, I've been so used to people saying you're this, you're that, and just oh kick in the head again, you're down, you're down, you're down, you know. That's my normalness. Like if I asked for something, somebody saying the heck with you, and no help or no understanding is like okay, back where I'm started from. I'm still there. Nobody will say okay, we'll help you, we'll let you do this.

And I always think about there's so many kids out there. And I can't change systems. I can't . . . maybe I'm just a little voice. But it's always how come they don't let street people be adults? Like, we're smart. We're survivors. We can con. Well you know, we're good at what we do. We grew up really fast, you know. We know how to do things. We're smart. And it's like they don't give us responsible . . . how come they don't lessen welfare and say hey, kind of, you know. There's so much of it, you know.

There's kids that aren't even going to school and they're in trouble. They don't even know what to do. They have nowhere to go. They don't have the help. They don't have the support.

And I find, in our programs, there's so much to your healing process that you need this, you need this, and we don't have enough of anything, you know. Like Barb was saying and all that, once you sober them up, you know, and then you need support and you need this and you need this. You need the healing from the past. And there's just so much to it.

So we're just not . . . take us off and fix us or lock us up, it don't work. Because we'll always be there and the chance of going back are so . . . Not very many people are willing to come and share with people openly about all the hurts, and all the stuff that's been happening. There's very few.

Like we have, like she said, our program is not very . . . oh, we can go out and advertise SWAP until whatever. But it's not like that. We respect the people because a lot of people have straightened out and they go their separate ways. It's the — how do you say it? — anonymity . . . anonymity, whatever. And we do respect that. And there's few of us that come out and speak what was really going on and who we are, like.

In my community, everybody knew where I came from . . . oh, you used to be a prostitute. Oh yeah, I'm taking Native ministry now, and I do this and do this; it's different. But I work damn hard. I work damn hard to keep straight, and I work damn hard to go to school.

That's something very . . . you know, I never went to school before. I hated school, you know. We were poor, we were . . . my parents were drunks, you know, and I didn't have to go to school, I ran my own life. I was dysfunctional, you know. And to try to keep that this day and try to live in an environment . . . I have a hard time coping with, to try to understand and it's not easy, but . . . Did I talk too much?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Not at all.

Barb, is there anything else that you wanted to add before we allow the committee members some time to talk with you about this?

Ms. Lawrence: — I suppose the only comment, and just the last thing Darlene said there, and I don't know that I did touch upon it in there, but this really, really is a long-term process in terms of people turning their lives around. I mean, it's not even kind of turning it around. I mean, it's changing it entirely from anything they've ever known, and it is a long, long-term process.

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

Mr. Yates: — That was a very . . . (inaudible) . . . presentation, Barb, and I'm very appreciative of some of the information you're providing us. My first question has to do with the numbers, and I'm actually happy to hear that the numbers we were hearing may not be as large as what we were hearing. Because it gives you a feeling that the problem is just about monumental and very difficult to deal with, if you're dealing with that large set of numbers. Not to mention what comes into your mind when you figure if there's that many kids working the streets, well then how many people are using those kids every night, and how much of your community is actually involved in this.

But getting back to the numbers. Have you kept statistics over the six and a half years, and would you say that the numbers that you're giving us are consistent with sort of the last number of years?

Ms. Lawrence: — We kept general statistics over that period of time, Kevin. Unfortunately we didn't keep the breakdowns until, I believe it was '97, '98 that we actually started making breakdowns according to . . . the Department of Justice had asked us for this information, based on racial background, gender, and specific age categories, and that wasn't until '97-98 that we started keeping those.

When I look back on them, in fact just last night, there is a consistency. The figures that I've reported to you in this report are for a six-month period so they will go up slightly, I anticipate. Mind you, we're now into the winter period too where you see fewer people out there — but those numbers may be a little bit higher.

And when I look back, the numbers for this year, it would appear there's going to be a slight increase over the last number of years; but they have been very consistent. There's been a slight increase over the last . . . since we've been keeping them in '97, the breakdown, but it's been relatively slight.

Mr. Yates: — My second question goes to the whole issue of treatment or how do we tackle the problem. And you talk about in your paper, basically that the typical bureaucratic top-down approach to a problem like this doesn't work.

And if you could, for lack of a better word — and you've got some suggestions in here, 24-hour, you know, safe home and those types of things — but if you were designing a treatment program or designing a model to deal with this problem in our community, could you give me some of the things that you would think would need to be in that and where we'd go about looking to start something like this?

Ms. Lawrence: — Well we've certainly been looking at this and in terms of the proposals that we're putting forth to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, we did develop a kind of a broad framework. They asked us not to get too detailed at this point in time. But I can certainly give you some idea of what we feel is important.

I guess the very first thing that I think that is critical is the fact that the program be a voluntary program, that's it's not a place where people are locked up. That it's a place that they decide that they want to be, because if they want to be there, if they find some value, if they've made decisions to make some changes in their life, then they'll tough it out. Because there will be many, many, many difficult moments, and I think some of what Darlene just said illustrated that. And we think that that's absolutely important.

We think it's also very, very important to involve young people in setting up such a centre. You know it's . . . I remember a couple of years back running into some young people on the street, and at that time there were some things the community was talking about, and we mentioned some of this stuff. And they came out with some ideas that were very similar to the ideas that we are hearing from others.

But what's critical is that those were their ideas, you know, and if it comes from them, it may be exactly the same thing we're talking about. But if we put it together and then we try it — we go to them and we say here, we can fix you; we know how to do this — they're going to run away from us.

You've got to let them take ownership of it; you've got to let them be involved in it. You've got to let them have input into the rules and how it's going to be run, the structure of it all.

And you know what? They'll give you something that will work. We know that. This is what our agency is all about. We're run by people from the street. And we have been very, very successful in terms of making those connections with people on the street, building very, very strong relationships with people.

And it's on the basis of the relationships of trust, it's on the basis of the safety that you can help people feel, that will be what will allow them to risk making those changes. Because it's an incredible risk for them to step out of that life. And they need the safety. They need to know that door opens both ways. They need to know it's not a prison. Because if it's anything that smacks of an involuntary process, they're going to stay away from it.

One of the things that we do at SWAP with our drop-in centre is very much of a home atmosphere. And many of the young people, in talking to them over the years, they've very much come to see SWAP in that sense. It may be the only stability that they have in their lives at all. And it's very important to have people involved who can engender that kind of sense with young people.

Me and my co-workers, some of us are getting on a little bit and we get referred to everything from Kokum to mom and, you know, whatever. Sometimes I try hard not to let my feelings get hurt, you know, because I often think, well I'm not quite that old yet. But that's really, really important. And I think it speaks volumes about some of the needs, you know, the emotional needs that these young people have.

We need . . . I talked in here about needing people who are healthy, needing people who have stability in their own lives. We very much believe that people on the street have such an

incredible wealth of experience and understandings and wisdom and they are the best people to be delivering these services.

They also need to have stability in their lives and they need . . . people need to be involved in their own healing journey. Because if they're not, then you're going to have trouble. And that means whether you've come from the street or otherwise, because there's lots of people that have never been on the street that aren't particularly healthy and they're working in the human service field.

We need people who know how to deal with addiction issues. That's critical. We need people who know the dynamics of abuse issues — sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, abandonment. We need people who don't get caught up or preoccupied in trying to rescue these kids. You know, who can recognize the strengths and the gifts that these young people have. We need people who will listen. And again that is absolutely critical.

You know, the young people on the street, they're just . . . they're hurting. They're no different than any other young people in many ways, and yet they are very different in many other ways. But, you know, they need to be allowed the opportunity to make mistakes and to learn from them.

And we need to kind of stop just . . . I've met so many wonderful, well-intentioned people who are extremely concerned about this issue, and who'd cut off their arm to do something effective. But when they don't understand the issue, they often end up coming up with ideas and suggestions that aren't helpful, that will further alienate these young people, and that in fact may even put them at greater risk and danger on the street. So it's really important that we have people involved who understand these issues.

We need, I think — as I also mention in here, Kevin; I believe it's very important — we don't need a huge centre unless we're going to deal with . . . we're going to have one centre for a provincial thing. In Regina we don't need a huge centre. But we do need a centre that has a capacity to assist people who are not necessarily residing within that facility, because there are many, many people on the street who want help, who want support, and they will not go to existing agencies. Again the relationships that people develop are critical.

So I would suggest that a centre like this should not only be dealing with the issues of those who are residing. It also needs to be able to invite those that are still out there working to come in and access the programs. And as equally important, it needs to involve the families of those that are willing to come in. And there may be those that are not.

You know, one of the things that I find so incredibly disturbing and heartbreaking in working with this population is we put these kids in an absolutely impossible situation. Even when they recognize the dysfunction within their own life, the dysfunction in their family lives, even when they're ready to make changes, in order to do so it often means that they need to report on their families, and they won't do that. And not doing it leaves them with absolutely no option.

But if they report on their families, then there's going to be serious consequences for mom. No matter how dysfunctional those family units are, those relationships are so fundamentally important to those kids. They're the only relationships they've got other than their street friends. And these young people do not do it.

And I listen to them contemplate suicide because they can't go to the Department of Social Services and talk to the workers there about what's going on. Because to do so means that somebody is going to jump all over that family. The rest of their younger siblings are going to be apprehended, and rightly or wrongly, these young people are not going to do that.

And they have nowhere to go in this community. They have nowhere to turn.

I think we need to change that situation. Young people . . . our young board Chair, I remember listening to her one time talk about her experiences and situations, and for so many of these young people it is the same situation. They can no longer live at home, and yet they have nowhere to go except often to the street. They have no way to support themselves. They can't go to the department because the department is . . . Based on their experiences in the past, they believe that the department will not provide them with any assistance that would be truly helpful.

So it's like by default, there's only one choice that they have left in order to survive. You know, they can go and they can start working on the street. They can get involved in drug dealing. They can be involved in petty shoplifting. You know, at 14 or 15 as a young . . . as a youth, as a young woman, there isn't really a whole lot of options that you have.

And I know that the department has made some changes in the last few years in terms of providing section 10's for those that are 16 and over; allowing them a bit more independence and independent living arrangements if they feel they have some stability and will make some commitments to going to school or getting a job.

We need to stop tying our hands, or tying our help, rather, to such . . . or our assistance to such . . . we use it as a baseball bat. You know, we use our economic power, our ability to provide assistance, we use it like a weapon. It's like you either toe the line or you get nothing from us. And that's what we do to these kids. And a lot of these kids they just absolutely can't toe the line. They can't. It's impossible. As Darlene said, they've come from such an incredibly different background. Normalcy isn't a word that exists in their vocabulary. Normalcy to them is living in crisis all the time.

Our lives would be . . . they wouldn't know how to function in our lives. And yet we, that's what we attempt to impose on them. And we impose our expectations on them and they're totally unrealistic expectations.

I'm sorry, Kevin, I've really strayed far off from your question here.

Mr. Yates: — You've answered a good portion of the question. I'd like to just ask one quick supplemental question. How large

. . . when you say it doesn't need to be a large or a huge centre, how many people would it need to . . . how many would it need to sleep or whatever, just to give us some idea of what you think is necessary.

Ms. Lawrence: — In the conversations that we've had within the organization, and in fact we have been asked by others to the . . . the Regina university women's group had at one time contemplated something and they had asked us to come in and help them plan something. And this was a few years back, but I don't think . . . I think if you're looking at somewhere between seven to ten beds.

Mr. Yates: — That's it?

Ms. Lawrence: — Yes, yes.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Are there other questions?

Mr. Toth: — Yes, thank you. I'd just like to come back to some, it's just a bit of a follow-up on what Kevin had . . . his question about the numbers on the street. And going back to testimony yesterday, we had an individual who was quite adamant that there's more going on than strictly on the street.

And they were talking about places of prostitution — I don't know if you'd call them hook-pads — and I'm wondering if you're aware of anything of that nature. See, basically we were informed that there are people out, maybe one or two individuals on the street, just referring clientele, if you will, to certain locations. And if that would . . . if the numbers would indeed be higher. You're saying 175. Are we talking strictly on the street or in total? I wonder if you can give a response to that or if you are aware of some of that going on.

Ms. Lawrence: — Again, the 175 are, I would say, are those that we see on our outreach, so those are those that are strictly on the street. Actually in our meeting yesterday with a couple of agencies, one of the coordinators asked if in fact we had heard this rumour that . . . and it wasn't that there were trick-pads in Regina, it was that there was one in Saskatoon, and people were taking young people from Regina and moving them to Moose Jaw, and then on to Saskatoon. And I cautioned this young woman because she doesn't have a lot of experience yet working this area, but I cautioned her to really check out the information prior to distributing it, which I'm just doing right now.

Because as I also said in here, what we have found is that, you know, you hear something and all of a sudden it's accepted as gospel truth. I am sure that there have been instances and there may indeed, as we speak, be instances where there are some young people working out of houses. I'd be naive to deny that.

We work with people who work on the street. It's the nature of our organization. They volunteer with us, they work as staff. These people know the people on the street. Some of our volunteers still work on the street and this is not something that we have heard. If it's happening, I would say it's isolated, and I would say that there are not a great many people involved.

Have you heard anything otherwise?

Ms. Shepherd: — Not yet. No.

Mr. Toth: — Well I think it's an important question because certainly what was related to us yesterday, and I recall, I'm not exactly sure, two or three years ago, a couple of major hits, especially in Calgary, of this type of scenario. The pictures that were depicted of the places that girls were held and had to work in was just deplorable.

And certainly our committee has been asked to come up with some recommendations as to how we can address the concerns, and up until now we've been strictly talking, on the street. But if indeed there is even a little bit . . . and that may be just, you know, it could be just the start. Maybe it's not a major issue right now.

But if you will, if we come up with recommendations that seem to nail some of the concerns of the street prostitution issue and pushes people off the street, then it gets it behind the scenes. It doesn't make it any less of a fact or even that it's almost like we would condone it.

I think we need to be very mindful of the fact of some of the consequences of suggestions that would maybe remove the prostitution from the street and off the street and yet put young girls or girls or women or even young boys at significant risk.

So that's what we're trying to do is to get a feel as to what we should be looking at and some of the things we should be certainly being mindful of so that we're not making recommendations that maybe just, if you will, make the problem even a larger problem in some ways.

Ms. Lawrence: — And I fully agree with you, Don.

A number of years back it was one of the concerns that we brought to the community. There was . . . at that time they decided that they would have an increased police presence in north central. And that was one of the concerns we had at the time because these young kids, because of their age, they are very, very vulnerable to apprehensions and so on and so forth and they're really, really skittish.

And what we were afraid of at that time was that, in fact, that's what it was doing. It was pushing it — prostitution — underground. It was pushing it behind closed doors. And of course these kids can't rent houses, right, because of their age, right. So what it does, it forces them into the very types of exploitive relationships that we're supposedly trying to avoid.

But all of a sudden, you know — and this speaks to a public relations element that often is very present, particularly in adult prostitution — but all of a sudden you don't see the kids out there. The residents aren't complaining. Isn't life wonderful. We solved this problem. No, we haven't.

We've put those kids — and that's a very important illustration — we put those kids at even greater risk because as a street outreach component we don't even see those kids any more. We've lost them. They've become invisible. They might have been a little skittish before but when they were in trouble, when they needed help, they'd come to us. They aren't out on the

street any more. They don't have that access to us.

And so those are considerations that really, really need to be thought through very, very carefully. And I appreciate you raising that, Don.

Mr. Toth: — Another question I have comes to the . . . You made a comment about a shelter, and Kevin was talking about that a bit too, and you strongly brought out the idea of a voluntary entrance to the shelter.

Now we've heard testimony as well, in going to the Alberta model, for example, where individuals in Alberta have found that when they have apprehended girls off the street many of them have indicated that they were glad they did, because they really wanted the help but they felt that if they voluntarily went into and sought assistance and then really, as Darlene was saying, didn't get all of the spiritual, emotional support to help them deal with the problem they're trying to get away from and were back out on the streets, that especially if they were put on the streets by a pimp or even by a parent — and you had mentioned that — that they would face severe consequences.

The question I have, it deals with the voluntary aspect. Where the young girls were apprehended, they felt that they had a legitimate point to raise with the person who put them on the streets in the first place, that no I didn't go there voluntarily even though inwardly they wanted to, but because they were apprehended and put into that shelter situation, that it saved them from a beating, if you will, afterwards.

And so my question is regarding voluntary. When you say voluntary, do you think that there would be . . . many children may not seek shelter because they might be seen as trying to run away and therefore face a significant beating, if you will, when they leave the shelter?

Ms. Lawrence: — I think one of the things that we need to be aware of is that the situation in Regina is not the situation that exists in Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Vancouver. The situation in Regina is considerably different.

As has been, I think, related to you and it's in the report that was commissioned by the city, many of the young people in Regina are still connected to their families. And families are not always putting young people out there. It's an environment in which they grow up. It's simply an accepted fact of life.

So I again don't doubt that there are some instances where that may take the heat off the young person, if they've actually been apprehended because, you know, they can't take blame then from, if there is in fact a pimp involved.

I don't believe that the situation regarding pimps is anywhere near as prevalent in Regina as it may be in other centres from what we hear. And I guess we find that, by and large, the majority of the young people we come in contact with on the street are acting relatively independently in terms of the choice . . . in terms of the decision to be working on the street. There are certainly some cases where people are forced to be out there, but I would suggest that in the majority of cases they are not being forced by another individual. They may be forced by circumstances.

Ms. Shepherd: — You've got to remember that too, it's not like Calgary, Winnipeg, whatever. This is a totally different environment, you know. This is different than most places.

I always kind of laugh at people when they say, oh there's a big drug house up north and up south and like, like I live there. I live with these people. I talk to them and I . . . what drug . . . what the hell you talking about here. It's insane. And then there's big gangs and . . . This is mild. You know you talk to everybody, and everybody from the lowest to the biggest pimp to the one that does Ts (Talwin) and Rs (Ritalin) to the whatever.

To me it's normal. You know it's a normal thing. Oh yeah, there's a big bust and they've got so much drugs to sell and to me it's like, well I don't know. I don't do this stuff so I don't know what's going on so you know, like that. But I can name where all the drug houses are. Like it's normal to me . . . that's a new one. This is mild compared to bigger cities. It's mild. There's the odd one but . . .

And as far as . . . you always say try, and all. I think you do push people back into what you were just talking about, when you start apprehending, you start making drug busts. That's when, I think, that's when you do push them where you said. That's when that happens. You start doing the big cleanup things and you know. I think you do.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Barb and Darlene, we're kind of closing in on our time. Arlene, did you have any questions that you wanted to ask them?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I did, and I'd appreciate just taking a couple of minutes if possible here.

Barb, you alluded to the fact, and I think you did too, Darlene, that street gangs and so on, that whole picture is a bit exaggerated as far as Regina goes. Do you not hear of street gangs out there that are grooming girls for use so that they can, they can end up getting the drugs, alcohol, those kinds of things that they need? Have you heard any talk about an increased activity with street gangs?

Ms. Shepherd: — I think there will be. There's a lot of youth out there and I mean they're integrating quite heavily, and you see new people all the time. You see new people out there and there's nothing for them. There's no level of a place where a dysfunctional kid that learns different than ordinary school. It's really getting . . . and I think you're going to see more, because that's the way I see it. I see there's just too many young Native youth with nothing out there. And it's going to . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And, Barb, as far as the ethnic backgrounds of girls that, you know, that through poverty or for whatever reason have to work the streets, or feel they have to, what is your take on the percentages of Aboriginal people as well as . . . or compared to Caucasians?

Now I just want to qualify that I know it doesn't matter. I mean it doesn't really matter in the long run when one responds to the

situation, and how you respond is another thing. But we have heard that there are an increasing number of Caucasian girls or non-Aboriginal that are, you know — due to the fact that they don't get along with their families initially and there is some dysfunction and so on — are getting involved in the street life and street sex trade.

Do you know whether or not that is increasing? And are the people that come to SWAP for assistance, are they primarily Aboriginal or are there . . . what is the percentages?

Ms. Lawrence: — The percentages in terms of people that we are connecting with on outreach, it's . . . I believe it was 82 per cent out of this population that I've had in here that are Aboriginal.

Overall with the services that we provide through our drop-in centre — our education program, the other services — I think the population decreases slightly to about 78 per cent that are Aboriginal. But the significant vast majority of people that we are seeing on the street are of course Aboriginal.

And that number may be down just a little bit. There may be a few more other . . . because everybody gets thrown in the other side. But that might have gone up somewhat, but I would say it's relatively insignificant.

And one of the things that I would suggest that may happen, at least listening to people talk, is the possibility that for young, white females that are running away from home for whatever those reasons may be — the difficulties they're experiencing there or that are getting, if in fact they are, getting recruited — I would suggest that a lot of those young people are leaving the city. They are not staying within Regina.

So that becomes a population — of course if they're not here — that we can't measure. And you may have to go to centres such as Calgary and Vancouver.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Do you agree or disagree though that it's necessary to project some sort of strategy towards assisting them while they're being groomed here on the streets of Regina; or even if they do end up leaving Regina, there's a certain period of time that they are here?

Ms. Lawrence: — Oh definitely, definitely. And I don't think . . . You know, the colour of my skin does not matter . . .

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

Ms. Lawrence: — . . . to people on the street. The colour of my skin seems to matter to politicians. And I don't mean to offend anybody here, but it's a political issue. It's an issue for administrators; it's an issue for funders.

Those kinds of questions, you know, the programs we develop, I believe need to be inclusive. And as I indicated earlier I believe we need to have a consistency in terms of the approach that we use.

One final comment that I would like to make because I simply know that we're running out of time here is that — and I know you've heard this over and over again — we're hearing rumours of different perceptions coming out of Alberta in terms of their apprehension, what's going on there. We're hearing different things from front-line workers.

And we've seen this happen in this city too where people . . . it's like the newest lollipop flavour, you know. You put in a new initiative and you get all this great publicity and you hear all these wonderful things but the reality is vastly, vastly different. Public relations is public relations, and you need to go down through the levels of all of that.

And the conference in Edmonton this May, I didn't get out to. But you know, I wanted to go. One of the biggest reasons I wanted to go because I wanted to go out on the street and I really wanted to see for myself what was happening out there. I didn't get to go but we've been hearing some things subsequently to that.

One of the things I know and you know that they've been saying in Alberta too, even this kind of apprehension. If you don't have anything behind that, what's the point? What is the point? And it can be very dangerous, and I understand that Alberta has just very, very recently talked about allocating a very significant amount of dollars for the programming in that area.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Support and care.

Ms. Lawrence: — And that was my advertisement and promotion here, so . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I'd like to ask just one question in light of time. And I want to come back to these figures because I have to say I'm to the point where I'd like to get all the Regina groups in one room to discuss this; and I think actually that's maybe what we need to do.

I don't just mean on the numbers, but on a bunch of things about what's actually happening on the street. Because we've heard from the Action Committee for Children at Risk and the Regina police and the Regina crime prevention committee this figure of 300; now we're hearing from you that it's 60. And I'm, you know as a legislator who doesn't live in Regina, it just kind of leaves me really puzzled about . . . I know you are giving your figures with the best of intent, and I know that . . . and with all sincerity and with a lot of knowledge about what's happening on the street. And I'm assuming that the Regina police and the Action Committee for Children at Risk and the Regina crime prevention committee are doing the same.

So we have to get . . . if they're saying 300 and you're saying 60, we've got to get some resolution to the question of what is really happening on the street. And I don't see any way of doing that without bringing all the parties together. I mean that would . . . I don't . . . I'm not questioning your figure in any way.

I'm just saying we have these discrepancies in Saskatoon too, but you know the interesting thing in Saskatoon is that our outreach agency, that is somewhat equivalent to yours, which is Egadz, is saying 250 and the Saskatoon police are saying, you know, that their records show just a fraction of that. So we've

got discrepancies in Saskatoon as well, that also need to be remedied.

But I don't want to question your figures at all. I do just want to say that without having an absolutely clear idea of how many, roughly how many kids are out on the street at any one time, it's very difficult to shape programs and solutions around that.

And having said that, I really appreciated your suggestions in this document for strategies that we might employ to meet the needs of youth. I think you've, you've expressed them very articulately.

I don't know if you have any final comments on the discrepancies in the figures, but if you do, please share them with us and otherwise, we can talk about it on another occasion.

Ms. Lawrence: — Okay. I will try and be brief here, but I would like to just say that I think that would be a very interesting meeting to have. I'm not sure how helpful it'll be but it's got to, it's got to move, hopefully, the discussion forward.

One of the things that I have found . . . I've had this conversation, people know that we're coming to this meeting, they know that we dispute these figures, people in this community don't like to . . . they don't like conflict, right. The Regina Health District figures very, very much support our figures.

In recent conversations with them, however, I sense that they are starting to become vague. They're starting to say, well, because none of the groups out there that are keeping stats can lay claim to 100 per cent accuracy, then we really can't challenge the number of 300. That is absolute nonsense.

Ms. Shepherd: — Unless you go door knocking . . . (inaudible) . . . these 300 people that you . . . (inaudible) . . . door knocking and get your statistics right here.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Maybe while politicians campaign they can . . .

Ms. Shepherd: — Yes, they can door knock . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — . . . ask the question.

Ms. Shepherd: — . . . and say, oh by the way . . .

Ms. Lawrence: — Well one of the suggestions, one of the suggestions by one of the newcomers . . .

Ms. Shepherd: — I think it's going to be always big, you know; there's always the ones at our back door and there's a lot of . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes. Oh, no, no. I understand why we may only be able to guess within 50 but I . . .

Ms. Lawrence: — We should be able to get closer.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I just want to get, I want to get some resolution of the gap between 60 and 300. And thank you very much, an excellent presentation.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I just need to ask, I need to ask you just one more question in this regard. The numbers that you have is based on Regina Health District, and from your work with SWAP you've determined these numbers.

So for instance, we had a gentlemen in the other day from Indian Metis Christian Fellowship centre; and so I'm just wondering if there is a lot of communication or conversing on whether or not the same people are being assisted in two or three different places? And if there isn't the communication in place that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And absolutely none at all?

Ms. Lawrence: — Oh, no and I was shaking my head about something else, Arlene. IMCF, Indian Metis Christian Fellowship, does . . . they do not do an outreach program. Okay, they're not out on the street.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Right.

Ms. Lawrence: — We're out there four to five nights every week, okay. Yes, there are people who do access programs in other, you know, a number of agencies.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes.

Ms. Lawrence: — When we count our statistics, they are the statistics of the actual people that we see out on the street. We separate our drop-in statistics from our outreach statistics. And I will say my statistics are not based on information I've received from the health district.

But what I find quite interesting is that when I did ask them earlier for their numbers and shared with them mine, there was . . . it was as if we had been, you know, sharing that information all along. Because we were very, very close in our numbers.

And we have been. The figure of 300 that was given at the forum on child prostitution in 1997 very unfortunately came out of the health district; it came from some of their staff. It was an error. That figure should have never been put forward.

Now some people, as I've said, in the community have chosen to . . . they've latched on to that number and they've run with it. Terry Mountjoy from the city — although he may drive his Volvo up and down the streets once in a while in north central Regina — he is not . . . he's a bureaucrat, he's an administrator, he is not a front-line outreach worker.

And quite frankly, I have raised this discrepancy in his presence on numerous occasions and yet he has never contacted Kathy Lloyd of the health district to confirm these numbers. He's never talked to me. Although when he was quoted in the paper about why does this discrepancy exist, he said, well Barb just uses figures of people they actually work with. Terry has never discussed that with me. And I'm not particularly pleased that he would choose, through the public media, to put words in my mouth.

So I think you really need to look at where some of this

information is coming from. What experience do they have? What credibility do they have? What work are they doing out on the street? How long have they been out there?

I stand behind our figures 100 per cent. And I agree, Peter, this needs to be cleared up. We need to know what these numbers are.

And the other thing though that I would caution that we need to remember, these are the kids that are already involved. As I indicated earlier, there is much, much larger numbers of young people and families who are at risk, and we need to be developing programs that also work in that whole area of prevention that are going to change those environments that leave these people so vulnerable.

Because, as I said, we can do all the front-line work we want to do, but if we're not going to be assisting those families and those communities, we're going to just see this constant flow of young people out into the streets.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Well thank you very much, Barb. That was a wonderful presentation and we thank both you and Darlene for coming today. Thank you.

The committee will break for 10 minutes. We may as well just simply take 10 minutes.

The committee recessed for a period of time.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I'd like to welcome you today. And we have Peter Gilmer with us — an advocate. And Peter is with the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry in town here. So we'd like to welcome you, Peter. And we're just going to take a moment to introduce ourselves. I'm not too sure you've been introduced to all of the committee members, so at this time we will take the opportunity to do that.

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

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

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

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Peter Prebble, and I represent Saskatoon Greystone. And this is our staff person, Randy Pritchard

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Arlene Julé. I'm the MLA for Humboldt. And this is another staff person — this is the committee Clerk, Margaret Woods.

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

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Peter, we've got one other MLA who is on the committee and is just now away from the proceedings for a few minutes — Don Toth from Moosomin. And he should be back shortly.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, just to invite you to go ahead with your presentation, and we certainly do want to welcome you and thank you for coming.

Mr. Gilmer: — Well thank you for having me. I think I'll just start out by very briefly going over where I come from with the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry.

The anti-poverty ministry is an outreach ministry of the United Church of Canada. However we're not, we're not strictly a United Church organization. Our board is ecumenically based, which means that we have spaces on our board for persons from other denominations and faith groups. We also have set aside board spots for representatives of community groups, and at present we have a representative from Rainbow Youth and a representative from the Council on Social Development on our board.

We also have a couple of spots open for our low-income volunteer, what we call our community volunteer places on the board. And we have a group of low-income volunteers who we've done work for in the past and who have returned the favour by doing work for us. And they democratically decide amongst themselves who will represent them on our board.

We're an anti-poverty organization that does advocacy work for and with low-income people. We do our work in three ways generally. One through what we call individual advocacy work, making sure that low-income people get those things that they're entitled to through various government systems.

Secondly, we do public education on anti-poverty and poverty issues and concerns.

And third of all, we do what we call systemic advocacy or social justice work which is aimed at developing community consensus — consensus amongst low-income people in community groups around what some of the key alternatives are, what some of the key policy changes and needs are, and lobbying governments and others on those issues.

I take a particular interest in this committee partly because of previous work I've done. In a previous work life, I was the director of the Saskatchewan Coalition Against Racism.

And back in 1994-95, we held a community-based youth inquiry in Regina which we held in conjunction with the Regina Council on Social Development and the Youth Forum, which was a group of young people that were doing a lot of community work at that time. And we held this commission back in early February of '99 and it brought together a bunch of youth groups, community groups, and others to present to a three-member panel.

And one of the key issues at that time was the question of what was called, at that time, child prostitution. But what really came out of that inquiry and from many of the presentations from community groups and youth was that we needed to stop talking about it in terms of child prostitution and move towards talking about child sexual abuse.

And even though we're dealing with a huge problem, it's somewhat gratifying that at least in terms of the language and the thinking about it, that we've come a long . . . it strikes me

that we've come a long way in the last five years in that it's now the orthodox view that we should be talking about child sexual exploitation and child abuse as opposed to child prostitution.

However my main purpose in being here . . . and I'll just premise my remarks in this matter by saying that I found out about this commission on very short notice and I've had limited time in the meantime. So this will be a somewhat scrambled report, but it deals with many of the concerns that we deal with on a regular basis.

And I really want to focus in on the connection between poverty and youth at risk and youth on the street. And in particular, I guess, that I would want to focus on the issue of social assistance rates in Saskatchewan and the influence that that has had on youth in crisis.

Certainly poverty is not a complete explanation for what's going on on our streets, but we do know that the vast majority of youth on the street are from families on social assistance or have themselves been on assistance. And the continuing decline of incomes in low-income neighbourhoods in this city has created greater desperation and I would say increased problems in terms of the sex trade.

This is just a piece of anecdotal evidence, but I remember when in 1983-84 when a welfare reform plan came in that significantly cut benefits particularly to single employables, I was living in Riversdale in Saskatoon at that time, in inner-city Saskatoon. I was going to university.

And I had some immediate contact with the question of welfare rates because my roommate at that time was on social assistance, and after having paid his share of the rent, was left with $80 a month to live on. At that same time it became quite obvious to me that there was an increase in the number of youth and others on the street when benefits were cut back, that there was a pretty obvious correlation.

And it would very surprising for me though — I'm certainly not the expert that Barb Lawrence is — it would be very surprising for me to not believe that there is a strong correlation between our ongoing decline in social assistance levels as the cost of living rises in this province and the crisis that many youth are facing.

Just to give you a little bit of background in terms of the crisis, in terms of assistance rates. One of the things that we often talk about now in the anti-poverty movement is that social assistance rates are very similar to where they were in 1982. And yet since 1982 which is 18 years ago, the cost of living in this province has risen by over 70 per cent. So obviously families and individuals on assistance are in a much worse position today than they were in 1982.

And we see this as a problem under two administrations — both the Devine administration and the Romanow administration. There was significant cuts in the early 80s to social assistance rates, so that with cost of living factored in, a single employable during the course of the 1980s would have seen their income drop by 54 per cent from 1980 to 1990. The average family, it was in the neighbourhood of 30 per cent.

There were some minor increases in 1992 to social assistance rates. However because they were very minor increases and because of the cost of living has continued to rise, what we're seeing now is that by 1996 we see that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives did a study of social assistance rates across North America and found that our rates ranked 56th out of 60 states and provinces, which I think is very disturbing.

Also between 1986 which was, you know, right of the height of the impact of welfare reform, the rates were actually higher than they were 10 years later in 1996 when cost of living was factored in. So even though there was some minor increases under this present administration, they have gotten nowhere near keeping up with the cost of living.

So what you have is a situation where single employables are living on a basic allowance of $195 a month, 210 for rent. What we see with that is that in many cases both individuals and families on social assistance are taking money out of their basic allowance for food and other basic needs to cover the cost of accommodations, as rents have continued to rise very rapidly, and particularly in the last couple of years.

We also see that many — because of the desperation that people are in — many people on assistance are the first to take out advances or are in a position of overpayment, so they then are in a position of having overpayments or advances deducted. So if you start out with $195 to begin with and take out some money for rent and some more money for paying off an overpayment, obviously you're left with what's way below what's needed to meet your basic needs.

And we've gotten to the point where we've even stopped keeping track of where our rates are in terms of what it takes to meet basic needs to food, shelter, and clothing. And this is far different than the poverty line. The poverty line is basically connected to using a certain percentage of a household income on those basic needs. I think it's about 58 per cent, perhaps 60 per cent, in that range.

But what we're finding is that while there may be a decline in the number of people that are falling under the poverty line, for those people who are and particularly . . . while the working poor are obviously finding themselves in decline themselves in terms incomes. But for people on social assistance this has been a very rapid growth or rapid depth of poverty whereby the gap between what they're receiving and what they need to meet those basic needs is falling.

The last time that we kept records on this was earlier in the '90s, about 1994, and already by that point we were saying that basic allowances were falling anywhere from 28 to 45 per cent below what it took to meet basic needs for food and clothing and basic necessities.

So given that those kind of circumstances, it's not surprising, and the fact that the very large percentages of our inner cities are finding themselves dependent on social assistance, I don't think it's particularly surprising that we've seen a growth in the sex trade, and with the desperation in many households, that

more and more youth are finding themselves in an increasingly dangerous lifestyle.

I guess one of the concerns that we have in particular on this issue is that while we look at this in a judicial sense, and we certainly think that there needs — we've been impressed with the discussions in terms of strengthening legislation in regards to johns and going after sexual predators — that we also have to look I think at questions of systemic evil and systemic law-breaking frankly, in this province and right across Canada.

Canada is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. And in order for us to be signatories, every province in the country had to agree to that covenant. That was done in 1976. And provinces of all political persuasions agreed that they would live up to that covenant at that time, as did the federal government.

What we've seen, and particularly over the course of the last 10 years, is that we're not living up to international standards when it comes to economic and social rights in particular. This includes the right to an adequate income for people in need, which takes local budgetary requirements into account.

In 1996 with the implementation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer to national level, we saw a combination of two things. We saw the federal government cut back considerably on payments for health, education, and social programs. But at the same time, with the elimination of the Canada Assistance Plan, we saw the elimination of basic rights including the right to an adequate income for people in need, which was the only . . . and these are the only economic rights and social rights that we've had in Canadian legislation.

The right to work freely chosen, which would mean that work fair programs would be illegal which they are on an international level and the right to appeal departmental decisions. We believe that legislation needs to be in place to ensure those protections and to uphold our international covenants.

Other things such as adequate housing, quality adequate housing, is considered to be an international human right that we've agreed to. And so I think when we're looking at questions of adequacy in terms of income, in terms of housing, in terms of child care, that we've got to stop talking about these as public policy issues or handouts — they're neither. What they are is basic human rights which are internationally recognized and which much of the industrialized world recognizes and upholds.

And Canada is doing very poorly on these counts, even though we're listed number one on the UN indicator, based on things such as gross domestic product, educational attainment, and life expectancy. When we start looking at any equity factors — whether it's racial equity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, whether it's gender equity, whether it's economic equity — what we see is that Canada drops very quickly.

And so we're now ranked 17th in the world in terms of child poverty; and we're ranked no. 11 on the United Nations development programs overall poverty index. And like I said, we're dropping quite quickly on these indicators.

Countries such as Norway and Sweden and other European countries have done a much better job of ensuring that their social fabric is maintained in terms of adequacy, in terms of a combination of adequacy of wages and social programs. Also, they've done much more in terms of supports for young mothers.

In Saskatchewan, if you're 25 . . . well, single mothers under the age of 25 in Saskatchewan have an 83 per cent poverty rate. So it's pretty much a guarantee that you're going to live in poverty if you're a single mother in this province. However, in Sweden or Norway, your likelihood of living in poverty in that situation is no different than anybody else.

So I think that we have to be looking seriously at questions of adequacy in terms of child care where we have low-income subsidies that are stuck at 1982 levels, where we've not had a significant increase in child care spaces. And we have to look at the fact that programs that are aimed at combating poverty primarily benefit women, and that attacks on those programs primarily create greater poverty for women in gender inequality.

I'd also like to make a comment in terms of racism. I think that . . . I appreciated Barb's comments in terms of the fact that it really doesn't matter what colour we're looking at, but I think that we have to take seriously the fact that we are looking at a question of racial exploitation as well as sexual exploitation if 82 per cent of the youth . . . or 80 per cent of the people on the street that she's dealing with are of Aboriginal descent.

And as we know, the majority of people who are exploiting them are of non-Aboriginal descent — what's been referred to in north central by many as the Cadillac gang. I think that we need to take seriously questions of equity for Aboriginal people, and I think that that also comes down to economic equity.

You probably have noted that Saskatchewan . . . or that Regina has the highest poverty gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the country. Non-Aboriginal people have a poverty rate in Regina of 14 per cent, while Aboriginal people have a poverty rate of 64 per cent. So we're looking at a 50 per cent spread.

Saskatoon has very equivalent numbers. So obviously, unless we're willing to deal with ensuring that there's greater equity and opportunities for Aboriginal people, we're going to continue to see that gap grow as our demographics change.

Finally, I guess one point I'd like to make on this question is in regards to the National Child Benefit. It was our hope when the National Child Benefit came into place that this would be a benefit for all poor children. We're concerned — I know that this terminology isn't appreciated — but we're concerned about the clawback of the Child Benefit to families that are wholly reliant on social assistance.

We know that . . . we think that the child benefit program overall has been a progressive move; it's improved the lives of

many low-income working families. However I think that given the growing depth of poverty for people on assistance, that we need to ensure that all poor children are helped by this benefit. And I know Manitoba has recently moved to prevent that clawback, and we would hope that Saskatchewan follows Manitoba's lead on this.

I said that was going to be my final comment, but I think it is important that we recognize that the work . . . that there's certainly problems, not just for children in families on social assistance, but also working poor families that we see. But we've also seen a decline in the minimum wage. We've also seen in terms of the cost of living, we've seen an increase in part-time jobs that don't pay a living wage.

And I think we also have to recognize that there are all kinds of problems in the inner city that people are dealing with and that we have to look at ways that we can structure our economies in those areas through community economic development and other models which create economies that meet people's needs, rather than thinking that the problem is just with people and that if we could only straighten out their heads and straighten them out, that we can fit them into the economy.

I believe in individual responsibility as much as anybody, but I also believe that we as a society have collective and social responsibilities. And I believe that we need to be upholding people's basic rights and basic dignities. And as long as we continue to allow our social safety net to erode, I think that this problem is going to continue. I don't think that you can address it and eradicate it without addressing poverty head-on.

And my very final comment is that often when I talk in this way, people will say, well you just want to throw money at the problem; we've done that in the past, and you know it doesn't work, and why do you want to go back to that solution. I would argue that we've never thrown . . . we've never done a very particularly good job of throwing money at problems.

I believe that we can do things more effectively and efficiently. However the percentage of the provincial budget that's spent on social assistance rates is 4.4 per cent. On income support programs combined is about 7 per cent. This is not a . . . you know, this isn't going to break the bank for the province to increase social assistance rates.

And I think that we have to recognize that if we don't deal with social assistance rates, not only are we going to have problems in terms of more children on the street, we're going to have problems with increased health care costs. We know that poverty is the number one determinant of health. We're going to have problems in terms of the education system. We know that the drop-out rate for poor children is three times as high as non-poor children. And obviously we know we're going to have problems with the criminal justice system.

So I think that it's time that we seriously looked at raising social assistance rates to meet basic needs, not as a public policy issue but as a basic human right. And with that I'll turn it to over to questions.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Questions to Peter?

Mr. Yates: — Right. Peter, I have a number of questions and . . . (inaudible) . . . you see tackling this problem. I want to talk for a minute about the issue of housing. Now you talked about the assistance rates for a single employable I believe is . . . you said was 250 a month.

Mr. Gilmer: — 210.

Mr. Yates: — 210 a month?

Mr. Gilmer: —For shelter.

Mr. Yates: — For shelter, right. Now do you see tackling that problem through increasing the rates, or perhaps more government low-income housing, or what is the best way to tackle that problem in our communities in order to make the greatest impact? Because upping the rates in my mind will just have the Boardwalks of the world up their rates.

Mr. Gilmer: — Yes, a very good question and one that we get asked a lot. I think that I'm more concerned in terms of the social assistance rates, I'm more concerned with raising the basic allowance immediately. However I don't see raising shelter allowances as a long-term solution.

I do think that in lieu of enough social housing, enough spent on social housing, and enough affordable housing, and perhaps if we were to look serious at questions such as rent controls in the province again, then perhaps we could get around raising the shelter allowances. Because I hate as much as anybody to see a lot more public funds going into the hands of slum landlords.

However we know that we're not putting enough . . . there's not . . . since the federal government has gotten out of social housing, and since the province has not been able to provide anywhere near the kind of social housing units that we need in place, I think that raising the shelter allowance is at least a stop-gap measure.

I agree it's not a long-term solution and that we need to be . . . and I think there is a host of potential solutions here. I think one is increasing social housing, which I think is particularly important for families that are at highest risk because just having some kind of immediate quality place to stay in is really significant.

But I also think that we need, for other low-income people, I think that we need to be looking at home ownership programs. I think that we need to be looking at ways that we can more effectively have people on social assistance use their shelter allowances for mortgage payments as opposed to paying slum landlords, but provide similar programs that help low-income working people buy their own homes.

One of the big problems that we have in inner-city neighbourhoods is the transiency rate. It's really hard to do community development work if you know half your population is changing every few years. And I think that a lot of the crime and other problems in inner-city neighbourhoods is based on the fact that people don't know each other; there's a breakdown in community. And I think that a home ownership . . . having greater, more home ownership plans with more

stability of housing in the inner cities would make a considerable difference. So I think that that's part of it.

But I also, frankly, along with shelter allowances, the other answer potentially would be rent controls, but that appears to be a no go with public policy-makers these days. But I think frankly until there's enough social housing and enough built into home ownership plan, I think that those are really the choices that we have to make sure that people aren't spending their bread money on housing. I think we either have to raise the shelter allowances or bring the rents down through some form of rent ceilings and controls.

Mr. Yates: — On the other side of the equation, the 195 per single, employable, what do you see as an appropriate rate for those today? I know you say you haven't kept stats, but you must have some idea what it . . .

Mr. Gilmer: — Well even though it sounds really radical to some people, I think . . . I mean we've had very conservative . . . what we've been calling for is very conservative increases. We believe in increases that would meet basic budgetary needs.

We've never talked, and I don't think any anti-poverty organization in the country has talked about raising people above the poverty line. All we're saying is do a study of what the real costs of living are that brings it up to the year 2000 levels — you know, base social assistance rates on that, and then index it to the cost of living.

And my hunch is — just to give you a rough figure — I would say that we're probably looking at somewhere in the area of a 20 per cent increase. So I would say that if you raised the rate somewhere in the neighbourhood of 35 to 40 dollars on the basic allowance for single, employable, that that's about the range that we're looking at at this point. But I think that a serious study has to be done to look at what it takes to meet basic needs and then link social assistance rates to that.

I think with the minimum wage . . . I mean what we've called for in terms of the minimum wage which I think is considerably less than what the labour movement in other groups have called for, which is three-quarters of the average industrial wage, we've said at least raise it to the level of the poverty line for a single individual. We believe that people working full time at the minimum wage should live at least at the poverty line.

So with minimum wage earners we would say . . . and that would be a minimum wage now, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 7.20. It was 7.10 earlier in the year. I assume with cost of living it might be about 7.20 now. But I think that for people on social assistance, just meeting a basic needs level is appropriate, and I would say quite conservative. There are certainly individuals in the anti-poverty movement that would tell me that that's shooting way too low.

Mr. Yates: — Thanks very much, Peter.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — June, did you have any questions?

Ms. Draude: — Yes, I just had a couple of questions or comments I guess; one of them is a comment. I don't know with the whole idea of a committee, you know, child abuse through exploitation, and you mentioned that we had changed the idea from child prostitution to child abuse. And we've also been told many times and are looking at the fact that now we call johns, johns. Maybe they should be called pedophiles.

Mr. Gilmer: — Right. Yes.

Ms. Draude: — Have you . . . maybe that's something that should be totally making their activity so deplorable that maybe it would sink home.

And something else that we've heard from a number of people who have testified to is that the number of children that are being exploited, it doesn't matter what their financial . . . their social or their financial background was. They come from all financial scales right across the picture, and that they're . . . at one time we would have thought that it was mostly people then that were in serious economic trouble that were into prostitution once they're older, but even child abuse at the younger level.

So I don't know if you have any facts dealing with that, but that's what we had been told. And it's one of the very many conflicting pieces of information we've been given in the last few months.

Mr. Gilmer: — I guess I would respond to that by saying that I would . . . my understanding would be that persons involved in the sex trade would come from a wider range of economic backgrounds. But I think that probably when we're dealing with youth on the street that that group would be . . . you would be looking at a much higher percentage that would be coming from low-income backgrounds and I would probably suggest primarily from families on social assistance.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you. Other committee members?

Mr. Harper: — Yes, just one question. You'd mentioned in your presentation that you would lean to looking at strengthening the laws as it applies to johns and perpetrators of the crimes.

What vehicle, or what way, what suggestions would you have to strengthen those laws as far as it applies to the johns?

Mr. Gilmer: — Well I guess that . . . and I have to admit that I'm ignorant as to some of the changes that have taken place in the last three years, whether actually there's been legislative change because I hear talk about it and I don't know whether or not it's legislation that's taken place or whether it's being talked about as going to take place.

But I think that obviously when you make the shift — at not just a public perception level but a legislative level — to looking at it as a child abuse question as opposed to a prostitution question or, you know, as was mentioned if we're looking at sexual abusers as opposed to johns, then I think that that, that obviously that's a significant shift in the way that the law would handle it.

Mr. Harper: — So would you recommend increasing the age of consent and so on and so forth. Presently it's 14. Would you suggest it should be higher at 16, 17, 18 or . . .

Mr. Gilmer: — Yes I do. I know that the sad thing now is that there's so many of the youth are really children on the street . . . fall considerably below that 14 mark. But I think it would probably make sense to raise the level, raise the age.

Mr. Harper: — Good. Thank you.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you for your presentation. That was very good.

Mr. Gilmer: — Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I was just wanting to ask you one question I think at this time. When you were talking about the friend that you were living with, that he was a single employable and the rates were dropped and that put him in a precarious position as far as his finances and being able to have the needs, his basic needs met, could you tell me what he was doing at the time?

Obviously if he was a single employable that meant that he was in a category where he was not physically incapacitated or anything. So was there, I guess, I'm simply going to say, why wasn't he working?

Mr. Gilmer: — Well, I mean, not that there still isn't a problem for a lot of low-income people in terms of finding jobs, but at that time during a good period of the 1980s you remember that the unemployment rate, the official unemployment rate was considerably higher than it is today.

And that . . . I mean even to just to attain his social assistance he had to prove very, very solidly that he was working very, very hard to try and find a job. And I think that, you know, I guess my response back would be, you know, I think that we have to look at beyond just simply, you know, fitting people into . . . you know, straightening people out to fit them into the economy. I think we have to look at ways that the economy could have worked better for him.

He was an Aboriginal male. There was . . . I know that he had been in several jobs and had run across quite a bit of discrimination in the workplace. There was a host of issues that he was dealing with. So I think that, you know . . . I really think it would be ideal to be looking at shaping community economic development programs that would actually meet . . . would have, you know, put him to work because he desperately did want to work.

But the other thing too is that when you . . . that the experience that I have also with the people that I work with today is that so many of them are . . . it's just such a struggle to survive day to day, that doing that on top of the kind . . . developing the kind of skills that are needed and doing the kind of job searches that are needed to get a decent job is extremely difficult. You know, if you don't know where your next meal is coming from, it's more difficult to . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. In the context of today, there are training programs that are available to certain age groups. And of course that means that within, I think it's up to 25 years of age, there are people who have the availability of training, if they should so choose to take it, as an alternative to staying on social assistance. And it seems to me that there's a fairly wide variety of opportunity there.

I'm not going to say that after that training there may be, there may be the availability of a great, expansive number of jobs that would pay high, high wages. But I know that that program is in place right now, and so I think that, you know, we've talked with many members that have . . . or many people rather that have presented to this committee indicating that, you know, your fulfilment in life is linked to your sense of success and pride in contributing and participating in the economy.

And I think that that's at least a start for some people. I think there's nothing more deathly than to remain in a dependent situation where you're constantly on social assistance, so that any endeavour by any human being to move forward, and especially when there are governments that are willing to do what they can do to help them through skills training and so on, should be . . . maybe that should be taken, maybe it should be accepted or received.

And then, you know, from there comes new ideas and comes new opportunities. As you move, opportunities do come. And there's no doubt there will be a dispute around this table in government policy as far as economic development goes in the province and so on, but I think individual responsibility demands that people should move when they can, should take opportunities that they can.

And I'd just like your comment on that.

Mr. Gilmer: — Sure. I guess that one . . . I mean one of the things I would say is that I have some concerns about the question of dependency because I think that it's a label that we've put on people on social assistance that we don't label other people with.

I mean frankly if you're a business person, you're dependent on the private market. If you work for the government, you're dependent on public funds. If, like me, you work for the church, you depend on begging for your living. I think that there's . . . I think that in one way or another we're all dependent, and I think that the question of people having a right to an adequate income is still valid regardless.

However, I think that . . . Certainly people need to take those opportunities that they're provided and make the best out of them. However, a lot of people have . . . well I think that the experience of a lot of people is that their opportunities are extremely limited.

And what we've seen is . . . you know, I mean, I think no matter how much we may brag about the numbers of people on social assistance coming down, the reality is that we still have, you know, what is it, 50-some-odd thousand people — I can't remember the latest statistic — that are on social assistance. That's still a very high percentage of the population in

Saskatchewan.

And it's a very deceptive statistic because it doesn't include on-reserve Indians, which would up that percentage probably much to, you know, to a degree that would be much similar to Newfoundland or other provinces with higher unemployment and higher assistance rates . . . or rates of people on assistance.

So I think that, you know, I think that we also . . . that we, as a community, also have a responsibility. I mean I see people . . . everyday I see low-income people who I believe are the hardest-working people I've met in my life, who struggle everyday to, you know, to try to provide a decent living for their families through piecing together, you know, part-time work and do all kinds of valuable volunteer work and all kinds of other things. I think that . . . You know I'll match the people that I work with in terms of the work ethic, with anybody in our society. And so I think that I'm concerned that we not just focus the issue on individual responsibility but also on social responsibility which seems to be something that, in an increasingly individualistic society, it seems to be something, something that we're losing is a sense of community and social responsibility.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So what I'm hearing you saying then is that you're sort of distilling down this whole discussion to the lack of opportunity is why most people can't really kind of move ahead. Is that, is that correct?

I mean you've made a number of other comments but in regards to the reasons why people aren't in a . . . aren't experiencing some advantage from the training programs and so on. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Gilmer: — Well it's partly. I mean I think that one of the things that I would like to see in terms of community economic development and other economic development are programs that link, that link training and job creation. Whether that's a worker co-op model, whether that's a model that's connected to apprenticeship, whatever it is I think we need more programs whereby people can see that there's an actual goal at the end of it.

We've dealt with a lot of people, frankly, over the years and under both administrations that have been on treadmills where they get short-term programs or training or work placements, etc., but find themselves just back in the same situation that they were in before. And so I think that we need something that's . . . I think we need a job creation strategy that's sustainable.

And I think that we . . . I think it means a lot . . . you know there's a lot of models that I think that we need . . . I think we need to be a little more experimental when it comes to, when it comes to job creation. It seems like now that the only job creation we talk about is the tax break that will then trickle down and I think that after 20 years, we found out the trickle-down economics isn't working for the people that we work for very well, that it's time to start building something from the base up.

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

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes, just a couple of questions, Peter. One is with respect to racism. You mentioned earlier your involvement, a few years ago, with a coalition against racism. What's your advice to our committee in terms of what — and you talked about the element of racism in this issue that we're addressing now — so do you have any advice for us on what the province can do to combat racism in our community? And whether you've got any specific thoughts — and I'm not sure it's possible to pinpoint it down around this issue — but in terms of the racist element of this issue, is there any specific steps that you can envision us taking? And then on the larger issue, because really the issue around non-Aboriginal johns picking up Aboriginal kids is really a reflection of attitudes in the larger society to at least some degree.

Mr. Gilmer: — Well I think that there is a public education role here that we all have a responsibility for, both at a governmental level and also a community level. And I think for me it really stems around the question of what we mean by equity and by equality. I've been quite disturbed by a very strange view of equality that sort of says that if people have . . . you know, that if we're somehow all treated the same that that's equality, but doesn't look at the reality of the way . . . of where people are living and what conditions people are living under.

If we're looking at true equality, that does mean that it has to go beyond just strictly some equality of opportunity. It has to show itself in the real world. It's got to show up in . . . like obviously I don't believe that we'll ever have or could ever have, you know, an equality of condition. But I do think that equality has to show up in people's live day-to-day lives, and we know that on that front we live in an extremely unequal society where most of the social, economic, and political benefits in our society do not go to First Nations and Metis peoples.

And I think that we have to look seriously beyond questions of self-government. I think within the larger society we have to look at how is it that we can bridge that gap so that we're not looking at a 50 per cent poverty gap in Regina and Saskatoon; that we can ensure that Aboriginal people are made key players within our economic development. Because frankly you know, our future as . . . the future of our economy, the future of our province is largely going to be based on the social and economic position of Aboriginal people. And that demographic will continue to grow, and it won't be long before the majority of people in this province are of Aboriginal descent. So you know, that's the future of this province and if we want a better future, then we better start building it today.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I have other questions but in light of the time and the fact that we have another witness now, I think I should probably stop.

Mr. Gilmer: — Sure.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Peter, thank you very, very much for coming and sharing your knowledge and your advice with us today. We all very much appreciate it.

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

Mr. Gilmer: — Well, thank you all. I appreciate the

opportunity.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I'm going to suggest that we not break, but that we just . . . okay. You want a couple minutes now? Okay, sure.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Committee members, Tanya Buhnai has arranged to have some additional comments added to her presentation yesterday that would be valuable for the committee. And so, we've arranged to have five to ten minutes where Tanya would be more than welcome to present us with some of the information that she would like to add.

Ms. Buhnai: — Okay. I'd just like to say . . . Like I guess I mean, how would they be dealing with the circles of girls being shipped from one city to another? They're not necessarily in any place for very long. As well as the trick houses, as soon as they get word that anything is going down, they just move to another location. These girls are being shipped from . . . they're doing the circuit. They do Winnipeg, you know, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, Vancouver. And they're just shipped from one city to another like bloody cattle.

And that's not to say that boys aren't involved either in prostitution. There's lots of young boys that are involved. There's lots of young men that are involved.

I know in my area, over the last little while, I've lived in my area for about three and a half years, and I don't see it as being just mainly an Aboriginal problem. There's lots of white girls out there. I would say on any given day it's at least half white or half other race other than Aboriginal.

And I know lots of these girls that I've spoken to are from the south end, or they're from what would be middle-class families in other areas of the city, some of the outskirt subdivisions of the city. So it's not mainly . . . I mean a lot of the people that are working do not live in the neighbourhood.

I know of one girl, she drove to work every day. She used to park it in front of my house and get out and work; she didn't live in my neighbourhood. She does live in my neighbourhood now, but she won't work there because she doesn't want anybody to know where she lives. She'll go to north central to work.

And I mean I'd like to see some responsibility being taken. I've been fighting with the health district for over two years. They have quite a few programs in place, the Street Project being one of them. They have a van that drives around and hands out condoms and needles. And I have been fighting with them to get a program in place to pick up the condoms, the used condoms, that they're handing out.

The fire department will pick up the used needles. It costs them $5,000 a trip. Now I don't think this is money being well spent. You can talk to the fire department. It's 3 to $5,000 to get their huge truck out and . . . I mean, I called about a needle one time, four firemen — four firemen —came to my door. I mean I was shocked. I opened up the door. There's four firemen standing there in full-fledged gear, safety goggles, gloves up to here, plastic suits, rubber boots, to retrieve one needle.

And this is a waste of taxpayers' dollars if they can't find a better program for this. The health district has told me that there is no risk involved with a used condom or needle. I have Doctor Findlater on TV, with a TV interview from a local station, saying that there is no risk involved with a used condom or needle.

I have the literature from the health district stating that any type of bodily fluid is considered hazardous waste. But yet the Health department has brushed me off time and time and time again that there is no risk involved. Dr. Findlater says it's a lot more disgusting than it is dangerous. I'm not buying that.

They have stated that there is no reported cases of anybody ever contracting AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) or any sexually transmitted diseases from a condom or a needle. How could you prove it? You think they wouldn't have their lawyers fighting till the end to prove that they contracted it somewhere else?

I'm still fighting with them. They tell me that there is a program in place to pick up used condoms, but I have had no written confirmation in over a year since they told me that this program is in place. I went down there and they gave me one of those plastic boxes to pick up the needles myself.

I said, you know, I mean you're handing them out. Somebody has to be responsible. You're providing the street workers with safety. Where's my safety as a taxpaying resident in this community?

And they said to me, well you can't expect us to pay somebody to drive around and pick them up. I said, you pay somebody to drive around and hand them out. It would seem logical to me that you would be responsible enough to ensure the safety of the community residents and a lot of them are taxpayers, to do something about that.

They do have programs and initiatives in the schools to educate children about the hazards of needles and condoms. I don't think this is very effective. We know that these types of programs, I mean they're not effective. You can tell a child, I don't care how many times, that a condom or a needle is dangerous, not to pick it up. But why am I seeing children pick up condoms and put them in their mouths? This is not effective. I don't believe our tax dollars are being spent wisely on promoting this.

I'm not saying we shouldn't be providing the street workers with a safer environment, but I'm going to pass something around here too. The vice squad which was recently cut down to five members, if this is what my tax dollars are being paid for. And it's a vice request for bad date sheets from SWAP. I'll let you all pass that around and let you read it.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Can we keep this, Tanya, just so it becomes part of the record?

Ms. Buhnai: — Actually no, you can have a photocopy of it if you want, but certainly.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We'll get a photocopy of it

and return it to you.

Ms. Buhnai: — One of the residents in my neighbourhood found this on the street. Sherry Gay — her phone number is on there — is one of the women that are on the vice squad. I mean if we're just providing the street workers with a safer environment, you know, what is this, what is this vice squad to deal with prostitution out there for? You know, I as a taxpayer, I mean, think it's ridiculous. We're providing them with more safety, more health resources than we are for people in the communities.

As far as, I mean, as far as the needles go, I think it's ridiculous that the fire department has to pick it up and that the health district will not accept any responsibility whatsoever for the dangers, and the dangers in health issues involved in this, and that we're spending ridiculous amounts of money. And I'm talking $5,000 for that truck to go out and pick up one used needle.

They won't come out and pick up condoms. The health district told me to put a plastic bag over my hand and pick it up myself.

They have a needle exchange program which you do not need to exchange a dirty needle to get a new one. So a lot of these needles are unaccounted for. They're left lying around in our neighbourhood. If anybody wants to come, I can come and show you some of the drug houses where you'll be appalled — they're sticking out of the windows, they're littered all over the lawns. I mean if anybody is interested in seeing that, you can come.

I'm sick of finding condoms all over my property. Why should I have to put my own health at risk. I can't do simple yard work. I can't mow my lawn without having the risk there of being stuck by a needle. I can't rake my yard without taking the risk that I'm going to be stuck by a needle. And I mean if I ever did get stuck by a needle, what's the health district going to do for me then? They won't even guarantee me an AIDS kit because the risk might not be there. I mean that's ridiculous.

And point being is if I did contract AIDS through a needle, they would fight me till the bitter end that I must have been an intravenous drug user 10 years ago or whatnot.

And I mean I'm sorry, but for these kids, you know, I mean you can tell them and you can tell them not to touch the needles and the condoms that are out there on the streets, but they're children, and curiosity gets the better of them.

And point being is if you've told them a million times not to touch a needle and they do, and they get pricked by it, how likely are they going to go home and say to mom and dad, mom I got stuck with a needle today. They're not. They're going to be in trouble. You told them not to do it. They're not going to tell you.

And you might not . . . I mean you might not know that this child has contracted AIDS, hepatitis, or an STD (sexually transmitted disease) for years to come. And I mean that child might not even know, once they become sexually active and have already passed it on to 2 to 10,000 people, that they have contracted this. And it could have happened when they were five years old. And what's the health district going to do for them then? Nothing. Nothing.

Let's see what else. I'd also like to say that this responsibility cannot fall on the community's shoulders. If the federal government is not willing to take active measures in protecting children, you know . . . Most of these people that live in these communities don't have food, clothing, or shelter. Their basic needs are not being met at a level that they can sustain themselves with.

And I mean I'm sick of letting it fall on the community's shoulders and that oh, people from the community should be getting involved and doing this. Like they don't have their basic needs being met. They're not about to . . . they can't. They can't tackle a problem like this. We can't even get people out to volunteer because there's no child care.

This country should have national child care so that a single mother that's trying to make a go at it and get off welfare who's working for just about minimum wage or maybe even a little above, has more than $100 in her pocket at the end of the month after she pays for her babysitter. I mean that's a big problem.

And let's see what else I got here. We know that there's a problem that girls are coming in from small rural communities as well as the suburbs. I mean that's . . . The one young prostitute that I knew that was eight and a half months pregnant, she was from Saskatoon. She was trying to get away from an abusive stepfather that had repeatedly sexually abused her, looking for family, looking for somebody who cares about them.

And there is . . . you know, she was pregnant. She was in Grace Haven. As soon as she had her baby she was out on the streets again. She had nowhere to go. She had no money and she's back at it because there is no long-term programming. I think the government should be held accountable.

This report came out last fall, fall of '99. And Ralph Goodale says that we've cracked down on child prostitution and child sex tourism. Now I called him about this and he gave me a whole bunch of information. But there's nothing being done. The police do not have the tools. We have no long-term programming in place to deal with, I mean, even the basic needs, basic needs of these people trying to get off the street, or these children, because nobody will step in and do anything.

And I think if we got prostitution out of the residential neighbourhoods, and I believe that this is a possibility, if we make policing a priority . . . let's get the foot patrols back in the neighbourhoods that need it the most. Because that girl standing on the corner, when two cops are walking down the street at her, maybe they stop and chat with her for a little bit, it's not good for business; she won't be there long and neither will the johns. Let's get it out of our residential neighbourhoods and then these trick houses will be a lot easier to identify.

Because if there's not that much traffic from the johns coming in and they're all going to one house all of a sudden, it will be far easier to identify child prostitution houses, because that's

where most of these children are. Some of them are out on the streets, but a lot of them are in these houses. And if we get rid of that traffic, because I mean I have over 200 johns driving down my street every day — every single day at least 200 johns are driving down my street.

But I mean we're just not, we're not giving anybody any tools to deal with this problem. And the federal government needs to stand up and stop talking, and they need to be doing something for our children.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — You mentioned 200 johns. We're going to probably have a little bit of questioning from the committee members. But I just wanted to address that because it's very fresh in my mind that you mention . . . How do you know that? Like have you done a count?

Ms. Buhnai: — John plate numbers. I'm getting ready to publish john plate numbers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No. I'll let you know when I . . . If you want, I can send you copies when I get them published.

And I mean, I'm sorry, but it's not hard to figure out who is a john in my community. I don't write down their number, their plate number, until they've driven around at least three times. And I'm not talking peak hours. I'm not talking they're looking for a parking spot. When I have guys driving down my block 26 times, it's 8 o'clock at night, they're not looking for a parking spot. They're not there to visit anybody in my neighbourhood.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Tanya, did you actually tabulate 200 in one day?

Ms. Buhnai: — Oh, easy, if not more. Easy, if not more.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — The other quick question I wanted to refer you to is when you made reference to the vice requests, the bad date sheet from SWAP. I'm just going over that and it seems to me that this request was taking place so that actually the police would have the opportunity to identify and tag sort of violent dates.

Ms. Buhnai: — Right.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — From their point of view, from the police point of view, it seems to me that they're trying to get these bad, bad violent dates not only out of that area, but out of circulation, which is not a bad thing in my estimation.

So is the point . . . do you bring this up because you see this whole effort as being one that is futile, or that you're protecting . . . it's protecting the street workers, or what's the problem with it?

Ms. Buhnai: — I'm just saying if this is all that they're capable of doing, you know. I mean the vice squad was recently seven members; it's been cut down to five. There are only two women on that squad, okay. So those are the women that are going out there and posing as street workers. It's not hard to figure out who the woman cop is.

I have plate numbers that have picked up this woman. Okay, she goes out there in red shiny satin pants. This is not *Pretty Woman*. You know, like get a grip. Nobody dresses like this.

And I mean as far as the johns school goes, they say that they have a very high success rate. And I'm sure they do for the .00025 per cent of men that actually go through that school compared to how many men . . . I have more men driving down my street everyday than the number of men that have went through johns school last year. So it might be effective in a very, very, very small number.

And there's only two women that are soliciting out there from the police service. So I mean, are these guys that are going to johns school and being very, very successful in these programs, or are they just smarter to what's going on because they know one of the two police officers that could be soliciting them next time. Because there are only two. So I mean it's not hard to figure out if you're cruising again, well I ain't picking up that one, she arrested me last time, I mean, and there's only five of them there. They do sting operations every couple of months. And the rest of the time there is no consequences for picking up a girl on the streets. And they can just buy their way out of it anyways for $400. And I'd like to know what the federal government thinks, I mean, is a child's life worth more than $400? Because that's the price tag they put on it.

You pick up a 10-year-old girl, you don't even have to go to court. You pay your $400 to go to johns school, get a little slap on the wrist. You're smarter for the experience because now you know one of the women cops out there that do this. And I mean I just don't think it's adequate. I don't think it's adequate at all. And, I mean I am sorry, but I think the federal government should be valuing its children a lot more than a price tag of $400 on their head.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you, Tanya. Are there any other committee members that would like to comment or question?

Mr. Toth: — I have one comment. You mentioned, Tanya, that you have a list of vehicles that have been in the area, that you have taken licence plates down. I just don't remember now, which community, where police do send out letters?

Ms. Buhnai: — Prince Albert.

Mr. Toth: — Yes, that's right. But it seems we have questioned them about who they send letters to, because it's very few, it . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — They send letters to the registered vehicle owner.

Mr. Toth: — I realize that, but do they send . . . the questions we were having is, are you sending letters because somebody happened to be driving through the area? And the concern I have, like when you talk about going public with a list of licence plates of vehicles in your area, that you suspect . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — Right.

Mr. Toth: — I'm not exactly sure what kind of legal problems you might find yourself in, but I don't know what criteria you

have . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — They can sue me. They can sue me.

Mr. Toth: — . . . criteria you have used to determine, and I would say probably in your mind, that these vehicles are actually out there for that purpose. And I guess the comment I'm making is just trying to caution you a little bit too, because I don't know about the legal implications that might be there. I wouldn't want . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — They can sue me.

Mr. Toth: — I wouldn't want to see someone, as a result of a licence plate list, who was not there for that purpose and that's all I . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — No. And we do have guidelines. They have to drive around at least three times, which is a minimum. Usually it's more like 10. So somebody driving around 10 times around the block is not looking for a parking spot. They're not looking for an address, I mean . . . and if they're picking up the girl on the corner. I'm kind of confirming that they're there to solicit.

Legally, yes they can sue me. If I put my name on this thing and publish these plate numbers, they can sue me. You bet. There are ways around that. I can drop off the last digit of the plate number. I can put it on the Internet. The Internet is very anonymous. I don't have to have my name attached to this.

I do have my community group backing me on this. They are willing to take a stand on this. North central is willing to take a stand on this. Indian Metis Christian Fellowship is willing to take a stand on this. And I mean I think a lot of women would applaud this effort because it could be their only, only way of finding out other than hiring a private investigator if their husband or significant other is picking up prostitutes.

Mr. Toth: — Well I guess the only comment I have is the concern, as I indicated earlier, that we don't have some innocent person drive by and just making sure that what you're saying . . . like if you've seen someone picking up and the vehicle has been around there a number of times. If it's just one or two . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — Well for somebody that's driving around 26 times, what do you think they're doing?

Mr. Toth: — Well I'm not . . . that's what I'm saying. I'm just making sure that there is a criteria that really establishes in your mind that this vehicle was out there.

Ms. Buhnai: — We do have criteria and if we see that plate number, I mean we flag the plate numbers too. So that if they're there Monday, they're there Thursday, they're there Saturday, and all of the following next week, and the following next week, and the next week, and the next week, you prove to me that you know somebody in my neighbourhood. You prove to me that you were driving around for three hours looking for a parking spot when the streets are bare. I mean . . .

Mr. Toth: — No, that's fair enough.

Ms. Buhnai: — What can I say? I mean . . .

Mr. Toth: — I'm not arguing. I'm just trying to . . .

Ms. Buhnai: —What can I say? I mean we take down the plate number, we take down the description of the vehicle, we take down a brief description of the driver, we take down the date, we take down the time that the vehicle was seen, and we have to have at least . . . we need a signature stating that somebody saw this vehicle on such-and-such a date so that we are not just getting irrelevant information.

I mean these people are credible. They're putting their own . . . their own lives on the line. I mean by publishing this I can be sued myself, but I think it's important — I think it's important. I think it's worthwhile for women to have a means of finding out if their husbands are picking up a prostitute. Because you know what? If they go before that judge after they've been picked up, their wives or significant others are never informed. Never informed.

Even if they're convicted, which they never would be because they'll always take the $400 fine and go to johns school for a day . . . They can get out of a Saturday of doing whatever with their wife; they've got to go to work on a Saturday or whatever. And their wife needs never to know.

And I don't like the justice system playing with women's health. I mean, point being right there.

Mr. Toth: — I guess that's the important factor at the end of the day, and I think you've indicated that there are a number of people that you've already talked to in groups that have been fairly diligent in following up on this. So it's not just yourself in that . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — No, it's not just myself. I have people from north central and from my own community that are willing to do this.

Mr. Toth: — I think that's important and that was just the caution I was trying to bring forward. It's not that I'm saying I don't believe it's not a good thing. It's just I was trying to be somewhat cautionary so that we're indeed addressing the major concern out there.

Ms. Buhnai: — Yes, we know that we can be sued.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I think that, Tanya, your comments reflect a great deal of the desire to have some very definite and pointed action taken to address the issue and to hold people that would continue to harm our children responsible for their actions.

And what you're saying and what we have heard from others is that really there hasn't been that sort of responsibility met out by the enforcement of laws that are in place but not enforced. There are just no measures that hold johns accountable for — and pimps accountable — for their actions. And so your statement, and statements of other people, have indicated their frustration with this and their intent to try to take some definite measures to address it.

So I'm going to ask Mr. Prebble if he'd like to add any comments. Or Mr. Yates?

Mr. Yates: — I missed a good deal of the presentation, so I . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Tanya, I know your neighbourhood is the area just east of the Regina Inn. What's your estimate about — and you've spoken to the question about how many johns are picking up kids on a daily basis — what's your estimate about the number of children who are under 18 who are working the streets in your neighbourhood?

Ms. Buhnai: — I would say the majority of them are at least under 18, but I mean . . . The majority of them are under 18. There are a few diehard hookers out there that are 25, but I mean most of them are already dead by the time they're 30.

So I mean a career in prostitution is a life sentence. It doesn't . . . I mean you're not going to live until you're old and grey being in this profession.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — How many children do you estimate in the course of a week, in a month, in a year are . . . I mean you see a lot of these kids. So how many kids are you sensing are involved?

So how many kid are you sensing are involved?

Ms. Buhnai: — I mean, I wouldn't want to give you a number just because, I mean, I haven't been out there and counting. But the majority of the girls I see . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — But are we talking about 15 or 20 young people, or are we talking about 50 or 60, or we talking about over 100, or do you know?

Ms. Buhnai: — I mean, in the course of what?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Say on any one night when there is . . . during the summer — any one night or day during the summer.

Ms. Buhnai: — Just on my street alone, which is only one of three strips in my neighbourhood, okay. It's on 11th, 12th and 13th, and I live on 13th. So on any . . . we'll say, on any given summer night, there could be as many as, I don't know, 10, 20 children just on my strip alone that are under the age of 18.

So that's not including the other two strips in my neighbourhood, and that's not including north central, and that's not including all those children that are in the trick houses.

I know there was a trick house right behind me. The police were there weekly. These children were never removed. I mean, these children were out on the street night after night after night after night. The police were there weekly, if not just about daily, and nothing was ever done.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Did the police approach the houses?

Ms. Buhnai: — Did they approach?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Did they go in those houses? Did they approach the houses?

Ms. Buhnai: — Yes. They did go in this house on numerous occasions that I witnessed. But nothing was ever done. And they must have had five girls under the age of 14, under the age of 14 in that house at least, plus a brand new baby, plus some really little ones too.

Mr. Yates: — You probably answered my question. I was wondering where, in the city — I've been told it's in 5th and 6th Avenue North or north central, but there's also . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — Do you guys want a map of the . . .

Mr. Yates: — There's also an area on 11th, 12th and 13th Avenue?

Ms. Buhnai: — Do you know where the main police station is?

Mr. Yates: — Yes. I live here in Regina.

Ms. Buhnai: — Okay. On any given day, there is a street worker half a block away from the main police station in the city. I'm sorry, but that's really sad.

Mr. Yates: — At any part of the day? The question I'm asking . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — Any part of the day, 8 o'clock in the morning.

Okay. I walk to work downtown. I bundle up like the Michelin man. I mean, my big parka, toque on, scarf on, insulated coffee mug, trudging to work. It's 8 o'clock in the morning. They think I am out there working. And I mean, I'm not dawdling on any street corner either. I mean I'm hightailing it to work in the morning because I'm going to be late.

I mean walking home from work, men follow me home. I'm not dressed inappropriately. It's not like I'm out there in like a little miniskirt and high heels. I'm in my parka, my toque, my scarf, my mitts, boots. You know, like give me a break. And I mean just because I'm in the area, they think I'm a prostitute.

I can't be outside my house without men thinking I'm a prostitute. And it doesn't matter what I'm doing. I could be up on my second floor washing windows. They'll drive around six times honking their horn thinking I'm going to get off my ladder and come down and service them on the corner.

Mr. Yates: — We're talking the area of Broad to Winnipeg on 11th, 12th, and 13th avenues?

Ms. Buhnai: — The core? Or you're talking the . . . you want to know where the strips are?

Mr. Yates: — Well we've heard that they're up in the northeast. And I know a number of years ago that they talked that they were over in this area but this is the first we've heard in a while that they're back over there in that area.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Now maybe you could speak to the question of . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — I'll pass this around. This is the street project; they hand out needles and condoms. There's a map on the back of the red-light districts, okay. That's where the van cruises; that's where the girls are.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Tanya, have you also heard of, or is there, a red-light district, a stroll, out by the General Hospital?

Ms. Buhnai: — Yes, I live right across the street from the General Hospital.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, so that's the area. I'm not from Regina so you have to pardon me. I'm just trying to . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — Yes, yes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Right.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Actually one of my relatives and I went out to that area and it was very visible on the streets there, very visible.

Ms. Buhnai: — Oh it's very visible. I mean it doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that these girls are freezing their butts out in the middle of winter standing there on the corner, like they're not waiting for a ride. Well they are, but . . .

Mr. Yates: — I take my wife to work everyday. She works at the General Hospital; she's a nurse there. And I don't see it visibly right by the General Hospital there.

Ms. Buhnai: —Then you're blind. Then you're blind. Ask your wife.

Mr. Yates: — Generally I'm there at 7; I'm there at 20 to 7 or whatever dropping her off in the morning or picking her up, you know, about 7 o'clock at night or whatever.

Ms. Buhnai: — Well, there's only a few that stay out into the 8 o'clock hour of the morning. I mean that's not a given on any single day that there's going to be a girl out there at 8 o'clock in the morning, or at 7:30, but it does happen.

Mr. Yates: — Okay. I know she's talked about it in the past, but not recently. It still exists in those areas though, is what you're saying.

Ms. Buhnai: — Right.

Mr. Yates: — I thought it all moved over to that 5th and 6th . . .

Ms. Buhnai: — But that's why the health district has security people to walk the nurses to and from their cars, to patrol the hospital 24/7, to provide them with safety. The safety that's not being provided to the residents of the community, nor to the children of the community.

When the hospital parking lot was moved across the street on Broad Street there, and none of the people that work at the General Hospital used that parking lot because they thought it was a safety issue, that it was too far for them to walk.

Mr. Yates: — . . . Toronto Street and up and into the parking lot then.

Ms. Buhnai: — Go down 13th.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Well, thank you very much, Tanya. We appreciate your additional information, and certainly will be looking over all this information, in addition to the other transcripts and presentations that we've received up to this point.

So we want to thank you again, and thank you for bringing to us your knowledge, and also thank you for the work that you're doing in the city, trying to assist young people in your own way.

Ms. Buhnai: — Well thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

The committee adjourned at 4:57 p.m.